

## 5H A place to visit

### Evidence

- 5.100 The South Downs National Park attracts over 19 million visitors annually, who spend £464 million every year<sup>31</sup>. The most popular activities by visitors are walking and rambling, and visiting tea and public houses, followed with increasing popularity by shopping<sup>32</sup>. Day visitors are the largest proportion of visitors, and when asked a majority of visitors responded very high or high when asked about overall enjoyment of the South Downs National Park. Tourism in this area of the National Park relates closely to nature and the Local Nature Reserves nearby to the site. As there is a substantial evidence base on tourism in the National Park, it was not considered necessary to commission a separate study to support the AAP.
- 5.101 To the south, this part of the National Park is connected to Shoreham by Sea by a number of paths and right of way<sup>33</sup>. The People and Nature Network (PANN)<sup>34</sup> includes Shoreham Cement Works in the opportunity area of the Adur Blue-Green corridor where there are opportunities for cultural heritage and green infrastructure enhancements. To the north looking towards Upper Beeding and Bramber there are the South Downs Way and Downs Link. There is also the Beeding Hill Car Park, known locally as the Five Ways Car Park, to the northeast of the site.

### Issues

- 5.102 Visiting the National Park and enjoying its special qualities is the second purpose of national parks. The Landscapes Review<sup>35</sup> written by Julian Glover notes that our national landscapes should be “happier, healthier, greener, more beautiful and open to everyone.” Proposal 14 highlights the drive for National landscapes to become leaders in supporting sustainable tourism. During and since the pandemic more people than ever have been exploring the National Park. Locally, there are problems with car parking at Beeding Hill Car Park. Visitors regularly park along the South Downs Way and can block entrances to farmers’ fields. The site itself is also not well served by public transport, except for a bus service. We already are aware that 70-80% of all of those who visit the National Park do so via private transportation. The PANN<sup>36</sup> notes that the A27 to the south creates a barrier for communities to access the National Park and that there is a deficit in existing accessible natural greenspace in the coastal towns.

---

<sup>31</sup> [South Downs National Park Authority, Tourism Strategy \(2015-2020\)](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Visitor Survey Final report, South Downs National Park Authority, 2018](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Access Network and Accessible Natural Greenspace Study, South Downs National Park Authority, 2014](#)

<sup>34</sup> [People and Nature Network Full Report, South Downs National Park Authority, 2020](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Landscapes Review, Julian Glover, 2019](#)

<sup>36</sup> [People and Nature Network – The evidence and action report, South Downs National Park Authority, 2020](#)

5.103 We consider that there should not be an 'off the shelf' approach to this site. That



*Utilising materials already on the site as devices for interpretation and signage, giving reference to the industrial heritage. (Credit: Fitzpatrick Woolmer Design & Publishing Ltd)*

recreation and tourism that may work in other areas, may not be suitable here. We want something that speaks to the special qualities of the National Park, is unique and identifiable as being in the South Downs National Park. We would also want to avoid creating a 'honey pot' site, which would bring too many visitors to the site and degrade visitors overall enjoyment and possibility of returning to the site.

5.104 Various forms of pollution would have a negative effect on people and the natural environment. Littering has the potential to disturb local habitats, wildlife and livestock. Noise would detract from the tranquility of the eastern part of the site. The site is also within an intrinsic zone of darkness in the Dark Sky Reserve and so is susceptible to light pollution.

5.105 The third development scenario formulated as part of this study was leisure led. The floorspace figures for this scenario were based on the planning applications for the Eden Project in Cornwall and Zip World in Snowdonia.

### **How the Issues Affect the Five Areas**

5.106 An overall tension that affects the five areas is the way different uses will be dispersed throughout the site. We need to think about the relationships between uses and their users. There is the potential for conflict, for example, between residential and large scale commercial.

5.107 The **Riverside** is very accessible from the roadside and has close connections with the Downs Link, public transport (Number 2 bus) and the Adur River. Water sports and links to blue infrastructure could be possible here. With café or restaurants for those who are using the Downs Link and South Downs Way for recreation. However, there are concerns over the suitability of water sports in this area due to the velocity of the water and the strength of the current.

5.108 The **Cement Works** is a local landmark in the landscape of the South Downs with its distinctive chimney, which can be seen from afar. Here the industrial heritage of this part of the site could form part of a visitor attraction. A visitor centre, café or restaurant could also work well here.

5.109 The **Bowl** and the **Moonscape** are very sensitive both in terms of landscape and biodiversity. They are currently relatively tranquil as they are located some distance from the main road. They could be the best opportunity for recreation and tourism, and still be fairly hidden inside the landscape.



*Zip World, Wales: Zip wire across the old quarry and experience views of the Adur Valley. (Credit: Zip World)*

5.110 There are opportunities in the **Bowl, Moonscape and Clifflands** for the quiet enjoyment of the geodiversity and biodiversity of the site. This could be through the provision of nature and geology trails, bird hides and a visitor/education centre.

5.111 The **Clifflands** form a stunning backdrop to Shoreham Cement Works. They form another aspect of the site that are locally significant and act as a landmark. There are questions around implementing any kind of tourism or change to this part of the site, due to the instability of the chalk cliffs. They provide sensitive habitats for bats and peregrine falcons. Whilst the tops of the cliffs are important for nature, there is a section to the east edge of the **Moonscape** area that is lower value grassland. This section of the **Clifflands** could be suitable for recreational or tourism use although it is currently quite disjointed from the rest of the site and is sensitive in terms of landscape

## Options

5.112 There are a number of options arising from the tourism evidence:

- Firstly, a sensitive, naturalistic approach to attract visitors would conserve and enhance what is already on site in terms of fauna and flora, natural habitats and wildlife. This option would promote education and the special qualities of the National Park with a big push for biodiversity net gain and ecosystem services. This may include walking and rambling, bird watching, nature trails and star gazing in the dark night sky reserve. A café or small restaurant that would not be intrusive to the landscape mosaic could be suitable. This would be situated in the bowl, moonscape and incorporates elements of the cliffs.
- A second option is to celebrate the chalk. Similar to the first option, but with a focus on geology and particularly the chalk. There could be art and sculpture trails, a museum or an art gallery. This would be situated in the **Bowl** and **Moonscape**, with minimal physical interaction with the **Clifflands**. Rock climbing may be possible on the **Clifflands** as part of this option providing there was robust evidence on the stability of the chalk cliffs. There are several indoor rock climbing facilities in the sub-region but none that offer the outdoor

experience. A cable car could carry visitors from the Downs Link to the South Downs Way thus showcasing the **Clifflands** with minimal physical impact.

- The third option is larger scale tourism, focused on recreation that fits within the landscape.
- Finally, the natural amphitheatre of the **Bowl** could be used for live music and festivals. The whole site could be a suitable location for filming. For films or television.



*Dalhalla, Sweden: Open air theatre in old limestone quarry. (Credit: Calle Eklund)*

5.113 The Authority considers that a large scale leisure complex that is not bespoke to the National Park and does not relate to its special qualities is unacceptable at Shoreham Cement Works.

**Question 17: What visitor attractions would you like to see on the redeveloped site?**

**Question 18: What visitor attractions would you not like to see on the redeveloped site?**

**Question 19: What do you think is special about this part of the National Park that could attract visitors and can you suggest how it could be enhanced as part of the redevelopment?**