

Coldwaltham Meadow Conservation Group

Position Statement concerning legal compliance of the SDNPA's Statement of Community Involvement

This position statement reflects our original representation 2440.

1. Elements of the Local Plan have not been prepared with adequate or effective public consultation. As referred to in our representation to SD1 (Comment ID 2440), paragraphs 2 to 2.4, this is not coherent with the sustainable development principle, cited in the UK Government Vision and Circular 2010, of “ensuring a strong, healthy and **just** society”. There has been no formal Regulation 18 Consultation about Policy SD64, which is required by the Regulations during the production of the Local Plan. This is not coherent with the SDNPA SCI.

2. Former objectors to an earlier allocation policy within the same meadow, which was withdrawn, were not notified about Policy SD64. This conflicts with the SDNPA's “Standards for Acknowledging and Reporting Back on Representations”, referred to in the SDNPA SCI 5f, 5.11, p.19.

3. We were informed by the Parish Council that the concept of Policy SD64, which at that time had no map or quantum of houses, did not come forward until late March 2017. The first complete version of Policy SD64 was issued in June, one week before the SDNPA Planning Committee met to agree its inclusion in the Pre-submission draft of the Local Plan. At the meeting, Coldwaltham Parish Council's letter of objection was noted, but not circulated, and local residents were denied the opportunity to comment because they had not been given enough notice to request a three-minute “public speaking slot” (*source: Public Record of the meeting*). Public speaking slots were used at the following plenary meeting of the SDNP Board, to inform the Board that a Regulation 18 Consultation for Policy SD64 had not occurred. Despite this, the decision was made to include the Policy in the Pre-submission Local Plan, and we were informed that a Regulation 19 Consultation would provide an adequate opportunity to state our views. Policy SD64 was then substantially modified several times, without any form of public consultation on the changes made.

4. Policy SD64 does not reflect a collective vision or a set of agreed priorities and is therefore not coherent with national policy guidelines on plan-making and community consultation, specifically the first point of NPPF 17, the first part of NPPF 69, the whole of NPPF 155 and the principle of NPPF 188.

5. If a Regulation 18 Consultation had been provided about SD64, the National Park would have been made aware of the environmental constraints associated with the Policy and the alternative sites that have been offered by local landowners could have come forward earlier. The SDNPA “Call for Sites” was so obscure that we have found no-one in the village who was

aware of it. There has been no evidence presented by the National Park Authority of this process, which should be transparent and available for public scrutiny.

6. The lack of consultation outlined above was further compounded by the issuing of the first version of the Development Brief for Policy SD64 on 31 October 2017, with an accompanying email to the Parish Council requesting feedback within 8 days (*Source: email exchange*). It was withdrawn in response to objections from the Parish Council and a further four versions of the Development Brief were issued after the pre-submission Local Plan consultation period had ended. It is ironic that the March 2018 version of the Development Brief still contains the text:

“Early and active engagement with individuals, special interest groups, statutory undertakers and public bodies that have a stake in the site and the community is highly recommended... ... a more passive exhibition of developed design ideas can be perceived as token consultation where decisions have already been made.” (source: 9. Consultation & Engagement, p.20 Coldwaltham Development Brief March 2018).

In this respect, the Local Plan has not been prepared in accordance with the SCI and is therefore not legally compliant.

19.10.18