

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Committee

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

POLICY & PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MEETING 15 DECEMBER 2016

Held at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst at 2.00pm

Present:

Ken Bodfish	Janet Duncton	Mark Dunn	Philip Ede
Daniel Humphreys	Helen Jackson	Sue Saville	
Margaret Paren (ex officio)	Norman Dingemans (ex officio)		

Other SDNPA Members:

Heather Baker	Barbara Holyome	Gill Mattock
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SDNPA Officers: Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside Policy and Management), Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive), Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Karen Everett (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Steven Bedford (Principal Accountant), Alan Brough (Head of Business Services), Rebecca Haynes (Governance Officer), Dorothy Cox (Committee Officer).

Also attended by: Anne Rehill (Performance & Project Manager), Claire Mattingley (Major Projects Co-ordinator).

OPENING REMARKS

70. The Chair informed those present that:
- SDNPA Members have a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthers the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regard themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and will act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

71. Apologies were received from Jo Carr and Pete West.

ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

72. Mark Dunn declared a personal interest during item 5 as detailed in minute 78.

ITEM 3: ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

73. The Chair informed the Committee that nominations for the position of Deputy Chair closed 5 clear working days before the meeting and as Helen Jackson was the only nomination, Helen Jackson was duly elected as Deputy Chair of the P&P Committee until the first meeting of the Committee following the Authority AGM in 2017.

ITEM 4: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2016

74. The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
75. Philip Ede joined the meeting at 2:04pm

ITEM 5: MATTERS ARISING

76. Minute 63: The invitations to tender for the provision of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer Services would be released during the week commencing 19 December.
77. Minute 65: Using an EU life bid to fund the Big Chalk project was no longer an option following the vote to leave the EU, however the benefit of the project is that the SDNPA working with the AONBs now had a joint strategy for managing chalk landscape. Alternative sources of funding the various components of the project were being investigated, including the water companies and HLF bids, as all partners want to continue pursuing objectives.
78. Mark Dunn declared a personal interest in this item as he owned a chalk water well in the National Park.

ITEM 6: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

79. There were none.

ITEM 7: URGENT MATTERS

80. There were none.

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ITEM 8: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

81. There were none.

STRATEGY, PLANS & POLICY

ITEM 9: INSURANCE CONTRACT

82. The Committee considered report PP22/16 by the Head of Business Services.
83. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- Collectively, the National Park Authorities were in a stronger position to receive a better deal on insurance. It was hoped that the example of the shared insurance contract would highlight the benefits of developing other shared services. Under the proposed contract, each National Park Authority would have its own policy and risk profile.
 - The individual risk profile of NPAs was generally lower than for other Local Authorities as they did not own high risk buildings such as schools or run services such as social care and therefore had low public liability claims; however any future increase in assets owned by the SDNPA may increase the level of risk.
 - As a basis for benchmarking, in 2015-16 the cost of all insurances for the SDNPA was £139,000; with a 2% increase in IPT the cost was expected to rise to £140,000 if the Authority continued with the existing arrangements.
84. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:
1. Approved the issuing of a tender for relevant insurance cover for SDNPA, in Partnership (or association) with other National Park Authorities.
 2. Delegated to the Chief Executive to award the contract following a competitive tender process, conducted under the Public Procurement Rules.

ITEM 10: DIGEST OF CONTRACT STANDING ORDER WAIVERS 2015-16

85. The Committee considered report PP23/16 by the Head of Business Services and commented that the Authority was established as a lean organisation and did not wish to award unnecessary consultant contract, however the award of such contracts was unavoidable.
86. In response to a question, officers confirmed that contracts were not awarded because of familiarity and each consultant had successfully tendered for the business..
87. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the contract standing order waivers issued during 2015-16 along with the contracting activity carried out under standing orders during the year.

ITEM 11: AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT UPDATE

88. The Committee considered report PP24/16 by the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group.
89. The Committee commented:
- There was a need to move forward with the project which would not only benefit local communities but also the profile of the Authority
 - Any approach to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Park was welcomed. The lack of affordable housing was a significant issue in relation to health and wellbeing of the community which was relevant to the National Park Authority Duty.
 - Community Land Trusts should also be taken into account if the project was to be developed
 - The SDNPA was not a housing authority and whilst the SDNPA could make a contribution, the involvement of partner authorities was essential.
 - Further work was required on the project plan and business case prior to recommendation to the Authority.
90. In response to questions, officers clarified:
- The New Homes Bonus was passed to local authorities and was not available to the

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SDNPA. It was the intention for the Authority to develop affordable homes without using any SDNPA grant monies. If the project was to be taken forward the Authority would seek specialist advice in the first instance prior to reporting back to the P&P Committee

- Work on the SDNPAs Local Plan was proceeding with the involvement of parishes. The need for affordable housing was a priority.
- The HCA offered a possible source of funding but also provided a route to different parts of the housing sector. The Community Land Trust had been engaged in discussions.
- A verbal update following the Landowners Conference could be given at the February P&P Committee meeting

91. It was proposed and seconded to vote to:

- Acknowledge the recommendations of the task and Finish Group
- Agree to an extension of the Group until the Authority AGM to allow a business case and project plan to be prepared
- Receive a verbal update on the progress at the February meeting
- Agree the commissioning of specialist advice
- Note the details for the Landowners Conference

Following a vote the proposal was carried

92. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

1. Acknowledged the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group as set out in Section 2 of report PP24/16.
2. Agreed to:
 - i. An extension of term for the Task and Finish Group until the NPA meeting on 11 July 2017 as set out in Section 3 of report PP24/16, to allow a business case and project plan to be prepared for the delivery of its recommendations for presentation as an interim verbal update at the February P&P meeting and thereafter to the July meeting of the NPA for approval.
 - ii. The group commissioning expert advice to assist officers in producing the business case.
3. Noted the Landowners Conference to be hosted by the SDNPA on 3 February 2017 to help raise awareness of the shortage of affordable housing in the South Downs National Park as set out in Appendix 4 of report PP24/16.

93. Heather Baker and Gill Mattock left the meeting at 2.53pm.

ITEM 12: ACCESS RESTRICTION AT CHERITON

94. The Director of Countryside Policy and Management informed the Committee that:

- Public consultation on the Access Restriction had taken place in two stages: the first concerned the existing Direction and the second, the proposed variation to extend the date by a further six years.
- The South Downs Local Access Forum were one of the consultees and no objections were received. A detailed report was prepared recommending the Authority gave a new direction to restrict access to Cheriton Wood and to undertake the appropriate statutory notifications.
- The Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Policy and Programme Committee had considered the report and made the decision to endorse the recommendations as follows:
 1. That the SDNPA gave a new direction to restrict access to access land at Cheriton Wood and to undertake the appropriate statutory notifications.
 2. That the Authority scheduled a review for no later than six months before the fifth anniversary of the direction.

The decision had been taken under delegated authority but was required to be reported to

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the P&P Committee.

PROJECTS AND FUNDING

ITEM 13: NOTIFICATION OF PROJECT APPROVAL

95. The Committee considered report PP25/16 by the Performance & Project Manager and commented that the butterfly project had been a great success and was a good example of projects that the Authority should be seen to be supporting.
96. **RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the projects approved since the last P&P meeting.

ITEM 15: TO NOTE THE DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

97. Thursday 26 January 2017 at 2pm at the South Downs Centre.

CHAIR

The meeting closed at 3:04pm.