

**Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Authority**

**SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**AUTHORITY MEETING**

Held at 2.00pm on 26 April 2018 at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Ken Bodfish	Tim Burr
David Coldwell	Norman Dingemans	Janet Duncton	Mark Dunn
Philip Ede	Barbara Holyome	Helen Jackson	Doug Jones
Tom Jones	Gill Mattock	Robert Mocatta	Russell Oppenheimer
Margaret Paren (Chair)	Ian Phillips	Pete West	

South Downs National Park Authority 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), Robin Parr (Head of Governance), Richard Sandiford (Senior Committee and Member Services Officer).

Also attended by:

Ruth James (Communication and Engagement Manager), Jo Williams (Sustainable Tourism Lead), Jeremy Burgess (Landscape and Biodiversity Lead - Water), Andy Beattie (Wealden Heath Countryside and Policy Manager), Veronica Craddock (Infrastructure and Environment Strategy Lead).

**OPENING REMARKS**

472. The Chair informed those present that:

- South Downs National Park Authority 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.

**ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

473. Apologies were received from Heather Baker, Jo Carr, Chris Dowling, Neville Harrison, Daniel Humphries, Roger Huxstep, Gary Marsh, and Gill Mattock.

**ITEM 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

474. The following declarations of interest were made:

- Barbara Holyome - Item 12, Public Service Interest as Parish Councillor for one of the Parishes the pipeline would potentially impact.
- Russell Oppenheimer - Public Service Interest as County Councillor for one of the electoral divisions the pipeline would potentially impact.

**ITEM 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2018**

475. The minutes were approved as a correct record of the Authority meeting held on 22 March 2018 subject to the following amendment:

- Agenda Item 14 – “Endorsement” was spelt incorrectly in the agenda item heading.

**ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING**

476. In regards to minute 402 the Authority was notified that National Parks England (NPE) would be providing a response to the NPPF.

477. In regards to Agenda Item 10 the Authority was informed that the South Downs Local Plan would be submitted for examination on 27 April 2018 along with 144 accompanying documents. The final submission would be available online.

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478. Members expressed their thanks to officers for their hard work on the Local Plan.

**ITEM 5. URGENT MATTERS**

479. There were none.

**ITEM 6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

480. There were no public speakers.

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

481. Members were asked to indicate if they wished to discuss any matters under Agenda Item 16, the Part II minutes of the National Park Authority (NPA) meeting held on 22 March 2018.

482. No Members indicated they wished to discuss any matters under Agenda Item 16. The Part II minutes of the NPA meeting held on 22 March 2018 were hence approved as a correct record.

**ITEM 8. AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE**

483. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair on the following:

- In capacity as Chair of NPE attended the unveiling of a plaque which commemorated the Lake District National Park's receipt of World Heritage Status. Prince Charles undertook the unveiling and gave a well-regarded speech on natural beauty, the cultural importance of the landscape and the importance of National Parks. A half hour discussion was also had with the Chair of National Parks UK (NPUK), the Chairs of the Yorkshire Dales and Lake District National Parks and the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP on Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Hobhouse Review.
- Attendance and chairing of a meeting of NPE which discussed Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan. NPE's 3 year business plan was approved with a greater focus on NPE's core business of its relationship with Whitehall and Parliament and further emphasising what National Parks could collectively do. The need to be a better communicator back to National Park Members and officers was highlighted. The budget to deliver the business plan was also considered and, taking into consideration Brexit and the end of the Defra settlement in 2019, an increase in individual National Park contributions to £21,300, fixed for 3 years, was agreed. A new accord with the Forestry Commission was also agreed which required the Forestry Commission to consult with National Parks at an early stage any proposed tree planting. An update on the future of farming work was also received.
- A conference call was held with Defra to shortlist for interview a new Secretary of State appointed Member. There were 12 applications and 4 would be interviewed.
- A meeting was planned with the Minister for National Parks.
- Meetings were planned with several other MPs.

484. The Chair expressed her thanks to members for giving up their time for the annual round of Member Discussions. These discussions were valuable and feedback would be provided to Members at the next NPA workshop.

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

485. Authority Members considered the report from the Chief Executive (Report NPA12/18).

486. The Chief Executive updated Members on:

- The "Mend our Way" walk which was to take place on Friday 14 September 2018 to raise money for the "Mend our Way" campaign. The South Downs Way would be separated into 13 stages of differing length, from 2 to 20 miles, to ensure all could participate. If successful, the event may be opened to the public in the future.
- The initial provisional outturn for the Authority which indicated a significantly greater underspend than anticipated. However, the reasons for the underspend were positive being due to greater efficiency savings from contracts, greater planning income, lower spend on planning appeals and saving having arisen from the new cost per planning application model.

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487. Members made the following comments:

- Commendation that the Authority, through “Take the Lead”, was so engaged with a programme to help prevent sheep worrying.
- Clarification on the governance arrangements for the Truleigh Hill project was requested and confirmation that projects were not being divided to come in under NPA approval limits.
- Due to CIL and section 106 funds the Authority was likely to have significant funds, however, there were currently limited opportunities for Members to engage with how these funds were spent.
- Was the Authority ensuring, wherever possible, that section 106 funds could be used as widely as possible for the benefit of the National Park?
- There was some concern about the location of decisions to prioritise projects. There should be future discussion on how projects were prioritised.
- The update on the South Downs National Park (SDNP) Trust in paragraph 6.4 should not have been included in the Corporate Update so as to ensure the Trust remained clearly independent.
- The Chair of the SDNP Trust would in future provide an annual report to the Authority.
- The “Mend our Way” walk was a great initiative with the potential to be a great public celebration. With the current interest in plastics the walk could also be a litter pick.
- When would the new SDNP signs be completed and installed?
- To increase the public awareness of the SDNP parish councils and schools should be encouraged to identify on their signs that they were in the National Park.

488. In response to questions Members were advised:

- Governance of the Truleigh Hill project was the same as all South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) projects; once signed off by Members it would include a mid-term review and final evaluation report.
- The Authority has strict rules to prevent division of projects to come under approval limits.
- The current review of the Partnership Management Plan would provide clear priorities for the future. This would come before Members on a number of occasions during its development.
- Paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 were included to highlight the success of the Income Generation Team. Updates on the SDNP Trust would no longer be included in the Corporate Update.
- Additional work on the accident safety standard of the new National Park signs was being undertaken. It was anticipated the signs would be installed by the end of summer 2018.
- A pilot project on signage with a selection of parish council would be starting in the near future.

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

**ITEM 10. CORPORATE PLAN - BRIDGE YEAR 2018/19**

490. Authority Members considered the report from the Performance and Projects Manger (Report NPA13/18), presented by the Director of Countryside and Policy Management.

491. Members made the following comments:

- The SDNP had an amazing resource in forest schools and it was disappointing not to see them included under “Understanding and Enjoyment” in the report. This should be reviewed, particularly as forest schools were mentioned in Defra’s 25 Year Environment Plan.

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492. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The Education Team were passionate about and dedicated to forest schools. The report referred to “our learning approach through the Our South Downs partnership” which includes our work with forest schools. The two areas specifically mentioned by name under “Understand and Enjoyment” were areas where the Authority was striving to do something new and special.
  - The National Parks Group for Educators and Outreach had made a submission to NPE that forest schools were not being given a high enough priority.
493. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to approve the Corporate Plan 2018-19 as set out at Appendix I.

**ITEM II. PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGY UPDATE**

494. Authority Members considered the report and presentation from the Communications and Engagement Manager (Report NPA14/18).
495. The key asks were not coming through clearly in the messages. The MP test should be applied - when you met with the MP you only had one minute so what you were going to say was important. The key messages card should clearly remind Members what the SDNP needs.
496. Members made the following comments on the Future of Farming:
- It was important to raise the issue of change identified in the second bullet point.
  - Concern was raised that some schemes may not accord with the purposes and duty of the National Park. The third bullet point should associate the SDNP with good environmental practice rather than just a place for any new schemes.
  - The fourth and fifth bullet points could be linked.
  - The second and third bullet points could be removed. People knew that farming was going through its greatest time of change and the Authority could show that the SDNP was the ideal place to pilot new schemes by talking about farm clusters.
  - The use of the land, not just for farming, but to create a sustainable economy through diversified use including sustainable tourism was an important relationship. The comments should not be restricted to a traditional view of farming.
  - The fourth bullet point should indicate sustainable, profitable, land management and protection. The focus should not solely be on food production.
  - The wording would be finalised by the Communications and Engagement Manager in consultation with Sebastian Anstruther.
497. Members made the following comments on Sustainable Tourism:
- What was meant by Sustainable Tourism should be clearer. From the Authority’s point of view Sustainable Tourism would be tourism that is beneficial to the SDNP.
  - The language in the third and fifth bullet points could be difficult to understand. Did we actually want a brand of sustainable tourism in the South Downs? It is unclear what the phrase “destination development” means.
  - If the SDNP Trust was a branding opportunity this should be stressed to people at the outset and the sixth bullet point should be given greater significance.
  - How people would arrive in the National Park should be talked about further.
  - The National Park should be a driver in attracting international tourists and that the special qualities of the National Park added value to the tourism offer.
  - The fifth bullet point on access and information was important as that was part of the National Park’s second purpose and duty.
  - People needed to be persuaded that coming to the SDNP was as worth their time as it was going to Brighton or Portsmouth. We also needed to work with our partners,

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particularly County Councils, to persuade them that the SDNP did not detract from their tourism offer, but instead added to it.

- People should be told more about what a fantastic place the SDNP was. An excellent example was the branded buses in Brighton and Hove which went to Seven Sisters and the Downs and included interpretation. That was an excellent way to engage people.
- It was unclear whether the correct phrase for the tourism we want in the National Park was sustainable, responsible or low impact.

498. In regard to Sustainable Tourism, Members were advised:

- The SDNP identity was not being used as widely by partner organisations such as the destination management organisations as it should. The SDNP had thousands of attractions and destinations, but unlike the Cotswolds or the New Forest these were not seen in a unified way. The aim should be to encourage organisations across the SDNP to promote the SDNP shared identity and the SDNP as a destination.
- A key point was that we wanted the South Downs to be more than just a day trip destination. There was the issue of wider value, getting more from each visitor and encouraging visitors to value the South Downs more. The South Downs should be a place of real value to people where they would spend both their time and money.
- It was important to get the message out that the SDNP supports significant income and employment from tourism.
- The second, fourth and sixth bullet points could be expanded to pick up the comments on brand and identity and access and information.

499. Philip Ede left the meeting at 15.28.

500. Members made the following comments on Water:

- In the first bullet point was the figure of 1.2 million people correct?
- Uncertainty about whether the messages got to the point we wanted to make.
- Could the third and fourth bullet points be merged as they were a similar message?
- In the second bullet point, was “our rivers ... are in trouble” the correct message?
- The SDNP’s rivers were in trouble; that needed to be highlighted.
- The messages were too broad; nothing was mentioned about consumption or water use.
- We should communicate the work the SDNPA had done or was planning to do. This should be an elevator for the SDNPA’s work.
- In the first bullet point wildlife and landscape should be mentioned first, then people second.
- Should the farm clusters or river trusts be mentioned?
- ChaMP was an excellent project for the SDNP. Both quality and quantity were important and the message could assist in holding key conversations.
- The subject of flooding should be considered for inclusion in the strategy.
- The Authority must ensure that any public affairs activities undertaken clearly related to our purposes and duties as a National Park being mindful that certain matters were not the responsibility of the Authority, but of another public body.

501. The full Public Affairs Strategy and delivery points would be brought to the July NPA meeting. The key messages card would also remind Members of the 2050 vision and the special qualities of the National Park so that the wider context was not lost.

502. Once the key messages have been redrafted they would be reviewed by Russell Oppenheimer with the MP test in mind.

503. An amended recommendation was proposed and seconded to ensure the key messages were reformulated to take into account the comments of the Authority.

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504. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to request that officers reformulate the key messages for the 3 objectives of the Public Affairs Strategy in line with the Authority's comments and include these in the Public Affairs Strategy to be considered at the July National Park Authority meeting.

505. Russell Oppenheimer left the meeting at 15.39

**ITEM 12. SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK RESPONSE TO ESSO PIPELINE CONSULTATION**

506. Authority Members considered the report and presentation from the Wealden Heath Countryside Policy Manager (Report NPA15/18).

507. Russell Oppenheimer returned to the meeting at 15.42.

508. Pete West left the meeting at 15.45.

509. Members made the following comments:

- Confirmation was requested that when stages 3 and 4 were reached the Authority would be consulted on the preferred route. Also, clarification on what detail the Authority would receive and to what extent Members would be involved.
- ESSO's professional approach was commended including their thorough consideration of routes outside the SDNP. If the preferred route was to pass through the SDNP, as it was inevitable that there would be harm to the National Park, what was the status for negotiating on mitigation and compensation?
- ESSO may be expecting the Authority to be quite demanding in regard to mitigation and compensation where appropriate.
- If compensation was required due to mitigation being impossible it should be considered if this could this be paid to the SDNP Trust by ESSO.
- Good to note that decommissioning of the old pipe was raised. The most sustainable construction methods available for decommissioning should be used.

510. In response to questions Members were advised:

- The Authority would be consulted further. ESSO had been very inclusive in their work with the Authority and forthcoming with information to enable officers to work with them in finding solutions on the project.
- Members would be involved through P&R Committee.
- Detail on proposed mitigation and compensation would be provided with the preferred route option.

511. An amended recommendation was proposed and seconded to recommend that ESSO provide a fully costed scheme of mitigation and compensation.

512. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:

1. Note the proposed scheme for the replacement pipeline.
2. Note the impacts on the special qualities of the South Downs National Park.
3. Approve the draft response to ESSO, incorporating comments from Policy and Resources Committee, including a recommendation that ESSO provide a fully costed scheme of mitigation and compensation before selecting the preferred route and going to formal consultation to allow proper consideration of the route.
4. Endorse Members' and appropriate officers' continued engagement with the specific consultation and technical groups that ESSO has set up, to ensure National Park purposes are full represented.

**ITEM 13. NATIONAL PARKS ENGLAND RESPONSE TO DEFRA 25 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN**

513. Authority Members considered the report from the Authority Chair (Report NPA16/18).

514. Members made the following comments:

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- It was surprising to see that standards for green infrastructure and the development of the tree health resilience plan and were given a low priority.
515. Members were informed that the NPE Board did not accept any of the low ratings for actions.
516. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note the National Park England collective prioritisation of issues arising from the Defra 25 Year Environment Plan.

**ITEM 14. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS UPDATE – PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

517. Authority Members received a verbal report from the Chair of the Partnership Management Plan (PMP) Task and Finish Group.
- The group's Terms of Reference were expanded at the last NPA meeting.
  - A fundamental review of the process was undertaken and the focus of the work would be on the delivery plan.
  - An outline framework for the PMP was agreed including criteria for priority actions.
  - To ensure Members and officers had sufficient opportunity to engage with the review and to ensure that the group could deliver its outcomes the timetable had been extended to the end of May 2019.
  - All Members were encouraged to engage with the PMP review process through attendance at the task and finish group or the upcoming workshops.

**ITEM 15. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO EXTERNAL BODIES**

518. There were none.
519. The Chair closed the meeting at 16.05.

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