

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at 2.00pm on 1 October 2019 at the Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH.

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Heather Baker	Pat Beresford
Ken Bodfish	Helen Burton	Chris Dowling	Janet Duncton
Thérèse Evans	Chris Henry	Barbara Holyome	Helen Jackson
Doug Jones	Gary Marsh	Robert Mocatta	Russell Oppenheimer
Margaret Paren (Chair)	Ian Phillips	Henry Potter	Vanessa Rowlands
Andrew Shaxson	Isabel Thurston	Diana van der Klugt	Richard Waring

South Downs National Park Authority Officers:

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

Also attended by:

Andy Beattie (Countryside and Policy Manager – Wealden Heaths), Veronica Craddock (Infrastructure and Environment Strategy Lead), Anne Rehill (Performance and Project Manager), Mike Hughes (Major Planning Projects and Performance Manager), Kelly Porter (Major Projects Lead), Kirsten Williamson (Planning Policy Lead), Lucy Howard (Planning Policy Manager) and Ruth James (Communications and Engagement Manager).

OPENING REMARKS

68. The Chair informed those present of general housekeeping matters.

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

69. Apologies were received from Janet Duncton, Michael Lunn, William Meyer, Vanessa Rowlands and Richard Waring.

ITEM 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

70. The following declarations of interest were made:

- Therese Evans – Agenda Item 13, Public Service Interest as a Winchester City Councillor.
- Isabel Thurston – Agenda Item 7, Public Service Interest as an Arun District Councillor.
- Andrew Shaxson – Agenda Item 14, Public Service Interest as a Harting Parish Councillor.
- Sebastian Anstruther – Agenda Item 14, Pecuniary Interest, would withdraw from the meeting for the discussion and decision.

ITEM 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2 JULY 2019

71. The minutes were approved as a correct record of the Authority meeting held on 2 July 2019.

ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING

72. Members were updated on:
- Minute 35. Since the adoption of the South Downs Local Plan it had been subject to an application for leave to be Judicially Reviewed. Although leave was denied a hearing had been requested to progress the Judicial Review. The Authority awaited the outcome.
 - Item 15. The Deputy Chair of the Authority updated Members on a recent meeting of the Transport for South East (TfSE) Board. Proposals for the future of the board were agreed pending feedback from the Department for Transport. TfSE's draft strategy was approved for public consultation as part of which a number of public consultation events would be held.

ITEM 5. URGENT MATTERS

73. There were none.
74. Vanessa Rowlands joined the meeting at 2.09pm.

ITEM 6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

75. The Chair invited Michelle Taylor to read a statement on behalf of Nick Herbert MP.
76. Nick Herbert MP made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- An offline bypass route would take traffic away from the National Park.
 - Increased severance of the National Park would be caused by an online route.
 - Planned development in the area of Arundel would cause increased traffic.
 - The bypass was supported by the majority of local people.
77. The Chair invited Mike Tristram, speaking as a member of the South Downs Partnership, to address the meeting.
78. Mike Tristram made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- Highways England (HE) had failed to have regard for the purposes of the National Park and a statement to that effect should be added to the Authority's consultation response.
 - All dual carriageway options had adverse impacts on the National Park.
 - HE could alter their requirement that the scheme be a dual carriageway.
79. The Chair invited Emma Tristram, speaking on behalf of the Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee, to address the meeting.
80. Emma Tristram made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- The countryside that the bypass would go through was originally recommended by the Countryside Agency for inclusion in the South Downs National Park.
 - Binstead was a historic and beautiful area which would be destroyed by the bypass.
 - Traffic needed to reduce, not increase, due to the climate crisis.
81. The Chair invited Camila Lambert, speaking as a representative of the Arun Countryside Trust, to address the meeting.
82. Camila Lambert made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- The landscapes under threat from the proposals were of national and international significance.
 - There were high levels of biodiversity in the area and the ability for species to move across the landscape must be maintained.

- Climate change had not been acknowledged by HE and seemed to be of no interest to them.
83. The Chair invited Henri Brocklebank, speaking as a representative of Sussex Wildlife Trust, to address the meeting.
84. Henri Brocklebank made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- We were living in a time of biodiversity crisis and all options had the potential for significant impacts on wildlife.
 - The ancient woodlands were not simply plantations with limited biodiversity value and the transplantation of ancient woodland soils had not been proven to be effective.
 - Significant and permanent severance would be caused by the physical divide and by noise, vibration and light pollution.
 - Bunds across an internationally important river valley was a un-futureproofed proposal that would exacerbate flooding issues in the area.
85. The Chair invited Angela Devas, speaking as a member of the public and user of the National Park, to address the meeting.
86. Angela Devas made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- The funds allocated to this project could be much better used on improvements to train and bus services and shared paths.
 - The “predict and provide” model for road improvements used by HE was out of date.
 - The survey that HE provided to the public about the proposals did not mention climate change, habitat loss or pollution.
87. The Chair invited David Johnson, speaking as a representative of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Sussex Branch, to address the meeting.
88. David Johnson made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- All proposals would damage the National Park and its setting; the proposals worked against both purposes of the National Park.
 - The proposals went against the proposals made in the Glover Review to increase the impact of National Parks.
 - Climate change should be the starting point when bringing forward these proposals and carbon assessment should be a key part of any development.
89. The Chair invited Chris Todd, speaking as a representative of Transport Action Group, to address the meeting.
90. Chris Todd made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- A bypass had not yet been built at Arundel as all proposals had gone against national policy to protect our national assets such as National Parks and ancient woodland.
 - No serious attempts had been made to assess other options, including the use of funds for public transport improvements.
 - The needs of Arundel could be met in other ways, possibly including a single carriageway improvement.
91. The Chair invited Derek Waller, speaking as a representative of the One Arundel Support Group, to address the meeting.

92. Derek Waller made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- The officer's report did not highlight that the A27 already went through the National Park, nor did it acknowledge the current traffic issues at Arundel.
 - The officer's report was sceptical about all route options without detail that would come during a future phase of the process.
 - A reduction of traffic through the National Park as a result was not acknowledged.
 - The SDNPA should adopt a less negative approach and rank the route options.
93. The Chair invited Kay Wagland, speaking as a representative of Arundel South Coast Alliance for Transport and the Environment (SCATE), to address the meeting.
94. Kay Wagland made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel:
- An offline route would mean destruction of local communities, loss of habitats and increased traffic.
 - The traffic at Arundel was caused by flow issues, not lack of capacity.
 - HE should reconsider a single carriageway route as proposed by local groups in Arundel.
95. The Chair invited Vic lent, speaking as a representative of the South Downs Society, to address the meeting.
96. Vic lent made the following points on the proposals for the A27 at Arundel, the PMP, Matterley Estate and Boomtown Festival, and the Single Issue Soft Sand Review:
- The proposals for the A27 from the South Coast Alliance should be considered along with proposals to improve air quality.
 - Climate change should be at the forefront of the SDNPA's work in the revised Partnership Management Plan.
 - Even if the planning application at Matterley Estate relating to Boomtown festival was not called in by the Secretary of State it should come under additional scrutiny from the Planning Committee.
 - It was pleasing to note that the number of proposed sand quarries had been reduced, but the rerouting of traffic for the remaining quarries should be considered. The SDNPA should also lead the campaign to build out the old Midhurst to Petersfield railway line route.

ITEM 7. RESPONSE TO HIGHWAYS ENGLAND RE. A27 ARUNDEL

97. Authority Members considered the report from the Countryside and Policy Manager (Report NPA19/20-11).
98. Members made the following comments:
- It was right and proper for this Authority to be concerned about proposals that affected the landscape setting of the National Park.
 - The majority in attendance at a recent meeting of the Local Elected Representatives Forum for the A27 were in favour of an offline route.
 - It was disappointing that the officer's report had not commented on the fact that HE now included a route option outside the National Park or on the analysis of data from HE's traffic impact projections.
 - All routes caused harm to varying degrees, however, some were clearly less damaging. What was the best for Arundel should be considered and it was disappointing the Authority was not proposing to favour any of the routes.

- The Authority should not pass up this one opportunity to rank the proposed options. This should be done in the clear knowledge that any ranking was subject to further details including mitigation.
- The route wholly outside the National Park must be the Authority's preferred option.
- None of the proposed routes were supportable as they did not protect the National Park.
- Climate change must not be ignored and sustainable transport options should be considered. None of these proposals gave regard to the National Park's purposes and the Authority should not be seen to be greenlighting any of the options through ranking.
- The Authority should not be attempting to rank the route options in the absence of so much important information.
- HE needed to take greater account of the Single Voice Letter.
- A bypass at Arundel had been proposed as the solution to traffic issues for so long that alternative solutions had not been reviewed; a bypass was no longer a suitable solution in our current age of climate change.
- The Arundel alternative should be taken account of and further analysis and consideration should be given to it.
- HE were working with the objective of building roads. A much more progressive approach to public transport should be taken.
- The offline route would blight the communities of Walburton and Binstead and sever communities from the National Park.
- It was disappointing that although HE had stated they were attempting to improve access for all they had made no attempt to assess non-motorised access in these proposals.

99. In response Members were advised that:

- The reasons for the recommendation before Members was that officers had concerns about the baseline evidence, including the presumption on other schemes proceeding.
- This Authority's role was to comment on the National Park and its setting. Balancing our view against that of other consultees was the role of the Planning Inspector.

100. An amended recommendation as set out below was proposed, seconded, voted on, and not agreed.

101. That the Authority was recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Countryside Policy and Management, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to draft the Authority's response to the non-statutory consultation which includes a qualified preference for the grey route.

102. It was proposed and seconded to vote on the officer's recommendation.

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

1. Note the contents of the report
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Countryside and Policy Management, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to draft a holding objection response as the Authority's response to the non-statutory consultation.
3. Agree the key issues to be covered in the response, including:
 - That all the route options as currently presented, including the route outside the National Park (Grey Route 5BVI), impact negatively on the National Park and its

setting. To varying degrees all would cause significant harm to the biodiversity, cultural heritage, access, recreation potential and landscape character and visual quality of the South Downs National Park.

- That Highways England should be urged to address, as a priority, the shared concerns raised in the Single Voice letter sent by the DEFRA family.
- That in the absence of both a detailed scheme plan, and a committed and funded mitigation and compensation package, it is not currently possible to rank the options in terms of their impacts upon the National Park.

I04. Chris Henry left the meeting at 4.12pm.

ITEM 8. LANDSCAPES REVIEW FINAL REPORT

I05. Authority Members received a verbal update from the Authority Chair highlighting that the final report was report for Government and it was for Government to respond. Members would be updated as information was received from Defra on any progress in relation to Government's response.

ITEM 9. AUTHORITY CHAIR UPDATE

I06. Authority Members received a verbal update from the Authority Chair on the following:

- Attendance at the "Big Picnic" in Exmoor National Park celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Countryside Act which was attended by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall along with representatives from all UK National Parks.
- The keynote speech given in her capacity as Chair of National Parks England (NPE) at the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) conference in Colchester on the theme of the need for National Parks and AONBs to work together at both national and local level.
- For understandable reasons there had, over the summer, been limited opportunities for meetings with Ministers.
- A joint letter, representing National Parks and AONBs was sent to Lord Gardiner urging that the Section 62 duty in the Environment Act 1995, and its equivalent for AONBs, should be strengthened to give greater weight to the designations in decision making by statutory undertakers. The letter also asked for greater legal weight for Partnership Management Plans. These requests and their link to the recent Landscapes Review would be discussed at a future meeting with Lord Gardiner.
- Thanks were received from David Butterworth, Chief Executive of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, for the exceptional help and support received from our officers in the planning of the National Parks UK (NPUK) Conference.
- Attendance at the funeral of Len Clarke who, amongst other things, had been on the Council of the National Trust, the Board of the YHA, and a member of the Campaign for the South Downs National Park. He was also in attendance for the second reading of the bill that led to the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. His autobiography was in the Paul Millmore Library.

ITEM 10. REVIEW OF APPOINTMENTS OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

I07. Authority Members considered the report from the Head of Governance (Report NPA19/20-12).

I08. Members made the following comments:

- It was noted there was currently a vacancy on Planning Committee, however, the Chair noted this was being kept under review pending appointments by the Secretary of State.
- The Chair of Planning Committee expressed his thanks to Ian Phillips for his work over the last 5 years and welcomed Vanessa Rowlands to the committee.

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

1. Amend the size of the membership of the Policy & Resources Committee to 13 members
2. Agree the revised membership of Committees attached at Appendix I
3. Note the appointment of Janet Duncton as a SDNPA representative on the South Downs National Park Trust

ITEM 11. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT

110. Authority Members considered the report from the Chief Executive (Report NPA19/20-13).

111. Members who attended the NPUK conference made the following comments:

- It was interesting to note that concerns and issues at this National Park were mirrored at others.
- The talk on Youth Engagement was of particular interest highlighting that National Parks should be places to do things not just to visit, also that an alternative phrase to "Youth Engagement" needed to be used in order to get young people involved.
- Member workshops should consider best practice from other National Parks.

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

ITEM 12. APPROVAL OF REVISED PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN

113. Authority Members considered the report from the Director of Countryside Policy and Management (Report NPA19/20-14) as part of which amended recommendations were tabled to Members. These amended recommendations being:

The Authority is recommended to:

1. Agree the content of the draft amended Partnership Management Plan as set out at Appendix I noting that additional wording will be added where highlighted in the document;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Countryside and Policy Management, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to finalise the wording of the draft amended Partnership Management Plan and to undertake the required statutory notifications set out in section 66 (7) &(8) of the Environment Act 1995;
3. Note that any responses received through the statutory notifications and the proposed amended Partnership Management Plan will be brought to the NPA Meeting on 19 December 2019 for consideration and approval; and
4. Note that Officers will consider the implications, if any, for the delivery of the Partnership Management Plan arising from the recently published Landscape Review.

114. Members made the following comments:

- Appendix I, page 33 of the report should include Borough Councils in the list of partners.
- The priorities fit in well with the recent Landscapes Review and the future communications proposals were welcomed.
- Additional work should be done on SMART objectives and measureable actions. Although the progress of the Partnership Management Plan (PMP) should not be delayed, the Authority should work to publish measureable actions within 12 months; these would strengthen the PMP.
- The approach taken to target setting in the PMP by the Yorkshire Dales National Park should be explored further.

- References to “Your National Park” should be changed to “Our National Park”.
- It was felt the statement on page 55 that “many places in the National Park are well served by rail” perhaps overstated the current situation in the National Park.
- The addition of recommendation 4 as part of the amended recommendations was commended as the Landscape Review may provide some additional leverage on targets.
- The PMP contained good priorities, particularly on Green Infrastructure and tree planting. However, SMART and deliverable actions were needed.
- Greater influence for PMPs would be welcomed.
- Climate Emergency should be referred to as Environment and Climate Emergency.

115. In response Members were advised that:

- The corrections highlighted would be made prior to statutory notification.
- Officers would continue to work on the indicator framework with a view to some SMART objectives being set.
- The target setting undertaken by the Yorkshire Dales National Park would be explored further.

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

1. Agree the content of the draft amended Partnership Management Plan as set out at Appendix I noting that additional wording will be added where highlighted in the document;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Countryside and Policy Management, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to finalise the wording of the draft amended Partnership Management Plan and to undertake the required statutory notifications set out in section 66 (7) &(8) of the Environment Act 1995;
3. Note that any responses received through the statutory notifications and the proposed amended Partnership Management Plan will be brought to the NPA Meeting on 19 December 2019 for consideration and approval; and
4. Note that Officers will consider the implications, if any, for the delivery of the Partnership Management Plan arising from the recently published Landscape Review.

ITEM 13. RESPONSE TO HIGHWAYS ENGLAND’S SECTION 42 STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON THE M3 JUNCTION 9 IMPROVEMENTS SCHEME

117. Authority Members considered the report from the Major Projects Lead (Report NPA19/20-15).

118. Members made the following comments:

- Opportunities to seek net benefit rather than just avoidance of damage should be taken.
- Officers were commended on their thorough approach to ensuring this project was able to proceed in the right way.
- As the National Park was a Dark Skies Reserve a detailed lighting assessment was important.
- The green bridge project at Twyford Down was being considered under the Smart Motorway Scheme rather than the M3 Junction 9 improvements project.

119. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Note the interim response issued to Highways England on 27th August 2019 as set out in Appendix 3; and
 2. Agree the response set out at appendix 4 and give delegated Authority to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Authority Chair, to make any amendments he considers appropriate arising from the NPA discussion and submit the final response to Highways England.

120. Sebastian Anstruther withdrew from the meeting at 4.59pm.

**ITEM 14. DRAFT PRE-SUBMISSION WEST SUSSEX AND SOUTH DOWNS
SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW OF SOFT SAND**

121. Authority Members considered the report from the Planning Policy Lead (Report NPA19/20-16).
122. Members made the following comments:
- The Authority should take the lead on pushing for the old Midhurst to Petersfield railway line route to be restored prior to extraction, rather than during or after.
 - The location of the bridges concerned was not on the A272, but rather the approach lanes.
 - The Midhurst to Petersfield cycling route should be a priority, but the re-establishment of heathland could also be considered, as could a realignment of the highway south of Durford Bridge in order to better protect the Historic Monument.
 - Was there a requirement for a hydrological assessment of watercourses?
123. In response Members were advised:
- Although minerals extraction was considered to be water compatible, analysis would be a requirement.
 - The supporting text would be amended to refer to the correct location of the structure
 - The Waste and Minerals plan should be read in the context of the wider development plan which included the South Downs Local Plan, but it was appreciated that multiple benefits should be sought as part of any future applications.
124. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Approve the draft Pre-Submission Soft Sand Review (SSR) for public consultation under Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 subject to any minor changes that arise prior to the start of the consultation being agreed by the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.
 2. Note the draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and draft Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) as supporting evidence for the draft Pre-Submission SSR.
 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to make any minor changes arising from the consultation and submit the Pre-Submission SSR to the Secretary of State under regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for examination.
 4. Note that if major changes are required to the Pre-Submission SSR that a further public consultation and decision by the Authority may be required before the documents are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.
125. Sebastian Anstruther returned to the meeting and Isabel Thurston left the meeting at 5.15pm.

ITEM 15. PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGY

126. Authority Members considered the report from the Communications and Engagement Manager (Report NPA19/20-17).
127. Members made the following comments:
- How would messages on climate change and biodiversity loss fit into these messages, along with smart and measureable targets? Perhaps additional work should be considered on these priorities.
 - The Authority should be commended for the work done to engage with the farming and land management community.
 - It was right to continue these current public affairs messages for another year.
 - Climate change was a key issue right now and the Authority should be concerned about being overtaken by this. The Authority should be at the forefront of issues such as this; a mechanism to respond more rapidly should be considered.
 - It was noted that the Member Day to be held on 21 November would be considering the issues of climate change.
128. In response to questions Members were advised:
- It was important to note the distinction that these three areas were public affairs messages, not organisational priorities. These were the areas the Authority had decided to currently push on public policy and seek to influence opinion on. Climate change and biodiversity were two key issues that were being considered in all the work of the Authority.
 - It was suggested that the Authority's public affairs messages could be reviewed following the Climate Change Member Day on 21 November.
129. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to:
1. Note progress on delivery of the Public Affairs Strategy (PAS).
 2. Agree that the Public Affairs Strategy be reviewed in October 2020.
 3. Confirm that the current three issues set out in para 1.3 of the report will continue to be the Authority's public policy priorities until the review of the PAS has been carried out.

ITEM 16. SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

130. Authority Members considered the report from the Countryside and Policy Manager (Report NPA19/20-18).
131. Members made the following comments:
- It was suggested the Authority considered a return to the South of England Show as part of its events schedule for the 10th Anniversary.
 - If the Authority wanted to focus on discussing climate change and biodiversity loss then reaching the kind of audience at those shows could be beneficial.
 - The new town and city centre events that the Authority had undertaken this year were extremely productive and valuable with excellent engagement with the public.
132. In response to questions Members were advised:
- The decision was taken to no longer attend the South of England Show due to the significant resource cost and limited good quality engagement with the public. Those key audiences, such as farmers and land owners, were being engaged with in other ways, such as through the farm clusters.

133. **RESOLVED:** The Authority resolved to note plans for the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the National Park.

ITEM 17. PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES

134. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11 July 2019 and 8 August 2019.

ITEM 18. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES

135. Authority Members noted the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meetings held on 18 July 2019 and 31 July 2019.
136. The Chair closed the meeting at 16.47.

