

## DUTY TO COOPERATE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

BETWEEN: Hampshire County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority

DATE: 16 February 2018

### Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground (SCG) is a jointly agreed statement between Hampshire County Council (HCC) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). It sets out the position and understanding with respect to key relevant duty to cooperate matters, and agreed actions to resolve outstanding matters. It is not binding on either party, but sets out a clear and positive direction to inform ongoing strategy and plan-making.

### Context

Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 requires all relevant authorities, including local authorities such as HCC, to have regard to the purposes of national parks. These are:

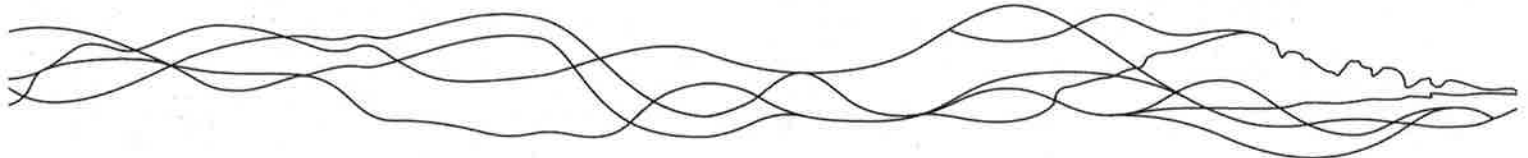
- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area;
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

As a National Park Authority and Local Planning Authority, plan-making for the SDNPA is subject to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) whereby Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. An example of such restrictions given in footnote 9 on page 4 of NPPF is policies relating to the development of sites within a National Park.

Furthermore, paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. It should also be noted that the DEFRA UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 on English National Parks and the Broads, referenced in the NPPF at this point makes clear that the Government recognizes that the Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing and does not therefore provide general housing targets for them.

Part of the county of Hampshire falls within the South Downs National Park. All statutory planning responsibilities within the National Park area of the county fall to the National Park Authority including minerals and waste matters. The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan was adopted by HCC, SDNPA, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and New Forest National Park Authority in 2013.

Both the South Downs National Park and Hampshire fall partly within Central Hampshire Housing Market Area (HMA). The two authorities work in partnership together with the relevant local authorities to ensure that strategic planning issues are properly and holistically addressed.



### Purpose and objectives

The SDNPA is preparing its first Local Plan – the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP). The SDLP is a landscape-led plan, with ecosystem services (the provision of goods and services arising from natural capital) at its heart. The SDLP will provide a comprehensive development plan document to cover the whole of the National Park, and will include a policy to address all types of development, with the exception of minerals and waste.

The purpose of this SCG is to demonstrate clearly and concisely how strategic cross-boundary matters relevant to the SDLP, which are specific to the two authorities, have been and will continue to be jointly addressed. These focus on the issue of addressing objectively assessed development needs, particularly housing needs, and on how points of disagreement between the parties are being positively resolved. Further detail is given in the South Downs National Park Duty to Cooperate Statement<sup>1</sup>, and in the jointly prepared documents referred to below.

### *Housing and employment provision*

Hampshire County Council notes the proposed provision of 1,859 homes over the South Downs Local Plan period (2014/15 to 2032/33) within the part of Hampshire falling within the National Park and agrees that this will be supported by existing or planned infrastructure falling under the responsibility of Hampshire County Council.

The greatest concentrations of housing development proposed in Hampshire within the National Park are 805 new homes at Petersfield allocated in the Petersfield Plan and 150 new homes allocated in the Liss Neighbourhood Plan. Housing development overall will be dispersed across the towns and villages of the National Park in line with the Spatial Strategy.

Approximately three hectares of employment land is allocated in the Petersfield Plan.

### *Provision of primary and secondary school places*

Both parties confirm that there is adequate capacity in both primary and secondary schools in Hampshire to meet the quantum of development proposed in the Local Plan.

### *Impact on the strategic and local highways network*

Both parties confirm that, taking into account the overall level of growth and specific locations anticipated to accommodate this, it will be possible to avoid any severe impact on the local or strategic highways networks through the use of mitigation measures. Evidence to support this statement is contained in the Transport Assessment of the South Downs Local Plan (Hampshire Services, 2016) and the Midhurst and Petersfield Junction Assessments (Hampshire Services, 2017).

### *Other infrastructure requirements*

There are many further types of physical, community and green infrastructure that future development will impact upon. Both parties agree that development will only be permitted where appropriate, necessary and reasonable infrastructure investment has been secured either in the form of suitable on-site or off-site works, and/or financial contributions to mitigate

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<sup>1</sup> South Downs National Park Duty to Cooperate Statement, 2017



its impact. These matters will generally be addressed at the planning application stage, or where appropriate in Neighbourhood Plans.

*Representations made by HCC on matters of detail*

It is confirmed that comments made by HCC in response to consultation on the Pre-submission Local Plan relate to matters of detail, and do not relate to the soundness of the Plan. It is agreed that these will be considered by SDNPA and may lead to minor changes to the Local Plan.

Signed on behalf of Hampshire County Council
<i>C. D Murray</i>
Date 16 February 2018
Position Head of Strategic Planning

Signed on behalf of the South Downs National Park Authority
<i>Tim Stacey</i>
Date 02 March 2018
Position Director of planning

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