

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY AUTHORITY MEETING**

Held at 2.15pm on 22 March 2018 at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Heather Baker	Tim Burr
David Coldwell	Norman Dingemans	Chris Dowling	Janet Duncton
Mark Dunn	Neville Harrison	Barbara Holyome	Roger Huxstep
Doug Jones	Gill Mattock	Robert Mocatta	Russell Oppenheimer
Margaret Paren (Chair)	Ian Phillips	Pete West	

SDNPA Officers:

Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive), Andrew Lee (Director of Countryside and Policy Management), Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Nigel Manvell (Chief Finance Officer), Louise Read (Monitoring Officer), Alan Brough (Head of Business Services), Robin Parr (Head of Governance), Richard Sandiford (Senior Committee and Member Services Officer).

Also attended by:

Lucy Howard (Planning Policy Manager), Matthew Bates (Local Plan Lead), Chris Paterson (Communities Lead), Veronica Craddock (Infrastructure and Environment Strategy Lead), Nigel James (Countryside and Policy Manager).

### **OPENING REMARKS**

388. The Chair informed those present that:

- The meeting was being web-cast by the National Park Authority and would be available for subsequent on-line viewing. By coming into the Meeting Room members of the public were considered to have given their consent to be filmed or recorded, and for the possible use of images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.
- SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and acted in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

389. The Authority was asked to note Agenda Items 19, 20 and 21. These items were taken as read as no Members indicated they wished to discuss anything related to these items.

### **ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

390. Apologies were received from Ken Bodfish, Philip Ede, Helen Jackson, Gary Marsh and Sue Saville.

### **ITEM 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

391. The following declarations of interest were made for Agenda Item 12:

- Alun Aylesbury - Public Service Interest as a Member of Stoughton Parish Council and the National Trust.
- Sebastian Anstruther - Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as the owner of land proposed for housing allocation within the plan and withdrew from the meeting for Agenda Item 12.
- Heather Baker - Public Service Interest as a Member of the RSPB and Sussex Wildlife Trust.
- Tim Burr - Public Service Interest as a Member of Coldwaltham Parish Council and Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as the owner of land impacted by the proposed settlement boundary and withdrew from the meeting for Agenda Item 12.
- David Coldwell - Public Service Interest as a Member of Horsham District Council.
- Norman Dingemans - Public Service Interest as a Member of Arun District Council.

- Chris Dowling - Public Service Interest as a Member of East Sussex County Council and the National Trust and a Personal Interest as his spouse was Deputy Leader of Wealden District Council.
- Janet Duncton - Public Service Interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council.
- Mark Dunn - Public Service Interest as a Member of Chichester District Council.
- Neville Harrison - Public Service Interest as the Chair of Southease Parish Meeting, a Member of the National Trust, the South Downs Society and Sussex Wildlife Trust.
- Barbara Holyome - Public Service Interest as a Member of Bramdean and Hinton Ampner Parish Council, the RSPB, Butterfly Conservation and Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.
- Roger Huxstep - Public Service Interest as a Member of Winchester City Council.
- Doug Jones - Public Service Interest as a Member of Buriton Parish Council and Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as the owner of land impacted by the proposed settlement boundary and withdrew from the meeting for Agenda Item 12.
- Gill Mattock - Public Service Interest as a Member of Eastbourne District Council and the National Trust.
- Robert Mocatta - Public Service Interest as a Member of East Hampshire District Council, Hampshire County Council, the National Trust and the RSPB.
- Russell Oppenheimer - Public Service Interest as a Member of Hampshire County Council, the National Trust and the Woodland Trust.
- Margret Paren - Public Service Interest as a Member of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
- Ian Phillips - Public Service Interest as a Member of the National Trust.

### **ITEM 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2017**

392. The minutes were approved as a correct record of the Authority meeting held on 19 December 2017 subject to the following amendments:

- List of those in attendance – Surname ‘Mocatta’ was spelt incorrectly.
- Minute 358 - Neville Harrison left the meeting.

### **ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING**

393. There were none.

### **ITEM 5. URGENT MATTERS**

394. There were none.

### **ITEM 6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

395. There were no public speakers.

### **ITEM 7. NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

396. The Authority was asked to consider whether, in respect of Agenda Item 22 the public, including the press, should have been excluded from the meeting on the basis that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if a member of the public were present during the items there would have been disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. This conclusion was reached on the basis that whilst there was a public interest in maintaining transparency of Authority proceedings and ensuring public understanding it was felt that on balance this was outweighed by the requirement of the National Park Authority to be able to take legal advice and enable the members of the Park Authority to fully consider the implications of its actions or proposed actions.

397. The Authority was asked to consider whether, in respect of Agenda Items 23 and 24 the public, including the press, should have been excluded from the meeting on the basis that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if a member of the public were present during the items there would have been disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Authority, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exempt information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. This conclusion was reached on the basis that whilst there was a public interest in maintaining transparency of Authority proceedings in relation to commercial activities and the business of the Authority it was felt that on balance this was outweighed by the requirement of the National Park Authority to be able to discuss commercial activities and its business and fully consider the implications of its actions or proposed actions without commercially sensitive or confidential information being released into the public domain.
398. **RESOLVED:** It was resolved that the meeting would move into private session at the appropriate time to consider Agenda Items 22, 23 and 24.

#### **ITEM 8. AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE**

399. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair on the following:
- Attendance at the February meeting of NPUK where agenda item 24 of this meeting and structural changes to the organisation were discussed. The company would cease to operate in its current form, instead moving to a commissioning model to operate more efficiently.
  - Attendance at a meeting of the Shadow Board of Transport for the South East where a response to Highways England's consultation on the Strategic Road Network and the Major Road Network was agreed.
  - A meeting with Peter Kyle, MP for Hove, and Baroness Jones of Whitchurch, the spokesperson for Defra matters in the House of Lords, where farming issues and the importance of the South Downs to the people of Brighton were discussed.
  - The Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS) AGM which was an opportunity to thank the VRS for their work. Thanks from the VRS Chair were relayed to Members who had given talks to outside bodies and contributed their fee to the VRS.
  - The Annual Schools Conference which had over 100 teachers in attendance and had an inspirational keynote speech from Prof. Justin Dillon, President of the National Associations for Environmental Education.
  - Catch up meetings with Caroline Horrill, Leader of Winchester City Council, where planning, the rural economy, affordable housing and tourism were discussed; and Tony Dignum, Head of Chichester District Council, where meeting the South Downs National Park's unmet housing need and a statement of common ground to accompany the SDNP Local Plan were discussed.
  - Secretary of State appointed Members of the SDNPA. Margaret Paren and Sebastian Anstruther were given two year extensions to their Membership and Ken Bodfish was given a one year extension. Sue Saville would leave as a Member of the Authority at the end of March 2018 and was thanked for her work during her time as a Member particularly in her role as Chair of the Member Group that oversaw the development of the shared identity.

#### **ITEM 9. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT**

400. Authority Members considered the report from the Chief Executive (Report NPA01/18).
401. The Chief Executive updated Members on matters related to paragraph 3.5 and the revised NPPF, and his appointment as Joint Chair of the Rural Housing Network. Members were also strongly encouraged to attend the SDNPA Member Days during 2018.
402. Members made the following comments:
- Would each National Park be providing a response to the NPPF consultation?

- Whether the Chief Executive represented the National Park in his role as Joint Chair of the Rural Housing Network?
- Whether information being reported about the National Park Trust to the Authority meeting, as in paragraph 6.4, compromised the Trust's independence.
- Regarding paragraph 4.6, whether signage not on the highway could have been installed sooner?
- Whether the comments made in the NPPF that pre-commencement conditions should be avoided would have impacted the Authority's ability to conserve and enhance the National Park?
- It was good to see how much money had already been raised for the South Downs Way. Because of the pressure on the South Downs Way maybe visitors should also be directed to other routes to further explore the National Park.

403. In response to questions Members were advised:

- There was likely to be an umbrella response from National Parks England to the NPPF consultation which individual National Parks would then have built on with their own response.
- The appointment as Joint Chair of the Rural Housing Network was on behalf of National Parks England.
- As maintenance of the South Downs Way was the responsibility of the Authority the information in paragraph 6.4 was reported to both the Trust and the Authority.
- The schedule for installing signage not on the highway would be reviewed.
- That comments on pre-commencement conditions may feature in the Authority's response to the NPPF.

404. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority since the last report.

#### **ITEM 10. PROGRESS IN RELATION TO THE SUBMISSION OF THE SOUTH DOWNS LOCAL PLAN FOR EXAMINATION**

405. Sebastian Anstruther and Tim Burr withdrew from the meeting at 14.50.

406. Doug Jones addressed the meeting as a member of the public on the subject of omission sites and that the Authority, and Officers, should be well prepared to defend the omission of sites from the Local Plan during examination.

407. Doug Jones withdrew from the meeting at 14.53.

408. Authority Members considered the report from the Planning Policy Manager (Report NPA02/18) and were advised:

- Of an update to paragraphs 1.8 and 3.8, that barrister Toby Fisher who was advising the Authority on Ashdown Forest was moving to New Zealand so the Authority would be guided by his replacement at examination.
- That the Pre-Submission consultation ran for 8 weeks at the end of last year. Over 2,500 responses from about 570 individuals and organisations were received. The Authority did not consider that there were any substantive objections on matters of soundness or legal compliance that would have required major changes to the plan. The Authority would therefore submit the plan for examination without another round of consultation.
- That some changes had been made to park-wide policies and allocations either as updates or in response to representations. For example, allocations that had already been built out were deleted. Also, a number of changes had been made to the agriculture and forestry policies.
- That Policy SD28: Affordable Homes remained the same despite objections that it went beyond Government policy. The policy sought to maximise the provision of affordable

homes for local people in this National Park in line with our duty and was backed by robust local evidence.

409. The Chair thanked the Planning Policy team for their work on the Local Plan.

410. The Chair also advised Members that, following discussion with officers regarding the main risk to the Local Plan, which was from the High Court decision on Ashdown Forest, all possible risk reduction factors, both internal and external, had been put in place. Accordingly the risk factor of 'medium' stated in the report could now be downgraded to 'low'.

411. As part of the risk reduction measures the Chair read the following statement in relation to Ashdown Forest.

*The air quality-related HRA work for Lewes Downs and Ashdown Forest has been expanded and updated since the Pre-Submission consultation last year. This work has been closely examined by NPA officers and the barrister, Toby Fisher. The conclusions for the work remain the same namely that 'no adverse effect upon the integrity of Ashdown Forest SAC is expected to result from development provided by the South Downs Local Plan/Lewes JCS, even in combination with other plans and projects.' The main updates in regard to Ashdown Forest/Lewes Downs are as follows:*

- *Modelling updated to include ammonia.*
- *Sensitivity testing on nitrogen deposition velocities.*
- *Model verification on measured data provided in the December 2017 AQC report for Wealden District Council.*
- *Investigation of emissions for the years between 2017 and 2033 to confirm a consistent improving trend.*
- *Updated presentation of modelling data.*
- *Further detail on the relationship between nitrogen deposition and its effect on heathland vegetation.*

*Other changes to the HRA in response to the Wealden representation were an expanded discussions on the Pevensey Levels SAC/Ramsar site and the modelled scenarios presented in the AQC report compared to that in the AECOM modelling.*

*Finally, other updates have been made to the HRA to reflect amendments in the plan itself and comments/data provided by consultees such as Natural England and the wildlife trust that are relevant to HRA matters. The Authority's air quality consultants have advised, in light of all of the further work, that there is no reasonable scientific doubt about their conclusion that the proposed South Downs Local Plan will have no adverse effect on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.*

*The expanded and updated HRA will be published as part of the core document library on the submission of the Local Plan for examination.*

412. The Director of Planning advised Members that the report was to note only rather than for approval as Members had resolved at the July 2017 Authority meeting that the Local Plan would be submitted under authority delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, unless major changes to the Local Plan were required. As there were no major changes made to the Local Plan, Members were receiving a progress update at this meeting.

413. Members made the following comments:

- This unique Local Plan was very welcome.
- Would Members be notified about the dates and location of the hearings during the examination and whether Members would be able to attend?
- It was an interesting and imaginative plan and a great triumph. The Statements of Common Ground were very important in recognising that the Authority could not meet the housing need in the National Park without damaging the landscape for which it was designated.

414. In response to questions Members were advised:
- That the schedule of hearings during the examination would be published on the Authority's website and Members would also be provided with the schedule.
415. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note progress in relation to the submission of the South Downs Local Plan for examination.
416. Sebastian Anstruther, Tim Burr and Doug Jones returned to the meeting at 15.11.

**ITEM 11. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF "A GREENER FUTURE: OUR 25 PLAN TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT"**

417. Authority Members considered the report from the Director of Countryside and Policy Management (Report NPA03/18).
418. The Chair advised Members that National Parks England would discuss what National Parks can offer in response to the 25 year plan at its board meeting in April 2018.
419. Members made the following comments:
- It was encouraging to see net environmental benefits being reflected in the NPPF.
  - Is there still concern about pollution from Gatwick Airport?
420. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The work around persistent bio-accumulative endocrine disrupting pollutants was still an issue and was now reflected in policy. A comprehensive range of tools to address plastic pollution was also highlighted in the 25 year plan.
421. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note this report, the summary and analysis attached as Appendix 1, and the potential implications of the 25 year plan for National Parks in general and the SDNPA in particular.

**ITEM 12. BUDGET 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

422. Authority Members considered the report from the Chief Financial Officer (Report NPA04/18).
423. Pete West left the meeting at 15.20.
424. Members made the following comments:
- Whether income from donations and sponsorships, on page 38 of the report, should have been reported to the Authority or to the South Downs National Park Trust.
  - Clarification was requested on why no spend had been projected against certain Departments on page 43 of the report.
425. In response to questions Members were advised:
- Donations and sponsorship mentioned on page 38 were solely to the Authority.
  - Page 43 of the report reflected year to year budget movement rather than the total budget.
426. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Approve the 2018/19 Revenue Budget as detailed in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.7 and Appendix 1 to this report.
  2. Approve the Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23 as set out in paragraphs 3.8 to 3.10 and Appendix 2 of this report.
  3. Approve the use of Reserves as set out in paragraphs 3.11 to 3.15 and Appendix 3 of this report.
  4. Note the Medium Term Financial Strategy and resources projection as set out in paragraphs 3.16 to 3.20 and Appendix 4 of this report.

**ITEM 13. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENTS AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

427. Authority Members considered the report and presentation from the Chief Financial Officer (Report NPA05/18).

428. Members were advised that an amended appendix 3 was tabled due to an incorrect reference being included to money market funds which were no longer accessible. This amendment had no financial consequences for the Authority.
429. Members made the following comments:
- The information circulated to Members following the query raised at Policy and Resources Committee relating to the 0.05% maximum indicator risk was very useful.
  - Were the Authority's funds held in a collective investment scheme with Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) and if so did they require a licence from the FCA? Also, how secure the Authority's funds were while invested in BHCC?
430. In response to questions Members were advised:
- BHCC were not required to hold any FCA licence as they were not offering a commercially available product. Although there was a theoretical risk to the Authority in depositing funds with BHCC, this risk was considered very low as BHCC is not only a public sector body but also had no history of default on which the probability of default is calculated; BHCC would therefore come out with a risk factor at 100% i.e. very low risk.
431. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement 2018/19 and the Treasury Management Practices 2018/19 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2;
  2. Note the amended Appendix 3 tabled at the meeting; and
  3. Approve the Annual Investment Strategy 2018/19, including the benchmark risk factor of 0.05%, as set out in the amended Appendix 3.

#### **ITEM 14. ENDORESEMENT OF NON-PLANNING RELATED COMMUNITY LED PLANS**

432. Authority Members considered the report from the Head of Governance (Report NPA 06/18).
433. Members made the following comments:
- Once the Policy and Resources Committee endorsed a plan what kind of weight would it have been given by the SDNPA as the Planning Authority?
  - Where did the initiative lay for parish plans to be produced and then brought before the Authority for adoption?
  - This paper could have led to possible confusions; when a non-planning related document was endorsed did it not then become a planning related document?
434. In response to questions Members were advised:
- How much weight an endorsed plan would be given was decided by the Planning Officer, Planning Committee or Inspector when considering an application.
  - The onus was on the parish council to produce the plan and they were encouraged to approach the Authority at an early stage.
435. A counter recommendation was proposed to withdraw the paper for the matter to be given further consideration.
436. The counter recommendation was not seconded, hence was not resolved by the committee.
437. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Agree that the Terms of Reference of the Policy and Resources Committee contained within Appendix 4 of the Authority's Standing Orders for Regulation of Authority Proceedings and Business be amended to include:  
"to consider, and where the Committee considers it appropriate, endorse non-planning related community led plans, including Parish Plans, Market Town Health Checks and Landscape Character Assessments".
  2. Agree that paragraph 1.2 of the Terms of Reference of the Planning Committee

contained within Appendix 4 of the Authority's Standing Orders for Regulation of Authority Proceedings and Business be amended to include the words:

"but excluding non-planning related community led plans"; and

3. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make these amendments to the Authority's Standing Orders and to republish them.

**ITEM 15. CHANGES TO PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN TASK AND FINISH GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

438. Authority Members considered the report from the Head of Governance (Report NPA07/18).
439. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to agree the changes to the Terms of Reference of the Partnership Management Plan Review Task and Finish Group as set out at paragraph 3.1 of this report.

**ITEM 16. PROCESS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

440. Authority Members considered the report from the Head of Governance (Report NPA 08/18).
441. Members made the following comments:
  - Were there any options for staggering replacement Independent Members?
  - After 8 years as an Independent Member the person possibly becomes less independent. If the Independent Member who had been a Member for 4 years wanted to be reappointed that would have been a satisfactory way to stagger the replacement.
442. In response to questions Members were advised:
  - Both Independent Members were eligible for reappointment.
443. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
  1. Delegate authority to the Head of Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Appointments, Management and Standards Committee, to undertake a recruitment exercise for the positions of Independent Member of the Authority's Policy and Resources Committee, including the approval of any documentation considered necessary and the taking of all other appropriate steps in carrying out the recruitment exercise and, if required, subsequent recruitment exercises; and
  2. Delegate authority to the Appointments, Management and Standards Committee to undertake such selection exercise(s) as it considers appropriate for the positions of Independent Member of the Authority's Policy and Resources Committee, and to make a recommendation to the Authority for the appointment of up to two Independent Members.

**ITEM 17. RESPONSE TO HIGHWAYS ENGLAND RE M3 JUNCTION 9**

444. The Chair informed Members that a draft covering letter had been tabled which would be included with the response.
445. Authority Members considered the report from the Wealden Heath Countryside and Policy Manager (Report NPA 09/18) presented by Veronica Craddock.
446. Members made the following comments:
  - Was one of the reasons for objection that Highways England (HE) were only consulting on one option?
  - It was possible that HE's consultation process was flawed.
  - The information from HE on the scheme and mitigation or compensation was very poor and must be improved for future schemes.
  - The improvements to the M3/A34 Junction were important both locally and nationally and the Authority was willing to work with HE to get the scheme right.



- There must be much greater dialogue in the future from HE about alternative options and mitigation or compensation.
  - The Authority's case for mitigation or compensation could have been strengthened by referring to net benefit as referred to in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the NPPF.
  - A few changes were needed to the draft covering letter and response to ensure the Authority was not telling HE how to build roads and to ensure consistency in the use of the terms mitigation and compensation.
447. In response to questions Members were advised:
- Although there was only a limited area in which the scheme could have been built the Authority was objecting on the basis that the major development test had not been met.
448. Amended recommendations were proposed and seconded.
449. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Note the proposed scheme for M3 Junction 9.
  2. Note the impacts on the Special Qualities of the South Downs National Park.
  3. To note the draft letter to Highways England (HE) tabled at the meeting
  4. To Delegate authority to the Director of Countryside and Policy Management in consultation with the National Park Authority Chair to approve the Authority's response to HE to take account of the Authority's comments and to include a request that HE produce a fully costed scheme of mitigation and compensation before selecting the preferred route and going to formal consultation to allow for proper consideration.
  5. Endorse officers' continued working with HE to ensure HE's nationally designated funds are utilised for maximum benefit locally.
  6. Agree that Members and appropriate officers continue to be engaged with the specific consultation and technical groups that HE have set up, to ensure National Park purposes are fully represented.

**ITEM 18a. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS UPDATE – AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

450. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair of the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group.
- The objective to increase affordable housing delivery was discussed and confirmed at the first meeting.
  - Prof. Peter Roberts attended the meeting as an advisor.
  - The group was reviewing all options to increase affordable housing delivery.
  - The Authority should support and focus on the cheapest available, which is rented social housing and could use S106 funds to support schemes with the aim of improving affordability by reducing rent levels. By targeting the use of the fund it was hoped to increase affordable housing provision by 20 houses each year.
  - The group was not recommending that the Authority should be building houses or competing in the sector.
  - Recommendations from the group would go before Policy and Resources Committee in May 2018.

**ITEM 18b. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS UPDATE – ENTERPRISE AND INVESTMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

451. Authority Members received a verbal report from a Member of the Enterprise and Investment Task and Finish Group.
- The group had continued its work on the basis that was set out at Policy and Resources Committee.
  - The group would bring forward recommendations based on evidence whether to proceed with investments or not.

**ITEM 18c. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS UPDATE – EUROPEAN EXIT WORKING GROUP AND “FARMING THE FUTURE”: SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PILOT SCHEME – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR DEFRA**

452. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair of the European Exit Working Group.
- Other National Park Pilot schemes were focussed on upland farming, whereas the SDNP Pilot Scheme is downland.
  - Officers would be attending a farming pilots workshop with other National Park officers in the near future.
  - Members were directed to review the Defra Heath and Harmony paper.
453. Authority Members considered the report from the Western Area Countryside and Policy Manager (Report NPA 10/18) and were advised:
- All National Parks had been invited to discuss pilot scheme proposals at a meeting on 9 April 2018.
  - National Parks England would be submitting a collective response to Defra’s Health and Harmony paper.
  - A new Farming Officer had been appointed to support the future of farming work.
  - MPs and Council Leaders had been written to with a copy of the SDNP Pilot Scheme document.
  - There was a lot of ongoing work to ensure the partners mentioned in section 8 of the document remained actively involved with the scheme.
454. Members made the following comments:
- Officers were congratulated on a high quality paper which compared very well to other proposals.
  - The Evidence Compendium in Defra’s Health and Harmony paper contained a wealth of information.
  - Members needed a few short, sharp messages regarding the SDNP Pilot Scheme to convey to interested parties.
455. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note the submission of the “Farming the Future: South Downs National Park Pilot Scheme - Expression Of Interest For Defra”.

**ITEM 18d. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS UPDATE – PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

456. Authority Members received a verbal report from a Member of the Partnership Management Plan Task and Finish Group.
- The group understood their work was of critical importance and was time limited.
  - It was felt the second iteration of the Partnership Management Plan should focus on delivery and how the National Park and its partners worked together.

**ITEM 19. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

457. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on the 14 December 2017, 18 January 2018, 8 February 2018 and 8 March 2018.

**ITEM 20. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

458. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on the 27 February 2017.

**ITEM 21. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO EXTERNAL BODIES**

459. Authority Members noted the report on the Sustainable Communities Fund.

- 460. The Chair of the Sustainable Communities Fund Panel updated Members on the recent panel meeting and on the Fittleworth Village Shop project that had been a recipient of an SCF grant.
- 461. The meeting was closed to the public, including the press, and moved into private session at 16.20.

