

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE 11 March 2021

Held: online via Zoom videoconferencing, at 10am.

Present: Alun Alesbury (Chair), Heather Baker, Janet Duncton, Thérèse Evans, Barbara Holyome, Diana van der Klugt, Gary Marsh, Robert Mocatta, Vanessa Rowlands, Andrew Shaxson and Richard Waring.

Also attended by: Russell Oppenheimer.

Officers: Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Rob Ainslie (Development Manager), Lucy Howard (Planning Policy Manager), Becky Moutrey (Solicitor), Richard Sandiford (Senior Governance Officer) and Sara Osman (Governance Officer).

Also attended by: Richard Ferguson (Development Management Lead (West)), Sabrina Robinson (Monitoring and Compliance Officer – Minerals and Waste), Kirsten Williamson (Planning Policy Lead), Chris Paterson (Communities Lead).

OPENING REMARKS

295. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and informed those present that:

- Due to the Coronavirus pandemic full meetings were not able to be held at the Memorial Hall until further notice, hence the meeting of the South Downs National Park Authority was held using the Zoom Cloud Meetings software.
- The meeting was being webcast by the Authority and would be available for subsequent on-line viewing. Anyone entering the meeting was considered to have given consent to be filmed or recorded, and for the possible use of images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

296. The Governance Officer confirmed the Members of the Planning Committee who were present and that the meeting was quorate.

297. The Chair reminded those present that:

- SDNPA Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthers the National Park Purposes and Duty. Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and would act 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

298. There were no apologies.

ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

299. The Chair disclosed a general, non-prejudicial interest on behalf of some of the Members present, as one of the speakers for item 8, Mr Kemp-Gee, was a founder Member of the Authority and was known to some of the Members present

300. Robert Mocatta disclosed a non-prejudicial public service interest in items 7 and 8 as a District Councillor for East Hampshire District Council (EHDC). Also, one of the speakers for item 8, Councillor Mark Kemp-Gee, was known to him as a fellow EHDC councillor.

301. Janet Duncton disclosed a non-prejudicial public service interest in item 9 as a West Sussex County Councillor.

302. Andrew Shaxson disclosed a non-prejudicial public service interest in item 9 as a parish councillor for Harting Parish Council.

303. Therese Evans disclosed a non-prejudicial public service interest in item 10 as a Winchester City Councillor. The speaker for this item, Councillor Chris Corcoran, was also known to her.

304. Barbara Holyome disclosed a non-prejudicial public service interest in item 10 as the speaker for this item, Councillor Chris Corcoran, was known to her.

ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2021

305. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment:
- The date listed at the top of the minutes was incorrect and should say '11 February 2021' (and not '21 January 2021'). The minutes were confirmed to be the correct record of the 11 February 2021 meeting.

ITEM 4: MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

306. A member asked for an update on application SDNP/20/01535/FUL – Butser Hill Lime Works, the decision for which had been delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee. The Director of Planning confirmed that discussions had taken place and the decision would be issued imminently, and a copy of the decision would be circulated to members of the planning committee.

ITEM 5: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

307. The appeal for SDNP/19/01876/FUL - Soldiers Field House had been allowed.
308. The appeal for SDNP/19/04720/FUL - Land rear 34 Lavant Street had been dismissed.

ITEM 6: URGENT ITEMS

309. There were none.

ITEM 7: SDNP/18/06111/FUL – Liss Forest Nursery, Greatham

310. The Case Officer presented the application and referred to the update sheet.
311. The following public speakers addressed the Committee:
- Cllr Mark Rodbert spoke against the application representing Greatham Parish Council;
 - Elly Butler spoke against the application representing herself;
 - Anna Dale-Harris spoke against the application representing herself;
 - Aaron Wright spoke in support of the application as the agent representing the applicant.
312. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC20/21-35), the update sheet and the public speaker comments, and requested clarification as follows:
- The application proposed combination boilers to be installed in dwellings. Was Greatham on mains gas?
 - Was the hedge that formed a boundary between the site and the Petersfield Road in the ownership of the applicant?
 - Was the proposed housing mix appropriate and could there be fewer larger dwellings to allow for more 2-3-bed properties?
 - What would be the implications if members deferred the decision to enable the applicants to deal with any issues raised?
 - What was local response to the loss of a shop in this application, were a shop had been proposed as a community asset in the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) allocation? Was there scope to provide a shop and café and/or farm shop, especially as this site was adjacent to the village primary school and opposite the village hall?
 - Did the scheme provide sufficient open space?
313. In response to questions, Officers clarified:
- Greatham village did have mains gas, however the sustainability of installing gas reliant boilers had been questioned by the parish council.
 - The hedge was in the ownership of the applicant however the grass bank between the hedge and the road was not in the applicant's ownership.
 - Paragraph 8.18 of the officer's report detailed the reasons behind the proposed housing mix. It was the view of officers that, on balance, the mix was considered acceptable as, whilst a notable percentage of larger dwellings was proposed, this would help to deliver affordable housing. Policy SD71 of the SDLP also required that any development proposal

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should provide clear transition in form and layout with a reduced build intensity from Petersfield Road east towards the open countryside and the housing mix allowed for this, with the larger units along the Petersfield Road edge of the scheme.

- This site was allocated for residential development of 35-40 dwellings in the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP). Members could be minded to defer the decision if, after the debate, they felt that the application could meet the SDLP policies with amendments.
- The provision of a shop had been mentioned in many representations with mixed feelings amongst the local community on whether it should be included or not. It was not a prerequisite to meet policy, and whilst a shop was in the original proposed, following discussions it was decided that it was best to put forward a wholly residential scheme. However, there was nothing to preclude a shop or even café being proposed in a development scheme for this site and if it came forward as part of the scheme it would be supported.
- The open space had been maximised given the number of dwellings, which was in the middle of the 35-40 dwellings allocated) and it was useable space.

314. The Committee discussed and debated the application, making the following comments:

- The committee agreed that the scheme was too suburban, was not landscape led and that it did not provide a sense of placemaking within the village.
- Developer had not sufficiently addressed local community's views.
- There could be an opportunity for this site, located next to the school and opposite the village hall, to create a centre for the village and the scheme was inward looking in its design.
- The design and layout was considered uniform and did not respect the local traditions and individuality of design of existing dwellings, and as such did not add anything to the village.
- This development did not provide a sustainable heating source for dwellings (i.e a transition away from gas central heating). Sustainable construction for any new development should provide for an alternative heat source and not provide heating reliant on gas, which the Government had committed to phasing out.
- Members considered that the affordable housing policy could be met with a different housing mix, or that some of the CIL liability could be offset, as outlined in paragraph 8.38 of the officer's report, which could make a difference to the viability of the development and enable it to meet the policy for affordable housing.
- Members were concerned that the viability had not been sufficiently progressed to determine an achievable level of affordable housing.
- The scheme was not sufficiently close to a satisfactory design to consider deferring it.

315. It was proposed to vote on the officer's recommendation.

316. **RESOLVED:** That planning permission be refused for the reasons as set out in Paragraph 10.1 of the officer's report.

ITEM 8: SDNP/20/03365/FUL - Meadow Farm

317. The Case Officer presented the application, referred to the update sheet.

318. The following public speakers addressed the Committee:

- Cllr Mark Kemp-Gee spoke against the application as Hampshire County Councillor for the Alton Rural Division
- Cllr Terry Blake spoke against the application representing Worldham Parish Council
- Roy Polley spoke against the application representing himself
- Bruce Weller spoke in support of the application as the agent representing the applicant.

319. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC20/21-36), the update sheet and the public speaker comments, and requested clarification as follows:

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- How would conditions 4 & 5 be monitored?
- Clarification was sought on the timescale for the application. The report stated that the applicant proposed any further soil importation would be completed in time for the Autumn 2021 crop planting however, the conditions stipulated that importation of inert soil and the earthworks associated with the land raising should be completed within 18 months of first commencement of the development.
- How many enforcement cases had there been on this site?
- Clarification of the need for the temporary car parking area.
- How would this application enhance the natural beauty of the National Park?
- Was there evidence of flooding in fields surrounding this site?

320. In response to questions, Officers clarified:

- The site would be on a monitoring list and would have monthly visits from SDNPA officers, who would check waste transfer notes to ensure that the correct tonnage of soil was imported to the site. This would be undertaken in consultation with the Environment Agency.
- If the application was approved and the applicants could start importing soil in spring 2021, the proposal could be finished by autumn 2021. However, the 18-month timeframe was conditioned to allow for the correct amount of soil to be found if it took time to get soil from various sources, and to allow for details to be provided at the discharge of conditions stage, where ecological monitoring of the site needed to be approved by SDNPA officer and the Environment Agency.
- There had been 8 enforcement cases in connection with the adjacent land which is subject to a Certificate of Lawful Use (Existing), dating back to 2015. Of these, one was permitted development, six the site operator cleared/rectified the breach, one was closed and the remaining one was the subject of this application.
- Condition 20 required the removal of the temporary car parking area, hardstanding and site office from the site within 3 months after the completion of the final profiling of the imported material. However, during the process of bringing soil on site it was considered typical for a development of this size to provide welfare space for staff and to keep documents. The car parking provision was for on-site workers and to enable SDNPA and EA officers to monitor the site.
- Whilst this was not considered a landscape led scheme, the conditions would ensure that it would be a well-run agricultural site that would enhance natural beauty by providing wildlife habitats and wetland areas around the ponds.
- The site was not within a flood risk zone and adjoining fields did not flood, however they were in better quality than this site.

321. The Committee discussed and debated the application, making the following comments:

- The Committee strongly agreed that importing soil to the site from outside the National Park was unacceptable, would cause harm to the landscape, and was not in line with duty and purposes of a National Park.
- Members raised concern that the applicants had created a problem on the site by importing waste material, and that they should be responsible for restoring the site to conditions favourable for growing crops.
- There was a consensus that there were too many unanswered issues and inconsistencies in this application for the committee to grant permission. It was not clear what the applicants intended to do with the site in the long term.

322. Officers noted concerns from Members that enforcement action should be undertaken at this site.

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323. It was proposed and seconded that the application should be refused, on the grounds that the importation of a significant amount of material, would result in an adverse impact on the landscape character of the area, altering the levels at odds with the character of the original field and that of the surrounding area and adding in unwarranted temporary structures, routes and associated paraphernalia, as well as the disruption and disturbance caused by the importation to the site of a substantial quantity of extraneous material. The final form of words to be delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee.
324. **RESOLVED:** That planning permission be refused for the reason set out in 323 above and that the final form of the reason for refusal be delegated to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee.
325. Ian Philips joined the meeting.

ITEM 9: Adoption of the West Sussex Soft Sand Single Issue Review of the Joint Minerals Local Plan

326. The Planning Policy Lead presented the report.
327. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC20/21-37) and made the following comments:
- It was noted that any inconsequential changes should be suggested to officers in time for them to be included in the report to the next full authority NPA meeting.
 - Members queried why the table detailing the assessment for each site allocation (on page 96 of the full papers), indicated that it was uncertain what effect the policy would have on so many of the objectives. Officers clarified that this assessment reflected the sites at this stage of the process, providing a true reflection of the sites are present, and that this would enable a comparison to be made over time.
 - Members complimented officers on a well-written report which made a complicated issue clear to understand.
328. **RESOLVED:** The Committee recommend that the National Park Authority:
- 1) Note the content of the Inspector's Report and his conclusion that the Soft Sand Review of the Joint Minerals Local Plan provides an appropriate basis for the planning for soft sand within the West Sussex including that area which lies within the National Park, provided that a number of Main Modifications are made to it;
 - 2) Note the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) and the Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Soft Sand Review of the Joint Minerals Local Plan;
 - 3) Delegate to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to make any other inconsequential changes to the text required prior to publication of the updated West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan;
 - 4) Adopt the Soft Sand Review of the Joint Minerals Local Plan as amended by the Inspector's recommended Main Modifications to form revised policies M2 and M11 of the statutory minerals plan for the South Downs National Park within West Sussex, and use these policies as the basis for planning decisions for soft sand minerals development across this area of the National Park along with neighbourhood development plans and the South Downs Local Plan, where relevant; and
 - 5) Publish an updated version of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018) and the relevant Policies Map.

ITEM 10: South Downs National Park Authority's (SDNPA) response to the Submission (Regulation 16) Consultation on the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan (TNP)

329. The Communities Lead presented the report and referred to the update sheet.
330. The following public speakers addressed the Committee:
- Cllr Chris Corcoran commented on the item, representing Twyford Parish Council.

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331. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC20/21-38), the public speaker comments and the update sheet, and requested clarification as follows:
- Members asked for clarification on a point raised by the speaker, that many of the comments made by officers at the pre-submission stage were repeated again at the submission stage, and a query had also been raised on why there was a need for further evidence to be provided.
 - The Twyford Conservation Area map on page 148 of the full meeting papers (page 20 of the TNP) shows that part of the allocated site is in the Conservation Area. However, on page 208 of the full papers, the comment on policy DB1 states that 'Part of the boundary of the site is in close proximity to the Conservation Area'.
 - Could the SDNPA response ensure that Policy HN6 in the Twyford Neighbourhood plan maintains the flexibility of policies SD30 and SD31, which applies a limitation of *approximately* 30% for extensions and replacement dwellings?
332. In response to questions, Officers clarified:
- Officers had reviewed the comments made both at pre-submission and submission stages and felt there were still some areas that need addressing, so those comments had been repeated at submission stage in order to gain clarification on these matters. Following submission of the SDNPA response to the Examiner, there were processes in place for further evidence to be prepared and submitted in order to support policies within the neighbourhood plan. There would also be opportunities for discussions to take place between the SDNPA, the Examiner and the parish council.
 - Officers agreed to correct the comment on policy DB1 to ensure it was clear that part of the site fell within the Conservation Area.
 - Officers agreed to review the wording of the response to ensure that the wording from policy HN6 included a reference to the term *approximately* as per policy SD0 and SD31: "For extensions and replacement dwellings, policies SD 30 and SD 31 will apply with *approximately* 30% limitations in each and every case".
333. The Committee discussed and debated the report, making the following comments
- Members commended Twyford Parish Council and others involved in putting together the Neighbourhood Plan.
334. **RESOLVED:** The Committee agreed the Table of Comments as set out in Appendix 2 of the officer's report and Update Sheet, which will form the South Downs National Park Authority representation on the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) Submission consultation, subject to minor amendments reflecting the member discussion at the 11 March 2021 planning committee meeting.
335. Janet Duncton left the meeting.

ITEM 11: SDNPA response to the National Planning Policy Framework changes and the National Model Design Code consultation proposals

336. The Planning Policy Manager presented the report.
337. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC20/21-39) and made the following comments:
- The committee fully supported the response.
 - It was agreed to state in the letter that the duty of a National Park Authority was subordinate to its purposes.
338. **RESOLVED:** The committee:
- 1) Approved the SDNPA response to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code consultation proposals set out in Appendix 1 of the officer's report.
 - 2) Delegated authority to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee to make any minor changes to the response.

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339. The Chair closed the meeting at 13:20.

CHAIR

Signed: _____