

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	13 July 2023
By	Director of Planning
Title of Report	Equestrian Development Technical Advice Note
Purpose of Report	Approve the use of the Equestrian Development Technical Advice Note

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Approve the Equestrian Development Technical Advice Note set out in Appendix I for publication subject to any changes proposed by the Committee;**
 - 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee to make any minor changes to the Equestrian Development Technical Advice Note**
-

Executive Summary

- Equestrian development applications are frequent within the National Park and can range from large-scale polo stables, livery businesses to a single pet pony. But all can have implications for landscape and views, individually or cumulatively. Equestrian applications often touch upon all aspects of South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) work from access and economy to water quality and land management.
- In response to this the TAN seeks to provide concise and straightforward advice to applicants and officers whilst signposting (rather than repeating) existing information and guidance.
- The purposes of the Technical Advice Note (TAN) set out in Appendix I are; to expand upon Policy SD24; make clear links between equestrian land use and landscape; and to guide consistency across officer responses.
- The TAN provides guidance for applicants and officers on appropriate equestrian development within the National Park. The TAN takes a positive approach to explaining how to make planning applications for equestrian proposals.

I. Background

- I.1** Equestrian developments bring a fairly unique set of requirements, they can be relatively complex, and have implications for landscape and views and therefore a TAN was considered to be a useful resource for both applicants and officers.
- I.2** Representatives from different disciplines within the Authority created a small working group to develop some guidance. With the help of a landscape and equestrian specialist, this guidance was worked up into two main themes to be used across the Authority. These are:

- Planning theme – Equestrian TAN
 - Land management theme – A land management guidance section on the SDNPA website.
- 1.3 Consideration by Members of the committee is sought for the TAN only. The update to the website guidance is considered to be more of an operational matter.
- 1.4 SD24 is the Equestrian Development Policy and sets out some key requirements which the TAN seeks to explain. In particular around ‘scale and intensity of use’ where these link to minimising negative effects on landscape/special qualities and land management where SD24 requires a ‘conservation-based land management plan’.
- 1.5 The TAN seeks to provide positive guidance, information and support for applicants, officers and Members when dealing with equestrian developments. It sets out how it is possible to both keep or graze horses in a way which can generate wider benefits for wildlife and the whole landscape. It is hoped the TAN would be used by those seeking planning permission or those undertaking changes under Permitted Development.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 Prior to consideration by Members, the draft TAN has been the subject of a 6-week consultation with key stakeholders and members of the public. The following were consulted across the National Park:
- Statutory Consultees including; Local Planning Authorities and Natural England
 - Parish and Town Councils
 - British Horse Society
 - Individuals who had requested to participate
 - Separately the consultation was also shared with the Local Access Forums
- 2.2 Across respondents there was significant broad support for the TAN. The consultees have provided detailed and helpful comments in response to the draft TAN. These can be seen in full in the Consultation Table background paper, but the main themes highlighted are summarised below:
- Statutory Consultees*
- Agreed there is a need for guidance.
 - Ensuring it is communicated to LPAs that cross the SDNPA boundary or just outside.
- Parish & Town Councils*
- Confusion about what might be Permitted Development and what might require planning permission and the triggers for these.
 - Concern about the proliferation of field shelters and fencing.
 - Concern about control and monitoring over field shelters and fencing but also other associated structures such as mobile homes, or storage containers.
 - A general desire for SDNPA to have more control over the above.
 - A keenness to ensure positive environmental outcomes for landscape more broadly and specific issues such as water quality or biodiversity.
 - General support for guidance on stocking density.
- British Horse Society*
- Highlighted the importance of considering stocking density on a case by case basis and sometimes the need to avoid horses fighting.

- 2.3 The comments have been addressed in the latest draft TAN (see Appendices). Where comments relate to matters outside of SDNPA control, such as Permitted Development, the TAN has sought to provide a simple explanation and signposting.
- 2.4 Overall the consultation has highlighted how difficult it is to provide hard and fast guidance where so many factors require consideration. The TAN however seeks to clarify some grey areas and to aid consistent decision-making, this is intended to help case officers weigh in the balance the needs of the landscape and those particular circumstances of the applicant when reaching a recommendation.

3. The Equestrian TAN

- 3.1 The content of the TAN seeks to provide clear and concise guidance in a format which is easy to understand. The guidance balances 3 topics; planning policy, landscape and equestrian activity. It provides technical advice on planning, permitted development and landscape assessment and sets out SDNPA's expectations for equestrian planning applications.
- 3.2 The document is written positively and seeks to sign-post and cross reference to guidance provided elsewhere, for example Dark Night Skies. In response to the bespoke approach needed, it provides opportunities for users to seek further clarification or to submit a Do I need Planning Permission or pre-application request.

4. Going Forward

- 4.1 If planning committee approve the TAN it will be published on the SDNPA website. It will be a material consideration that will be taken into account by decision makers at the Authority and host authorities when determining planning applications for equestrian developments. Training will be organised for SDNPA and host authority officers.
- 4.2 Longer term, officers wish to produce a case study demonstrating how positive outcomes can be generated through equestrian development.

5. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Limited. The TAN was produced by officers with a small amount of consultant input and will be used, proportionately, by planning officers when considering equestrian development in the National Park.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Provides guidance to assist officers and applicants on equestrian development; a common type of application in the National Park.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	Outcome 1 – Landscape & natural beauty Outcome 2 – Increasing resilience Outcome 3 – Habitats & species Outcome 8 – Creating custodians Outcome 10 – Great places to work
Links to other projects or partner organisations	Closely relates to some of the work being undertaken by The Aquifer Partnership in relation to water quality and equestrian land-use.

Implication	Yes*/No
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	Guiding better land management through the TAN and associated web pages, raises awareness and increases resilience and adaptation of equestrian land to a changing climate.
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	There are no direct implications arising from this report.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy? 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance 5. Using sound science responsibly	The TAN seeks to implement the South Downs Local Plan for which a full sustainability appraisal was carried out. Good land management is inherently sustainable.

6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Don't publish TAN and therefore there is no specific guidance for equestrian development (a common form of development in the National Park).	Low	Low	Publish TAN to guide applicants, officers and Members.

TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer: Ruth Childs (Landscape Officer)

Tel: 01730 819279

Email: ruth.childs@southdowns.gov.uk

Appendices I. Draft Equestrian Development Technical Advice Note

SDNPA Consultees Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services.

External Consultees Statutory and non-statutory consultees.

Background Documents Consultation Table

South Downs Local Plan

