

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING 29 NOVEMBER 2016**

Held at Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst, West Sussex at 2pm

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Ken Bodfish	David Coldwell
Norman Dingemans	Janet Duncton	Mark Dunn	Neville Harrison
Barbara Holyome	Daniel Humphreys	Helen Jackson	Tom Jones
Gill Mattock	Robert Mocatta	Margaret Paren (Chair)	Karen Roberts
Sue Saville	Jim Sheppard	Amber Thacker	Pete West

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside Policy & Management), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Nigel Manvell (Chief Finance Officer), Robin Parr (Head of Governance), Rebecca Haynes (Governance Officer) & Alan Brough (Head of Business Services).

Also attended by: Robert Thain (Minerals and Waste Policy Lead) Andy Beattie (Countryside and Policy Manager –Wealden Heath) & Ruth James (Communications & Engagement Manager).

### **OPENING REMARKS**

99. The Chair informed those present that:

- The meeting was being webcast by the Authority and would be available for subsequent on-line viewing. Anyone entering the meeting was considered to have given consent to be filmed or recorded, and for the possible use of images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purpose
- 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 Authority and of the Park.
- Item 15-19 on the agenda were to note and would be taken as read unless any Authority Member had any matters relating to those items they wished discussed.
  - The Governance Committee Chair wished to make a comment on Item 18.

### **ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES**

100. Apologies were received from Heather Baker, Jo Carr, Vaughan Clarke, Philip Ede, Doug Jones, Gary Marsh & Ian Phillips.

### **ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

101. In regard to item 10; the following members declared a Public Service Interest as a member of one of the local authorities the SDNPA had delegated host arrangements with:

Member Name	As a member of
Mark Dunn	Chichester District Council
Daniel Humphreys	Worthing Borough Council
Tom Jones	Lewes District Council
Robert Mocatta	East Hants District Council
David Coldwell	Horsham District Council
Amber Thacker	Winchester City Council

102. Gill Mattock declared a Public Service Interest in item 8 as an Eastbourne Borough Council Cabinet member and was part of the decision making body in regard to Downland sales in Eastbourne. Gill also declared a Public Service Interest in item 10 as a member of Eastbourne Borough Council and that the Council were a potential Host Authority for the SDNPA.
103. Sebastian Anstruther declared a Personal Interest in item 10 and a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Item 11. Sebastian would withdraw from the meeting room during deliberation and decision on both of those items.
104. Janet Duncton declared a Public Service Interest in item 11 as a member of West Sussex County Council.
105. Neville Harrison declared a public service interest during item 13 as detailed in minute 135

### ITEM 3 - MINUTES

106. The minutes of the Authority meeting held on 22 September 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

107. Minute 70: Landowners Conference: The aim of the conference was to bring together landowners, Rural Housing Providers, Planning Officers and specialist legal and financial experts to promote and aid delivery of rural affordable housing.  
Flyers for the conference had been tabled. The conference would take place on Friday 3 February 2017 at the South Downs Centre. SDNPA Members were encouraged to promote the conference.
108. Minute 86: Financial Services Contract: An Award notice had been issued and the contract documents were with Brighton & Hove City Council for signature.

### ITEM 5- URGENT MATTERS

109. There were none.

### ITEM 6 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

110. Deborah Hanson spoke on behalf of Steyning Parish Council and as a local resident against the inclusion of Ham Farm; in regard to Item 11 Proposed Submission Draft Joint West Sussex Minerals Local Plan. She commented on:
- Concerns in regard to flooding, light and water pollution & noise
  - The site would be visible from the SDNP and would have an adverse effect on the neighbourhood
  - There were other alternative more suitable sites
- A question was asked as to how many members had viewed the Ham Farm site.
111. Paul Wilton spoke on behalf of the Steyning Quarry Action Group against the inclusion of Ham Farm; in regard to Item 11 Proposed Submission Draft Joint West Sussex Minerals Local Plan. He commented on:
- The Ham Farm Site was not an appropriate site
  - The increase in lorry movements
  - Safety issues regarding current traffic levels on the A283.
112. Robert Cheesman spoke on behalf of the South Downs Society (SDS) in favour of the recommendations for Item 13. Entry/Boundary signage for the National Park. He commented:
- The introduction of signage in the National Park was welcomed and a long time coming
  - Members of the public had commented on the lack of NP signage
  - There was no need to have all roads signposted and 20 signs were deemed sufficient
  - The SDS were in support of decluttering
  - Wood might not be the most appropriate material for the signage, and the Society were happy to work with the Authority on designs

### ITEM 7 AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE

113. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair on the following:  
NPE: The October meeting agreed a revised and prioritised Business Plan that took into account the European exit. A Future of Farming Group was established of which Sebastian Anstruther was a member, and a new post was agreed to manage the additional work created by Brexit. Lord Gardiner attended part of the meeting. Discussions with the Minister included the:
- Defra Eight Point Plan
  - European exit
  - Importance of national parks to Government.
- The Chair gave her thanks to the SDNPAs Chief Executive Officer in his role as Lead National Park Officer for NPE; the position he held during 2016.

#### Events:

The Chair attended the:

- 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Campaign for National Parks. The Park Protector Award was accepted on behalf of the SDNPA. An introductory meeting with the new CNP Chair had been scheduled in December 2016
- 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Natural England celebrations
- AONB annual conference, which provided an opportunity to learn more about their work. A meeting with their Chair had been arranged for the New Year to discuss future cooperation across the protected landscape family.

Meetings: The Chair attended meetings with:

- Steve Brine the MP for Winchester, and Nick Herbert the MP for Arundel and the South Downs. At the meeting with Nick Herbert the Chair took the opportunity to express the Authority's disappointment with the approach taken by Highways England with the A27 east of Lewes proposals; he promised to raise the issue with the Minister for Transport
- The leaders of Lewes District Council and Chichester District Council
- Hampshire and West Sussex Parish meetings, where both meetings were well attended with a great deal of interest from Parish Council members

LPMWG: Site visits for the Local Plan were underway, with Hampshire and the western areas of West Sussex already undertaken. It was hoped that as many Members as possible were available to attend the east of West Sussex and East Sussex visits

#### Devolution:

- Mayor led Development Corporation on Teesside: The draft statutory instrument to transfer powers to the Mayor suggested the handover of the North York Moors NPA planning powers for the area of the National Park in the Teesside development area. Following a meeting between Lord Gardiner and his counterpart at CLG the issue was resolved and both ministers fully acknowledged the manifesto pledge to maintain the national protection of national parks and the North York Moors retain their Planning Powers.
- No devolution bids within the area of the SDNP were announced in the autumn statement and it seemed unlikely there would be any further news in the near future.

### **ITEM 8 - CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT**

114. Authority Members considered the report by the Chief Executive Officer (Report 23/16)

Secrets of the High Woods Revealed: With over 180 pages, the book included beautiful colour images and chapters written by a variety of authors including project volunteers, staff and consultants involved in the project. The book would be given free to volunteers on the project and would be available to purchase from the SDC reception for £10 each. A PDF version of the book would soon be available on the Authority website.

Downland Estate: The current programme of sales were currently on hold pending a request for further investigations from the opposition on Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC). The SDNPA understood from officers at that the pause would be temporary. SDNPA officers continued to be active behind the scenes to protect the downland estates in both Eastbourne and Brighton.

In all meetings SDNPA officers had made clear the concerns about the potential impacts of any sales/transfers on the special qualities of the National Park, and that many possible changes in land use after a sale might be agricultural in nature and would not come within the planning regime. The Authority had been assured that there was no intention within BHCC to look at sales of land within its core downland estate. Any such move would, of course, be of great concern to the SDNPA.

South Downs Documentary: Big Wave, a film company in Chichester filmed a beautiful, one-hour documentary about the South Downs National Park which had been bought by the BBC. The documentary would be shown on BBC4 and a premier will take place in Chichester on 11 February 2017.

Local Plan: The 3 parish workshops had taken place. Over 154 parish representatives representing 64 parishes attended as well as representatives from 5 Borough, District, & County Councils.

Viewshed Analysis: The [Viewshed study](#) has won a Strategic Landscape Planning Award at the 2016 Landscape Institute Awards. SDNPA officers Roni Craddock and Chris Fairbrother commissioned the Viewshed project and worked jointly with LUC to make it such an outstanding piece of work.

Communicating South Downs: The resource would be officially launched on 12 December and this link was available on the top right corner of the Authority website. The toolkit is a resource available for all local businesses and included free access to the use of the Shared Identity.

115. Authority Members commented:

- Downland Estate: The longer term consequences of the sale of downland could be significant for the South Downs and the SDNPA should continue to explore options with the local authorities to protect it in perpetuity.

There was a need to ensure that any public estates continued to provide public access. The public had a misunderstanding of the National Park status and many believed all downland was protected by the SDNPA.

The SDNPA might wish to consider a position statement in regard to downland sales across the SDNP.

Covenants on land sales would provide a greater degree of control than relying on the planning system. The downland landscape was iconic and a change of use would dramatically change the shape of the landscape.

The South Downs was a living working landscape and the Authority should respect the fact that landowners need to make a living. .

116. In response to questions, officers clarified:

- In regard to the sale of downland at Eastbourne and Brighton/Hove; the Authority had written and met with both local authorities to express the concern of the SDNPA and to discuss the principle of continued protection. The Authority was willing to investigate the use of covenants on sites and discussed the importance of whole estate plans. The Authority does not support the sale by public bodies of downland within the NP purely to generate capital receipts.

117. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority noted the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority since the last report.

## ITEM 9 - EUROPEAN EXIT

118. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Deputy Chair of the Authority on the outcomes of the recent European Exit Working Group meeting.

The group concluded:

- The Authority was a trailblazing National Park and could be in a position to pilot & trial a new model of local delivery for a future Agri-Environment scheme post-Brexit
- The SDNPA might be one of many organisations approaching Defra with a pilot approach for delivery of services
- The Authority would only approach Defra as part of an agreed joint approach with NPE. However it would be necessary to get a firm steer and clear actions from the NPE Future of Farming Group
- The Authority would need to provide Defra with a proposal at some stage in order to seek a mandate and funding for a pilot scheme.

### Pilot Stage 1

- Analysis of current levels of support for farmers from Pillars 1 and 2 of the CAP and any other schemes and assessment of whether better outcomes could be delivered with the same level of public funding
- Engagement: involving farmers (using the farm clusters) in shaping proposals for shaping a new scheme

- Based on the above, assess the feasibility of running a full pilot (Stage 2)

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## **Stage 2**

- Run a trial and assess outcomes to feed into design of national scheme post 2020.

119. Authority Member Sebastian Anstruther was invited to provide an update on the recent NPE Future of Farming Group meeting, which he is a member:
- The group had its first meeting on 21 November and is at an early stage of discussions. It is some way from developing any form of policy proposals to NPE although it was clear that all 10 National Parks in England were keen to influence the design of a new agri environment policy for England, which might in turn develop into an opportunity for National Parks to deliver schemes in their area.

120. Authority member Sebastian Anstruther left the meeting room

## **ITEM 10 - DELEGATED HOST AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS**

121. Authority Members considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report 24/16).

122. Authority Members commended:

- Their concern that greater savings might be at the cost of the quality of decisions
- The South Downs Local Plan would be in place within 3 years therefore caution should be observed if wishing to extend contracts beyond that time

123. In response to questions, officers clarified:

- All Host Authorities would start the new contracts at the same time, which was why a 3 month extension was suggested
- Arrangements were in place to take in house the case load, appeal and enforcement work currently carried out by Mid Sussex DC
- The Idox system was designed to track individual applications therefore payment on a case by case basis would be a relatively simple process
- There were options available to the Authority for outsourcing planning applications within the private sector or with local authorities taking on another authority case load, should services be returned to the SDNPA that couldn't be supported in house.

124. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority

- 1) Noted the position and progress that is being made in relation to the negotiations with the eight current host authorities in connection with potential new delegated arrangements from 1 April 2017 onwards;
- 2) Agreed that, in principle, the South Downs National Park Authority enters new Agreements under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable the willing host authorities to continue to provide a quality development management service for up to three years initially until 31 March 2020 and thereafter for a further 2 years up until 31 March 2022, if the arrangements are working effectively.
- 3) Delegated authority to the Director of Planning to agree to extend the current host authority arrangements on the current (2016/17) payment terms, if considered appropriate, for a period of no more than 6 months up to 30 September 2017, in order to robustly complete the above negotiations.
- 4) Delegated authority to the Director of Planning to negotiate, complete and sign the Agreements referred to in 2) above, subject to any substantial issues being referred back to the Authority for consideration

## **ITEM 11 - PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT JOINT WEST SUSSEX MINERALS LOCAL PLAN**

125. Authority Members considered a report by the Director of Planning (Report 25/16) and [Update Sheet](#). It was stated that in regard to:

- Ham Farm; the Authority had no substantial evidence that any issues raised could not be mitigated or satisfactorily addressed at the planning application stage. The removal of the Ham Farm allocation could put the Plan at risk in regard to the requirement to plan for the steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals (soft sand) and therefore

paragraph 724 had been revised following the recommendation made by West Sussex select committee to strengthen supporting text to ensure concerns were met.

- Horncroft Site and Silica Sand proposals in general: the Authority had not seen any information that would cause a change to the proposed strategy

126. Authority Members commented:

- It would be inappropriate for the Authority to be involved in matters on areas outside the SDNP boundary
- Members of the Authority had been heavily involved in the development of the Plan with regular workshops, (including joint workshops with West Sussex) and at Planning Committee. The Plan was a good example of joint working
- The Plan was a good Technical report with no new sites within the SDNP.

127. In response to questions officers clarified:

- West Sussex County Council would consider the Plan for submission on 16 December 2016
- In light of national planning guidance, the only option available to Minerals Planning Authorities was for all hydrocarbon development proposals (whether unconventional or conventional) to be addressed through a policy such as 7a. The only exception to the rule (by virtue of the Infrastructure Act 2015) was hydraulic fracking which was detailed in policy 7b. The Authority would work with relevant statutory consultees to address any hydrocarbon development proposals as they were submitted.

128. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority:

1. Agreed that the proposed submission Joint West Sussex Minerals Local Plan be published for representations on the legality and soundness of the Plan (Regulations 19 and 20) and subsequently be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public (Regulation 22); and
2. Agreed that minor changes relating to amendments, updates, typographical errors and re-ordering of the Proposed Submission Joint West Sussex Minerals Local Plan prior to submission to the Secretary of State and during the Examination in Public will be made under delegated powers by the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the National Park Authority and the appropriate representative of West Sussex County Council

129. Amber Thacker and Pete West left the meeting room and Sebastian Anstruther re-joined the meeting at 4:33pm

## **ITEM 12 - A27 EAST OF LEWES CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

130. Amber Thacker re-joined the meeting at 4:35pm

131. Authority Members considered a report by the Countryside and Policy Manager (Wealden Heaths) (Report 26/16) and commented:

- The A27 required improvement, however the current proposals did not improve the current issues faced by A27 users
- The opportunity Members had to visit the site was very informative.

132. In response to questions officers clarified:

- Government had recently made some £1.25bn available of which £1bn was to help improve local transport opportunities and £250m available to deal with pinch points around the country.
- It was not possible for the Authority to take a considered decision regarding all road junctions at this stage given the level of information provided by Highways England.

133. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority:-

1. Agree that Members and appropriate officers continue to be engaged with the specific consultation and technical groups that HE have set up, to ensure NP purposes are fully represented and the need for a strategic approach for the development of transportation routes in the South East was made.
2. Noted the evidence base provided on the impacts of the proposed A27 works on the Special Qualities

3. Recommended that, on the basis of the Highways England evidence so far presented and our analysis of it,
  - a. All Selmeston options, 1,4 and 6 are unacceptable, for reasons set out in the supporting evidence
  - b. The provision of an east to west non-motorised user path is supported
  - c. As currently presented that the junction proposals within the National Park would have significant adverse impacts so the SDNPA will on a case by case basis call for better design led solutions for mitigation
  - d. Urge Highways England to look more comprehensively at other, lower impact, measures that could improve the route in terms of traffic flow and safety
  - e. Work with HE to ensure their nationally designated funds are also utilised for maximum benefit locally
4. Delegated to the Director of Countryside Policy and Management - in consultation with the Chair of the P&P Committee and the Authority Chair - to submit a response to the Highways England Consultation
5. Called for a more strategic consideration by all authorities and agencies to the cumulative long-term impacts of proposed infrastructure developments on the Special Qualities of the National Park and its setting

### ITEM 13 - ENTRY/BOUNDARY SIGNAGE FOR THE NATIONAL PARK

134. Authority Members considered a report by the Communications and Engagement Manager (Report 27/16), [presentation](#) and [update sheet](#), which detailed a revised recommendation and commented:
  - They were keen to have signage in the National Park and there was a need for decluttering
  - Their support for the project however a maintenance programme should form part of the plan
  - Members of the public had expressed their confusion as to not always being aware of when they were in the National Park and something should be done to rectify that
  - Wooden signs might be impractical and the South Downs had a strong ironworks heritage
  - The full £185k should be allocated for the initial rollout of 20 signs. Further funding for additional signage would require approval
  - The shared identity was starting to be recognisable by the public and signage would help to embed this, however the identity might not yet be strong enough to use without text
  - Some local authorities might wish to contribute to signage in their area
  - Some Parishes incorporate the speed limit within their signage and the SDNPA could look at those examples as part of decluttering
  - The Communications team were commended as a practicable approach had been presented. The next stages should also be considered.
135. Neville Harrison declared a Public Service Interest in this item as a member of the South Downs Society.
136. Daniel Humphreys left the meeting at 4:06pm
137. In response to questions, Officers clarified:
  - Safety would need to be considered for any signage along highways
  - Once in place the Citizenship Panel would be able to give feedback on the impact of any signage
  - Signage needed to be in the correct position and not everywhere in order to add value.
138. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the revised officers' recommendations and to amend recommendation 4 to include approving expenditure up to £185,000 from strategic reserves. Following a vote the proposal was carried.
139. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority:
  - 1) Agreed the Location principles set out at Paragraph 7 of report 27/16

- 2) Agreed the Design principles set out at Paragraph 6 of report 27/16 and endorsed the indicative designs presented at the meeting.
- 3) Approved the next steps as set out at Paragraph 9 of report 27/16.
- 4) Approved expenditure up to a maximum of £185,000 to be funded from Strategic reserves for entry/boundary signage for the National Park
- 5) Agreed that the Authority should actively pursue the principle of decluttering when rolling out entry signage

140. Alun Alesbury, and David Coldwell left the meeting at 4:30pm

#### **ITEM 14 - INDEPENDENT PERSON APPOINTMENT**

141. Authority Members considered a report by the Head of Governance (Report 28/16) and the revised, tabled recommendation.
142. A Member commented that; the protocol for dealing with a complaint against a member would need to be revised if 2 Independent Persons were appointed along with their roles
143. **RESOLVED:** That the Authority:
  1. Appointed the person named in Appendix I as an Independent Person of the Authority to take effect from 10 December 2016;
  2. Agreed that the term of appointment be for four years;
  3. Agreed that the Independent Person receive no payment other than travelling and subsistence expenses at Authority-approved rates; and
  4. Delegate authority to the Governance Committee to oversee the process of recruitment of a second Independent Person, including the ability to establish a selection panel from amongst its members to interview candidates and make a recommendation to the Authority for appointment.

#### **ITEMS 15 - 19 WERE FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

##### **ITEM 15 - Local Plan Update**

144. The Authority noted the progress on the South Downs Local Plan

##### **ITEM 16 - PLANNING COMMITTEE**

145. The Authority noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on the 8 September and 13 October 2016

##### **ITEM 17 - POLICY & PROGRAMME**

146. The Authority noted the unconfirmed minutes of the Policy & Programme Committee meeting held on the 1 November 2016.

##### **ITEM 18 - GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

147. The Authority noted the unconfirmed minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on the 29 September 2016.
148. Attention was drawn to the fact the Governance Committee had commented (in regard to the Audit results report) the unqualified opinion was an achievement in which the Authority should be proud and thanks were expressed to officers involved in achieving this. It was the third year that the Authority had received good quality unqualified financial statements

##### **ITEM 19 - REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO EXTERNAL BODIES**

149. The Authority noted the following reports:
  - Sustainable Communities Fund.
  - South Downs Local Access Forum
  - Hampshire Rural Forum.

#### **Chair**

The meeting closed at 4:38pm