

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Planning Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>13 July 2023</b>
<b>By</b>	<b>Director of Planning</b>
<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>Update on the Progress of Neighbourhood Planning</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	<b>Update Members on the progress of Neighbourhood Development Plans across the South Downs National Park</b>
<b>Decision</b>	<b>Note</b>

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**Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the progress to date on the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans across the National Park:**

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- There are 61 designated Neighbourhood Areas in the South Downs National Park
- The SDNPA have adopted 41 Neighbourhood Plans which now form part of the Development Plan alongside the South Downs Local Plan and Minerals and Waste Plans
- There are currently 3 Neighbourhood Plans at an advanced state of development having progressed beyond the Regulation 15 Submitted Neighbourhood Plan stage
- There are three designated Neighbourhood Plan areas where the Town or Parish Council have chosen not to proceed with plan preparation
- There are 14 Neighbourhood Plans at the early stages of plan development
- The SDNPA now offer a more standardised support package to Neighbourhood Planning groups providing advice and input at the statutory stages of Neighbourhood Planning only.
- The SDNPA encourage all Town and Parish Councils to engage proactively in the preparation of the South Downs Local Plan Review process, namely appropriate workshops and through the preparation of Parish Priority Statements

## **I. Background**

- 1.1 Outcome 9.2 of the Partnership Management Plan is to support community-led initiatives, which enhance the towns, villages and landscapes of the National Park. Support for neighbourhood plans, and the volunteers who help to prepare them, contributes to this outcome.
- 1.2 There are 61 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) at different stages of development across the National Park. There are currently 41 Made Neighbourhood Plans, 3 NDPs are not being proceeded with and the other 17 NDPs are at different stages of plan preparation. Where a neighbourhood plan includes land outside of the National Park the SDNPA agrees with the other Local Planning Authority which will lead the support to the NDP group. Of the 17 outstanding NDPs, SDNPA is the lead LPA for 4 of them.

- 1.3 There is an established process for a community to follow to prepare a NDP. Once an NDP has successfully passed a community referendum, they become part of the development plan for the National Park, alongside the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) policies and minerals and waste plans. They are also subsequently ‘made’ i.e., adopted by the National Park Authority (NPA). NDPs reflect the vision and aspirations of the local community and can make a positive provision for development and growth, in line with the Local Plan’s development strategy. Once made NDPs are used to help determine planning applications within the parish.
- 1.4 These update reports are produced for presentation at Planning Committee as some responses on NDPs are made by Officers under delegated powers. This update enables Members to be aware of the breadth of NDP’s across the National Park as well as the work officers are undertaking with respect to progressing NDPs. The reports will also be used to inform the Authority Monitoring Report published at the end of the year.
- 1.5 Last year the SDNPA decided to carry out a Local Plan Review (LPR). As part of this review process the SDNPA are encouraging all Town and Parish Councils to prepare Parish Priority Statements (PPS). The PPS provides a mechanism for all town and parish councils to influence the development of the LPR and ensure their communities aspirations are reflected in the policies, designations and allocations of the LPR.

**2. SDNPA Neighbourhood Plan activity**

2.1 Some of the recent NDP activities include:

- The SDNPA provided a response to the Regulation 16 version of the Peacehaven and Telscombe Neighbourhood Plan in March 2023. A number of minor corrections were proposed, and more detailed comments provided to address inaccuracies in Policy PT4 – Impacts on the South Downs National Park. These comments will be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Examiner through the examination.
- The Lyminster and Crossbush Neighbourhood Development Plan was made part of the development plan and adopted by SDNPA in November 2022
- The Steyning Neighbourhood Development Plan was made part of the development plan and adopted by SDNPA in September 2022.
- The SDNPA provided a response to the Regulation 16 consultation on the Rowlands Castle Neighbourhood Plan. These comments were considered by the Examiner and a number of modifications are proposed to the Rowlands Castle Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the SDNPA comments.
- The West Saltdean Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum were approved by the SDNPA in August 2022
- The Alfriston Neighbourhood Area was designated by the SDNPA in February 2022

2.2 There are currently 41 adopted NDPs in the National Park, a further 17 NDPs are at different stages of preparation and 3 NDPs are not proceeding. A summary of the status of NDPs across the National Park is provided at Table 1.

Stage	Total NDPs	SDNPA lead
Made	41	18
Submission (Reg16) and Examination	3	0
Pre-submission (Reg 14) draft	0	0
Plans in Preparation	14	4
Plans not proceeded with	3	2

Stage	Total NDPs	SDNPA lead
Designated neighbourhood areas	61 (inc. Sheet, and Singleton which are not being proceeded with and the Steyning, Wiston, Ashurst and Bramber cluster which was undesignated)	24

**Table 1: Status of NDPs as of June 2023**

2.3 As table 1 shows there are currently 4 active Neighbourhood Plans in the South Downs National Park who have yet to reach the first formal stage of public consultation (regulation 14) where SDNPA is the lead LPA. These Neighbourhood Planning groups continue to work to develop a draft neighbourhood plan, each plan is listed below with a brief summary of current status.

- **Funtington Neighbourhood Plan**

The Neighbourhood Area was designated in March 2021. SDNPA officers attended a public event to provide advice and guidance on the preparation of an NDP in March 2021. There has been no further development on the plan since and the Neighbourhood Plan steering group last met in June 2022.

- **Greatham Neighbourhood Plan**

The Neighbourhood Area was designated in June 2019. SDNPA officers attended a number of parish council meetings since the area designation, however, there has been no significant development in plan preparation.

- **East Dean and Friston**

The Neighbourhood Area was designated in April 2019. There have been a number of Parish Council meetings and public events which the SDNPA have attended since the designation of the plan area. The SDNPA have provided advice and input on possible content and structure of the NDP. The Parish Council continue to prepare a draft NDP for regulation 14 consultation but currently there is limited progress.

- **Alfriston Neighbourhood Plan**

The Neighbourhood Area was designated in February 2022. SDNPA officers attended a Parish Council meeting in June 2022 to provide advice and guidance on the possible content and function of an NDP. A neighbourhood plan committee was formed, and the committee continue to meet to prepare a draft NDP, the committee met most recently in September 2022.

2.4 There are 10 other NDPs in preparation where the National Park Authority are not the lead planning authority to support Neighbourhood Plan making. Officers maintain an open dialogue with the lead planning authority and will offer advice and input where this is necessary to deliver National Park Purposes and Duty.

2.5 Details of the Made Neighbourhood Plans can be found at Appendix I to this report.

### 3. An alternative to Neighbourhood Planning

3.1 Following the launch of the South Downs Local Plan Review, the National Park Authority wrote to all Town and Parish Councils with made neighbourhood plans to advise them of the SDNPA intention to review the South Downs Local Plan.

3.2 The SDNPA have made clear to all Town and Parish Councils that the Authority will be offering less support and advice than it has in the past to those preparing a NDP or

reviewing and existing made NDP. This is a response to the resources available across the National Park, and recognising that many of our NDP group now have established experience in planning in a protected landscape. The adopted Neighbourhood Plans will remain in effect, as many have plan periods of 15 years or more. Therefore, whilst reviews may not take place, the adopted NDPs will remain part of the development plan.

- 3.3 The SDNPA will continue to offer support to NDP groups preparing plans at the statutory stages of plan making, as is required by National Planning Practice Guidance and legislation. The SDNPA will respond to all Regulation 14 and 16 consultations where they have the potential to affect the National Park or its setting and will support all SDNPA led NDPs through the Examination and Referendum process.
- 3.4 The SDNPA have offered an alternative method for Town and Parish Councils to inform the planning systems and plan making process. This will be in the form of preparing a Parish Priority Statement (PPS). PPS will allow town and parish councils to set out their aspirations for the future and identify any local issues which will be of relevance to the LPR process. Once prepared and considered by the SDNPA these PPS will form part of the evidence base underpinning the Local Plan Review process. They are offered as an alternative to Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Plan reviews. They provide communities with an opportunity to influence plan making and policy development in the National Park without significant resource or investment which is often required when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. PPS follow the limited guidelines set for ‘Neighbourhood Priorities Statements’ in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to allow PPS to be easily converted to NPS once the legislation is in place.
- 3.5 Following the launch of the PPS a number of Town and Parish Councils have indicated their intention to prepare a PPS and submit these to the Authority by October 2023 to allow for their consideration in the preparation of the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan Review.
- 3.6 If a Town or Parish Council choose instead to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Plan review they have been asked to make clear their intention to do so by 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023, so the SDNPA can take this into consideration in the Local Plan Review process.

**4. Resource Implications**

- 4.1 The SDNPA receives funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to support work on neighbourhood planning, known as the New Burdens Grant. The cost of Neighbourhood Planning to the SDNPA (excluding staff costs) is normally covered by the grant. A table listing the made NDPs in the South Downs National Park is shown at the end of Appendix I of this report.
- 4.2 There are further emerging NDPs yet to be ‘made’ in the National Park. All of these are NDPs for villages where the cost of examination and referendum is unlikely to exceed the available grant.
- 4.3 If Town or Parish Councils decide to review their made Neighbourhood Plan, the SDNPA is able to use MHCLG funding to cover the cost of reviews proportionate to the scope of review undertaken.

**5. Other implications**

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No – within budget and grants received

Implication	Yes*/No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	We will seek to achieve best value in all the work we do on Neighbourhood Planning across the National Park. Working in partnership with Town and Parish Councils is an effective way to share costs and reduce the burden on plan making for Neighbourhood Planning, but we would encourage all Town and Parish Councils to consider Parish Priority Statements as these offer a more efficient way to influence plan making in the National Park.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	Neighbourhood Plans have the potential to contribute to a number of the PMP and corporate plan objectives. Neighbourhood Plans will also contribute to the three corporate priorities, but in particular offer opportunities in relation to Nature Recovery and Climate Change. The key Partnership Management Plan outcome which Neighbourhood Plan contributes to is <b>9.2 to support community-led initiatives, which enhance the towns, villages and landscapes of the National Park</b>
Links to other projects or partner organisations	None
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	Neighbourhood Planning provides an opportunity to prepare more localised policies on climate change both in terms of mitigation and adaptation.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	The requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, will be considered for appropriate expenditure and programmes undertaken by the Authority
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Due regard has been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equalities Act 2010. The qualifying body with responsibility for preparing the neighbourhood plan must prepare a Consultation Statement demonstrating how they have consulted the local community and statutory consultees. The examiner who assesses the plan will consider whether the Consultation Statement meets regulatory requirements.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	It is considered that the proposal does not raise any health and safety implications.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None

Implication	Yes*/No
<p>Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?</p>	<p>The qualifying body with responsibility for preparing the neighbourhood plan must demonstrate how its plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This is set out in the Basic Conditions Statement. The examiner who assessed the plan considered that it met the requirements. Please note that the sustainability objectives used by qualifying bodies may not be the same as used by the SDNPA, but they will follow similar themes.</p>

**6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision**

6.1 There are not considered to be any risks associated with this report or decision to note the update.

**TIM SLANEY**

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Appendices I. Made Neighbourhood Plans in the South Downs National Park

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager

External Consultees None

Background Documents None