



**South Downs National Park
Statement of Community
Involvement – Draft for
Consultation
(Version 6)**

Draft for Consultation

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The Statement of Community Involvement is available:

- On the SDNPA website [via this link](#)
- At the South Downs Centre, Midhurst
- By post, on request

Draft for Consultation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) will consult with all stakeholders, including local communities, businesses and public bodies, on planning matters.

This is a draft sixth version of the SCI with the first adopted in 2012. This latest version of the SCI proposes to make changes to the approach to consultation on planning policy, setting out key principles and introducing the preparation of bespoke 'Community Involvement Plans' for separate planning policy consultations.

Changes to the planning system and the context of the SCI are explained further in the Introduction.

Consultation and engagement on Planning Policy and Development Management (the planning application process), are covered in chapters 3 and 4 respectively.

Neighbourhood Planning is a key part of planning for local communities in the South Downs National Park. Consultation on neighbourhood planning is covered in chapter 5.

Draft for Consultation

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I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) agreed to consult on a revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in March 2024 to amend the approach to consultations on planning policy, setting out key principles and introducing the preparation of bespoke 'Community Involvement Plans' for separate planning policy consultations. The changes are dealt with in section 3) Approach to consultation (Planning Policy).
- I.2 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) first adopted its *Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)* in 2012 to highlight the role that communities and other key partners play in influencing the formulation of planning policies and the determination of planning applications in the area. It identified what the Authority would do to ensure that the local community was proactively involved and has the opportunity to 'have their say' in planning decisions. Public participation remains at the heart of the process and allows interested parties to influence the decisions made.

I a) WHAT IS A STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT?

- I.3 The SCI sets out how the SDNPA will effectively involve residents, groups, organisations, businesses, other representatives and individuals within the community in decisions on planning applications and in the preparation and review of planning policies.

Data Protection

- I.4 The consultation and engagement methods in the SCI, including the recording and storage of personal data for those purposes, will be conducted in accordance with the principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

I b) THE PLANNING SYSTEM

- I.5 The planning system is underpinned by Acts of Parliament and guided by Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Greater community participation and empowerment is high on the national agenda as outlined in the Localism Act 2011 and the NPPF. The Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017) aimed to strengthen planning at the community level and the impact on consultation is outlined below. The power of digital engagement tools is also a key focus of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- I.6 The NPPF sets out the Government's policies for the system of writing plans, the planning application process and clarifies the overarching objectives for sustainable development. Particular reference is made to National Parks in the document (paragraphs 182, 183). It also directs readers to the *English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular (2010)* for further guidance (NPPF footnote 63).

- I.7 Each Local Authority is required to produce a Local Plan, which can be reviewed in whole or in part. Any additional development plan documents should only be used where clearly justified.
- I.8 Paragraph 16 of the NPPF promotes early and meaningful engagement with the local community so that Local Plans are reflective of a collective vision and set agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that have been made.
- I.9 The NPPF also sets one of the overarching roles of the planning system as having a set of core land-use principles that underpin plan-making and decision-taking. One of those principles is to empower local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting a positive vision for the future of the area.

The Localism Act 2011

- I.10 The *Localism Act 2011* introduced a number of changes to the planning system. These included the introduction of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) and Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDO) and the removal of Regional Spatial Strategies, such as the *South East Plan*.

The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017

- I.11 The *Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017)* became law on 27 April 2017 and aims to strengthen neighbourhood planning.
- I.12 Measures in the Act make the following changes:
- Section 6 made it necessary for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to set out in their SCI the policies for giving advice or assistance on proposals for the making, or modification, of NDPs
 - LPAs must take account of well-advanced NDPs and give these plans full legal effect at an earlier stage, and an adopted NDP forms part of the Development Plan
 - LPAs must notify the Parish Council (or neighbourhood forum) of planning applications if there is a NDP in place in that area
 - Section 13 amends the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)* to require LPAs to set out in their SCIs their policies for involving interested parties in the preliminary stages of plan-making
 - Local authorities in England must identify the strategic priorities for development in their areas in an up-to-date plan
 - The Act also restricts the use of pre-commencement conditions on planning permissions
 - The Act gives power to the Secretary of State to require the LPA to prepare joint local plans and to intervene where local plan preparation is failing

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

- I.13 In September 2023 Government consulted on proposed changes to the plan-making system being introduced through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The

proposals include a 30 month plan timescale incorporating three 'Gateway' checks by the Planning Inspectorate or similar body. The new 30 month plan timeframe includes three participation and consultation stages on the emerging plan. Secondary legislation is expected later this year with the intention of the new planning system commencing in Autumn 2024.

Ic) THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY AND PLANNING

- I.14 The SDNPA assumed its full planning responsibilities as local planning authority (including minerals and waste planning) for the National Park on 01 April 2011.
- I.15 The SDNPA's role is to ensure that the two purposes of National Park designation are achieved. These purposes, set out in the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act (1949), as amended by the *Environment Act (1995)*, are:
- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area; and
 - Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
- I.16 In pursuing these purposes, the SDNPA also has the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park.
- I.17 The South Downs National Park (SDNP) covers parts of: Adur, Arun, Chichester, East Hampshire, Eastbourne, Horsham, Lewes, Mid-Sussex, Wealden, Winchester and Worthing districts, Brighton and Hove unitary authority area, and includes land within the counties of Hampshire, East Sussex and West Sussex (Map, see Appendix I).
- I.18 As the local planning authority for the National Park the SDNPA is responsible for:
1. Spatial planning;
 2. Minerals and waste planning;
 3. Development management;
 4. Planning enforcement and;
 5. Other related regulatory functions within the National Park.
- I.19 In July 2019, the SDNPA adopted the South Downs Local Plan (SDLP) providing policies for determining planning applications within the National Park. The SDLP replaced over a thousand policies across the National Park.
- I.20 The SDNPA receives on average 4,000-5,000 planning applications each year. To maximise use of resources and maintain local engagement and involvement, the SDNPA works in partnership with the local authorities covering the National Park to deliver the planning service. Legal agreements have been in place since 2011 with five of the authorities ('host authorities'): Chichester, East Hampshire, Horsham, Lewes and

Winchester. The agreements delegate the decision making power to the host authority, who are then able to determine planning applications on behalf of the SDNPA. The development management service and enforcement are delivered directly by the SDNPA in Arun, Adur and Worthing, Brighton and Hove, Wealden and Mid-Sussex.

- I.21 In these local authority areas where the planning service has been ‘recovered’ by the SDNPA all development management work, including processing of all applications and related activities, will be undertaken directly by the SDNPA.
- I.22 As the SDNPA is the minerals and waste planning authority it is responsible for areas within the SDNP previously covered by Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex County Councils and Brighton and Hove City Council.
- I.23 Through working in partnership we now have adopted the following joint minerals and waste local plans:
 - East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan (2013)
 - East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (2017)
 - Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (2013)
 - West Sussex Waste Plan (2014)
 - West Sussex and South Downs Joint Local Minerals Plan (2018) (Partial Review March 2021)

I d) PARISH WORKSHOPS

- I.24 The SDNPA recognise the important role Town and Parish Councils play in engaging with communities across the South Downs and can support the Authority in disseminating important information about the work of the Authority. The SDNPA established a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with The Associations of Local Councils within the South Downs to establish a process for engaging with all Town and Parish Councils across the National Park.
- I.25 The Authority, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, carried out a review in 2021 of the Town and Parish Council workshops, liaising with SDNPA parish nominated members to understand how the Authority can more effectively engage with Local Councils. Following the review the Authority will now hold three engagement activities with Town and Parish Councils every year. The Authority will hold one Parish webinar for Town and Parish Councils and the wider community (summer). The webinar will present details on a key topic relevant to delivery of an Outcome identified in the Partnership Management Plan. The webinar will provide an opportunity for local communities to share best practice on local projects on this topic.
- I.26 In addition to the SDNPA webinar the Authority will hold two Parish meetings per year. One in the Spring and one in the Autumn. The aim is to have at least one of these virtual and Park-wide to enable better cross-parish sharing. These meetings are an opportunity for Town and Parish Councils to hear about the work of the SDNPA in

their local area; they also give Town and Parish Councils an opportunity to raise concerns they may have and ask questions of SDNPA officers and Members.

- I.27 The Parish meetings will cover topics including The Partnership Management Plan, South Downs Local Plan, and provide updates on key projects in the SDNPA. The workshops will also be used to facilitate engagement and consultation on key SDNPA policy.

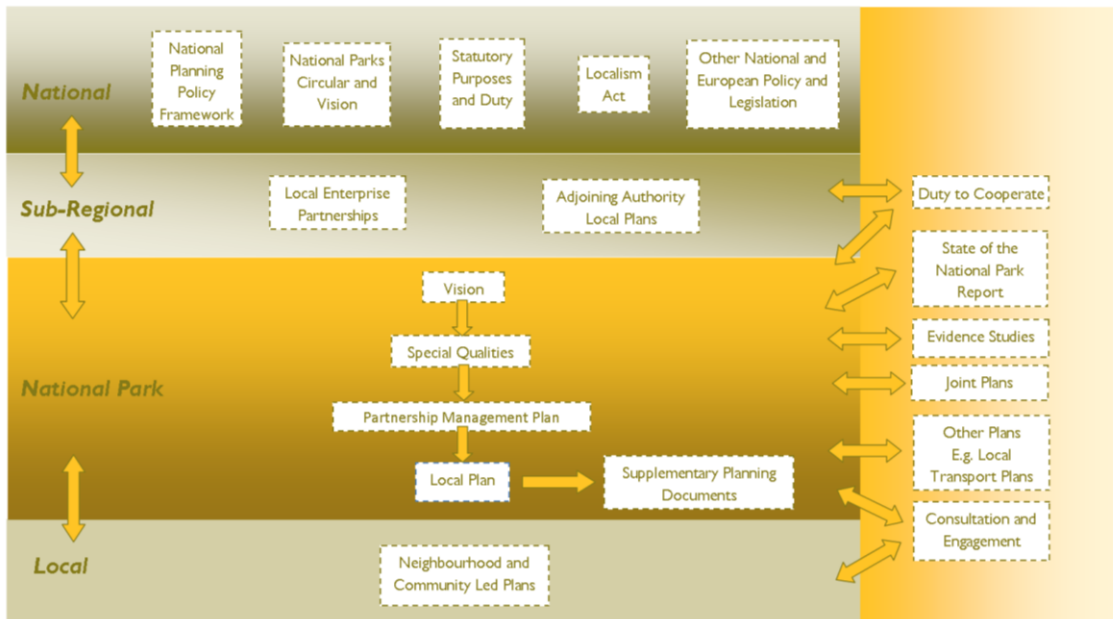
I e) DEVELOPING THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- I.28 During July and August 2011, the SDNPA notified individuals, groups and organisations of its intention to prepare a SCI and invited people to provide their comments and views on how and when they would like to get involved in the planning policy and the planning application process. The comments received informed the original SCI.
- I.29 A second consultation was carried out for eight weeks between 17 October 2011 and 9 December 2011. This asked for comments on the content, format and ease of use of the document. These comments informed the SCI, adopted on 13 March 2012.
- I.30 In January 2014 and August 2017, the SDNPA updated the adopted SCI. These changes were focused primarily on factual updates as a result of changing national planning policy and legislation.
- I.31 The SDNPA updated the adopted SCI in August 2021 to reflect the adoption of the South Downs Local Plan and changes in legislation and national policy some of which were a response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- I.32 In early 2024, the SDNPA agreed to consult on further changes to the SCI to revise the approach to consultations on planning policy. This includes setting out key principles and introducing bespoke 'Community Involvement Plans' for separate policy document consultations.
- I.33 The SDNPA will continue to regularly review the SCI to ensure it reflects any changes in legislation.

2. DEVELOPING PLANNING POLICY

2a) THE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1. The diagram below (Figure 2.1) shows the different documents that together make up the planning policy framework.



2.2. The Development Plan Documents (DPD) set out planning policies to deliver the spatial strategy for the SDNPA (see Appendix 2 for list of the documents making up the Development Plan for the South Downs National Park). The different types of DPDs in the National Park are:

- Local Plan
- Area Action Plans
- Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plans
- Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs)

Neighbourhood Development Plans

2.3. Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) are DPDs prepared by local communities. Adoption or making will be subject to majority support at a local referendum.

2.4. Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. It allows local communities to:

- Set planning policies through a NDP that is used in determining planning applications

- Grant planning permission through NDOs and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order
- 2.5. There are a number of other supporting documents which inform or monitor the plan making process:
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
 - Local Development Scheme (LDS)
 - Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 2.6. Supplementary Planning Documents expand upon existing policy or provide further detail to policies in the Local Plan, for example a Design Guide. They should only be used where clearly justified to help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.

Technical Advice Notes

- 2.7. Technical Advice Notes (TANs) are non-statutory documents that provide explanatory information and advice to applicants on specific policies. Consultation is discretionary and will be conducted using a method most appropriate to each individual TAN.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.8. A *Sustainability Appraisal (SA)* of the Local Plan is required by law; this must also incorporate the requirements of the *European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEA)*. The main purpose of the SA process is to assess the potential positive and negative impacts of policies, whether social, environmental or economic, at an early stage, allowing any negative effects to be mitigated. The appraisal is subject to consultation, and takes place alongside the preparation of the Local Plan. The SA for the Local Plan can be viewed on the [SDNPA website](#). Consultation with the statutory consultees (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) is also carried out on the scoping report for the SA for a period of five weeks in accordance with the Regulations. Some NDPs also require Strategic Environmental Assessment and the SDNPA will screen NDPs to assess whether this is necessary once the scope of the plans has been established.

3. APPROACH TO CONSULTATION (PLANNING POLICY)

3a) KEY PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT IN PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 The SDNPA recognises that each planning policy consultation will need a bespoke approach in order to reach relevant and representative audiences and to suit the stage of plan- making. The SCI sets out key principles that apply to all planning policy consultations, the detailed approach to engagement or consultation will be set out in bespoke **Community Involvement Plans (CIP)**.
- 3.2 Key Principles:
- a. **Timely** engagement and consultation – allowing early and ample opportunity to engage in policy formulation. We will provide early notification of upcoming consultations through the SDNPA website and Planning Newsletter. We will endeavour to avoid running any planning policy consultations during August or over the Christmas and New Year period. If it is necessary for a consultation to run over these periods, then the length of consultation will be extended.
 - b. **Inclusive** engagement and consultation – which is accessible to all those who want to take part including additional outreach to engage with underrepresented groups. These can include:
 - Young people (specifically aged 16-24)
 - People with disabilities (including people with learning disabilities)
 - People from socially deprived areas (including areas of rural deprivation and urban areas on the edge of the National Park)
 - Black and Minority Ethnic groups (including Gypsies and Travellers)
 - People with no or limited internet access
 - People with children/and other caring commitments who may not be able to attend evening meetings
 - c. **Effective and efficient** for both those responding to a consultation and for the SDNPA processing and analysing responses. We will look to use existing networks and events to save time and resources. We will maximise the use of digital engagement tools to widen public participation. Engagement and consultation exercises will be proportionate to the scale and importance of the matter under consideration. Ongoing monitoring will measure the effectiveness of different engagement and consultation methods.

- d. **Clear results and accountability** – the SDNPA will acknowledge any comments on DPD consultations received electronically. At the end of each period of consultation we will analyse the responses received and prepare a summary report. The summary report will be published on the SDNPA's website and will be considered by Planning Committee at the appropriate stage when making subsequent decisions on planning policy.

3b) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLANS

- 3.3 The SDNPA recognise there is no “one size fits all” approach to engagement and consultation; and that each stage of Plan preparation may require different approaches to reach audiences as widely as possible. The SCI therefore requires that a bespoke Community Involvement Plan (CIP) be prepared for individual engagement or consultation exercises, which uses the key principles of the SCI and furthers the aim to engage underrepresented groups.
- 3.4 The CIP should cover the following, and reflect the key principles outlined above:
- Why people are being involved?
 - Who is to be involved?
 - When will people be able to get involved?
 - How will people be involved?
 - How the results of community involvement will be used.

3c) WHO WILL WE CONSULT?

- 3.5 Section 13 of *The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017* amends the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)* to require local planning authorities to set out in their Statements of Community Involvement their policies for involving interested parties in the preliminary stages of plan-making.
- 3.6 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is committed to opening the planning process to all sections of the community and hearing from as many groups and individuals as possible throughout the development of planning policy. There are existing legal requirements for consultation set out in the *Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012)*. The regulations categorise consultees into two groups (see also Appendix 3). These are:
- **Specific Consultation Bodies** - The regulations list specific organisations and types of organisations that should be defined as specific bodies. A local planning authority must consult with those organisations in this list that they consider may have an interest in the subject of the proposed planning document.
 - **General Consultation Bodies** - The regulations list categories of organisations that should be defined as general consultation bodies. A local planning authority must consult with those organisations in their list of general consultation bodies, as they consider appropriate.

3.7 We will maintain a **consultee database** for all those who wish to be kept informed and alerted to consultations (if you would like to be added to or removed from this list, or would like to update your contact details please contact the Planning Policy Team at planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk).

3.8 In consulting with the local community the SDNPA will take all reasonable efforts to make documents accessible to everyone. All documents made available online will be web accessible. Web accessibility encompasses all disabilities that affect access to the web, including auditory; cognitive; neurological; physical; speech and visual.

3.9 Not everyone has access to the internet. The SDNPA will provide hard copies of consultation documents (either as a resource at a public venue or in response to individual requests where appropriate). The Authority will also ensure there are always alternative response methods available that do not require the internet (e.g. paper copies of response forms).

3d) HOW WE WILL CONSULT

3.10 We use a variety of mechanisms for consultation and engagement, particularly when undertaking additional outreach to underrepresented groups. We are mindful of the different levels of participation and influence in plan-making. We will therefore broaden our approach and encourage wider contributions and involvement from local communities, by ensuring our approach covers informing, engaging / consulting and co-designing policy with stakeholders and partners where appropriate and realistic. The SDNPA will make use of digital engagement tools for consultation with the public and other stakeholders to boost public engagement. Additional methods the Authority has tried and implemented in recent years include:

- Making documents available in different formats (for example in larger print or braille) and languages (on request)
- Engaging through any existing networks and establishing links with existing groups
- Providing hard copy documents, or parts of documents (on request) and enabling consultee response by letter
- Ensuring consultations are publicised effectively and it is clear how people can get involved in the process
- Providing electronic copies of documents on 'memory sticks'
- Providing a phone service for members of the public to ring to discuss any consultation documents.
- Using Social media channels such as Instagram and twitter to promote consultations
- Creating and filming You Tube videos to further explain consultations

3e) MINIMUM CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 3.11 DPDs include Local Plans, Minerals & Waste Plans and Area Action Plans. The tables below show the minimum consultation required by the current Regulations during the production of a DPD. The SDNPA commonly prepares joint Mineral & Waste Plans with relevant local planning authorities. County Councils leading on the consultation of these plans, will ensure minimum regulatory consultation requirements are met.
- 3.12 It is standard practice to consult on main modifications to a DPD after its examination hearings. These consultations will normally be limited to those who have been previously engaged in the plan at Regulation 18 and 19 stages because new issues cannot be addressed at this point in the process.

FIGURE 3.1: CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Minimum consultation required by Regulations

Regulation 18	Regulation 19
Notify each of the Specific Consultation Bodies that the SDNPA considers may have an interest in the DPD and invite representations.	Send, to those Specific Consultation Bodies invited to make representations at Reg. 18, a statement of where proposed Submission documents are available and the procedure for making representations.
Notify those of the General Consultation Bodies that the SDNPA considers appropriate and invite representations.	Send, to those General Consultation Bodies invited to make representations at Reg. 18, a statement of where proposed Submission documents are available and the procedure for making representations.
Invite representations from persons who are resident or carrying on business in the National Park as the SDNPA decides is appropriate.	Any person may make representations on a proposed Submission document (that would include residents or those carrying on business) [N.B. This provision is in Reg. 20]
Methods used to notify these bodies and invite representations: either email or where email is not available by letter in post.	Methods used to send statement of where proposed Submission documents available and how to make representations: either email or where email is not available by letter in post.
The SDNPA must carry out the consultation on the DPD for a period of not less than six weeks.	The SDNPA must carry out the consultation on the DPD for a period of not less than six weeks.
Copies of the proposed document(s) to be made available in The South Downs Centre.	Copies of the proposed Submission document(s) to be made available in The South Downs Centre.
Provide web-based proposed document(s).	Provide web-based proposed Submission document(s).

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 3.13 The table below shows the minimum consultation required during the production of a SPD and the additional range of methods to be used by the SDNPA as it sees appropriate for the type and coverage of document and the resource implications for the SDNPA.
- 3.14 Consultation on a draft SPD will involve two stages. For the first stage there is no prescription in the Regulations as to how this consultation is conducted. SDNPA will carry out this consultation for a minimum of six weeks. For the second stage the minimum requirements for consultation are explained in Figure 3.2 below. After both stages any issues raised and how these were addressed, along with any necessary changes to the SPD, will be summarised in the consultation statement referred to in Figure 3.2.

FIGURE 3.2: CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS (SPD)

<p>Minimum consultation required by Regulations (SPD)</p>
<p>Before adopting an SPD, the authority must prepare a consultation statement setting out who has been consulted, a summary of the main issues raised and how these issues have been addressed in the SPD (that is who was consulted and the issues raised from the first consultation).</p>
<p>Before adopting an SPD the proposed document must be made available for comment along with the consultation statement. There is a minimum statutory period of four weeks allowed for any representations to be made (Reg. 12).</p>

3f) OPTIONAL CONSULTATION METHODS

- 3.15 The following are a list of additional consultation methods for DPD and SPD production processes, which may also be used by the SDNPA:
- Early notification through Planning Newsletter
 - Production of summary leaflet to accompany DPD/SPD documents
 - Consultation of general consultees as appropriate (e.g. may depend on location for SPDs)
 - Notification to all contacts in consultee database
 - Public meetings and / or manned and unmanned exhibitions
 - Public notices / posters
 - Media release
 - Stakeholder workshop
 - Virtual events
 - You Tube videos

- Social media press releases and posts
- Consultation phone service
- Use of QR codes to easily access online information
- Online surveys and polls
- Place specific notifications / publicity
- Interactive map based consultation tools

3g) ONGOING ENGAGEMENT ON PLANNING POLICIES

3.16 We are committed to providing as much information as possible and keeping our local communities up to date with the progress of planning policy development, as well as providing information on the wider / national changes to the planning system.

3.17 Three channels that we will utilise are:

- **Website** - we will maintain the SDNPA website, publishing regular updates and information, documents, and contact details. This should be a first port of call to members of the community and stakeholders
- **Planning Newsletter** - the SDNPA produce a newsletter, covering a range of topics relating to planning. The newsletter is sent via email to all contacts on the consultee database and published on the SDNPA website ([click here for link to Planning Newsletter](#)). Paper copies will be made available to those without access to email or the internet
- **Media Releases and Social Media** - the SDNPA will publicise consultations through media releases and through social media channels

4. APPROACH TO CONSULTATION (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)

4a) INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 Development Management is responsible for processing and determining planning applications, along with other applications including works to trees, advertisements and listed buildings. These planning services are provided by either the SDNPA or local authorities through hosted arrangements. The Development Management teams provide pre-application planning advice and investigate and take appropriate action in respect of breaches of planning control.
- 4.2 Involvement of the community and stakeholders at an early stage of the decision-making process is more likely to deliver development which meets their needs and aspirations, whilst ensuring the statutory purposes of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) are adhered to. The *Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)* is an important tool for involving the wider community in the planning process, particularly in the decision making process for key planning applications.
- 4.3 Determination of planning applications is dealt with either by councils (host authorities) within the SDNPA, or directly by the SDNPA where the planning services have been 'recovered', as explained in section 1d) above.

4b) CALL-IN PROCEDURE

- 4.4 Within the authority areas where the role of dealing with the applications is delegated i.e. the host authorities, the SDNPA will also identify key applications which could potentially generate particular, special or major issues for the National Park and which will then be 'called in' to be dealt with by the SDNPA.
- 4.5 The 'call in' process is a 'Direction' served on the relevant local authority by the SDNPA stating the reason for the 'call in'. In some cases an application may be major development [in terms of its size as defined by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended], but it is not considered likely to have a significant adverse impact on the beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage or recreational opportunities provided by the South Downs National Park (SDNP). In those cases a 'Reverse Direction' is served which allows the local council to continue dealing with the application. Directions can be served at any time after the application has been accepted as valid, up to the point before a decision is made. In some cases the SDNPA may accept a host authority recommendation to its planning committee, but would issue a 'Potential Recovery Direction' (informally "red card") which gives the SDNPA an opportunity to call the application in if local councillors resolve to make a

decision against officer recommendation. All such Directions are published on the SDNPA website on the [planning register](#) and can be found in the list of documents for the relevant application.

4c) PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

- 4.6 The SDNPA directly provides the pre-application service for the parts of Arun District Council, Adur and Worthing Council, Eastbourne Brough Council, Brighton and Hove City Council, Mid Sussex District Council and Wealden District Council within the National Park. Outside these areas, but within the National Park, the host authorities will continue to provide the pre-application service on our behalf.
- 4.7 Advice provided by SDNPA is free for householder proposals although there may be a charge if a meeting is required. Advice for other forms of development will be subject to a fee depending on the proposals.
- 4.8 For applications which are likely to be 'called in' and considered by the SDNPA, any pre-application advice registration and fee charges are still administered by the relevant host authority but a planning officer from the SDNPA may provide the advice.
- 4.9 In order to operate a transparent service, the final pre-application response will be placed on the online planning register at the point of which a relevant formal planning application is received and validated by the Authority at the site.
- 4.10 Applicants will be encouraged to consult the community when developing their proposal in a way that is proportionate to the scale and impact of the proposal. The SDNPA's *Local Validation List* is a list of documents and information that, together with the national government list, will be required before an application is accepted as valid. This list can be found on our [website](#). Consultation will be carried out on the IAPP local validation list every two years with all relevant parties to ensure the information required to submit a planning application is up to date and fit for purpose. The consultation will be published on the SDNPA website and will be carried out for eight weeks.
- 4.11 The Authority greatly values the role of neighbourhood plans and the qualifying bodies who prepare them. Therefore, we have established a protocol on pre-application advice for parishes with a made Neighbourhood Development Plan; this is set out in Appendix 4 of this document. The purpose of the protocol is to invite qualifying bodies to provide a formal response to the SDNPA or the host authorities working on its behalf in regard to locally significant pre-application advice requests. This is to ensure concerns / issues are identified as early as possible and dialogue established to explain and where possible resolve any conflict between parties in relation to the proposals.

4d) PUBLICITY FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 4.12 Our initial consultation with stakeholders and members of the public showed the importance of site notices, the publicising of planning applications in the local press and informing adjoining neighbours.
- 4.13 All applications will be publicised via a site notice and adjoining neighbours will receive a letter. Neighbours will be considered to be adjoining where the boundaries of the application site are at any point contiguous, or if there was not a footpath or highway in between would be contiguous. In addition we will place an advertisement in the local press where specifically directed by Article 15 of the *Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order (2015)*. See Appendix 5 for further information on what type of publicity is required (site notice, advert in local newspaper, neighbour notification) depending on the nature of the development being proposed.
- 4.14 There will be a minimum of 28 days to respond to the site notice, the newspaper advertisement and / or the letter and the date of the 28 day period expiry will be clearly stated on each form of publicity. However, if the dates of the site notice being put up, the newspaper being published, and the letter being sent out to neighbours are different then the overall expiry date will be the latest of the 28 day expiry periods. As soon as the overall publicity date has expired the application can be determined. It is therefore advisable to ensure that a letter of representation is sent before the expiry date on the form of publicity to which they are responding.
- 4.15 In our consultation with the public in preparing the 2012 SCI it was clear that email communication was preferred for both receiving information and providing comments to the SDNPA. For initial contact, such as to neighbouring owners, when email addresses will be unknown, information will have to be provided in hard copy but, where an email address is then provided, subsequent contact will be made via email.
- 4.16 A public access system allows users to do the following:
- Search and view a weekly or monthly list of applications;
 - Search and view applications and appeals, using address, keyword or using a map based search;
 - Make comments online linked to an application;
 - Track the progress of applications (once registered) and;
 - Register to be notified of applications.
- 4.17 The easiest way to comment on a planning application is to search for it on our [website](#). You can search for an application by address or by its planning reference number and submit your comments online. Alternatively you can send comments to us by post addressed to SDNPA, South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH, to planning@southdowns.gov.uk or to the relevant host authority ([link to contact details](#)).

- 4.18 Comments on applications submitted by email or letter will be published on the SDNPA website. Comments submitted online via the Public Access system will be automatically processed and published immediately on that platform. A summary copy of the comments submitted online will be automatically sent to the contributor by return email. Comments submitted by email or letter will be published on the SDNPA website. No acknowledgement will be sent for comments received by email or letter.
- 4.19 All consultation responses and representations received by the publicity expiry date which are material to planning and relevant to the proposal, will be summarised in the case officer report and taken into account, whether the application is determined by officers or by the Planning Committee. SDNPA will exercise discretion in considering comments received after the publicity expiry date.
- 4.20 Only 'material planning considerations' will be taken into account when reviewing the comments submitted. There are many material considerations but the most common include:
- Loss of light / overshadowing
 - Overlooking / loss of privacy
 - Visual amenity (but not loss of view)
 - Adequacy of parking / loading / turning
 - Highway safety / traffic generation / Road access
 - Smells, Noise and disturbance resulting from use
 - Hazardous materials
 - Loss of trees
 - Effect on listed building and conservation area
 - Layout and density of building
 - Design, appearance and materials
 - Landscaping
 - Local, strategic, regional and national planning policies,
 - Proposals in the Development Plan
 - Government circulars, orders and statutory instruments
 - Disabled persons' accessibility
 - Previous planning / appeal decisions
 - Nature conservation
 - Archaeology

- 4.21 The following are NOT considered to be valid planning concerns:

- Effect on property value
- The loss of view
- The impact of construction work or competition between firms
- Restrictive covenants
- Boundary, access matters or ownerships disputes
- Personal moral issues or opinion of the applicant

4e) PLANNING APPLICATIONS DECIDED BY THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- 4.22 If the application is for a development which is considered, by the Director of Planning, to have potential significant impact or could set an important precedent it will be referred to the Authority's Planning Committee for consideration. In addition, some major applications will be referred to the Planning Committee for consideration or applications submitted by Authority members, the Authority itself, or by an Authority employee.
- 4.23 All those who make a representation on planning applications will be informed (by email, or by letter if they have not provided their email address) of the date when the application is going to committee. Reports and agendas for Planning Committee meetings can be found on the website five clear working days before the meeting date.
- 4.24 Anyone can speak at a SDNPA Planning Committee providing they have made written representations on the planning matter in question beforehand and have notified the Member Services Officer at the SDNPA at least 3 working days before the meeting.
- 4.25 A maximum of six people are invited to speak on each planning application or related matter, for example, three in support and three against. If more than three individuals or representatives wish to raise similar points, then they will be asked to agree amongst themselves who should speak on their behalf. If necessary, the Chair of the Planning Committee will make any final decision on which members of the public may speak on an issue. The Chair may also use his/her discretion to increase the number of people who may speak.
- 4.26 Further information on public speaking at Planning Committee meetings can be found on our [website](#).

4f) PLANNING APPLICATION DECISIONS

4.27 All decision notices are available to view on the [SDNPA website](#).

4g) APPEALS

4.28 If a planning application is refused, or a decision is not made within specified time limits, the applicant may choose to appeal. In this circumstance an independent planning inspector or the Secretary of State will make a final decision on the application, and there may be a further opportunity for public involvement in the process.

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5. APPROACH TO ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

5a) INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs), Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs), including the Community Right to Build, provide the tools for successful neighbourhood planning; allowing communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work.
- 5.2 The introduction of the *Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017)*, in particular section 6, made it necessary for Local Planning Authorities to set out in their Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) the policies for giving advice or assistance on proposals for the making, or modification, of NDPs.
- 5.3 This section of the SCI sets out our procedure for providing this advice and assistance to Parish Councils and to local community groups interested in following the Neighbourhood Planning process.

5b) NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- 5.4 Communities are able to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood through a NDP. They could influence where new homes and offices should be built and what they should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. Producing NDPs is optional and while the South Downs National Park (SDNPA) will provide technical advice and support, the NDPs will need to be produced and led by a Parish/Town Council or a Neighbourhood Forum (known as the qualifying body).
- 5.5 A NDP should support the strategic development needs set out in the Local Plan and plan positively to support local development (as outlined in paragraph 29 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*).
- 5.6 The NDPs made by the SDNPA are shown on a map in Appendix 6.

5c) NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT ORDERS

- 5.7 A NDO is an order which grants planning permission for specific types of development in a particular Neighbourhood Area specified in the order.
- 5.8 The community can therefore extend permitted development rights in their area for development they want to see go ahead. For example a NDO could allow things like improvements to shop fronts or extensions to houses or other buildings.
- 5.9 All other consent regimes will still apply e.g. Building Regulations or Listed Building consent.

5d) COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUILD

- 5.10 This is a type of Neighbourhood Development Order for a particular scheme that benefits the community. A community organisation, formed by members of the local community, are able to bring forward development proposals which will be able to go ahead without requiring a separate traditional planning application, providing they meet minimum criteria and can demonstrate local support through a referendum.

5e) NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING CONSULTATION

- 5.11 A qualifying body (Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum) should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its NDP or Order. They should ensure that the wider community: is kept informed of what is being progressed; is able to make views known throughout the process; has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the draft plan or Order and is made aware of how their views have informed the draft plan or Order. Furthermore, a qualifying body must publicise the draft NDP or Order for at least 6 weeks and consult any of the consultation bodies whose interests if considers may be affected by the draft plan or order (as per the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 as amended). A qualifying body must prepare a consultation statement setting out the engagement and consultation undertaken in the preparation of the plan or Order.
- 5.12 Where a draft NDP or Order submitted to the SDNPA meets legal requirements, the SDNPA must publicise the NDP or Order for a minimum of six weeks, invite representations, notify any consultation body referred to in the consultation statement and send the draft plan or Order for independent examination.

5f) HOW ARE WE GOING TO WORK TOGETHER?

- 5.13 The SDNPA's *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)* (see Appendix 7) outlines the key roles and responsibilities of the main parties involved in the development of a NDP for the Parish (or Neighbourhood Forum in non-Parished areas). In doing so it confirms the willingness of all parties to work positively together and sets out the protocols and parameters by which the NDP will be prepared in order to produce a planning document for the local community that is suitable for adoption as a NDP.
- 5.14 The Parish Council (or Neighbourhood Forum) will be responsible for the overall content of the NDP prepared and for its submission to SDNPA. Parish Councils must seek to further the National Park Purposes when preparing and agreeing a NDP proposal for submission to SDNPA. This is in line with the duty set out in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by s245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The purposes of the National Park are: Purpose 1: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. Purpose 2: To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the

special qualities of the National Park by the public. The SDNPA additionally has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.

- 5.15 SDNPA have agreed a Protocol (see Appendix 4) for consulting qualifying bodies (Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum) with a made NDP on significant pre-applications within their neighbourhood area.

5g) WHAT SUPPORT WILL WE PROVIDE?

- Professional and timely advice on NDP preparation and other relevant planning matters, particularly the Local Plan;
- SDNPA will check the compatibility of the draft NDP with the National Park Purposes and Duty, and adopted Local Plan;
- Provide a view on the requirement or otherwise for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the NDP (known as a 'screening opinion');
- Support and advise as necessary, on the scoping and development of a proportionate SEA including the appropriateness of this forming part of a wider Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Plan, if required;
- Endeavour to attend meetings and events where possible and useful to developing the NDP;
- Nominate a lead officer at the SDNPA who will be responsible for co-ordinating the input of other technical specialists from within the SDNPA as may be required to support the process. The lead officer will also liaise with the relevant District and County Council on technical matters such as highways and schools where necessary;
- Liaise with the Parish Council to ensure that the NDP is in conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted / emerging Local Plan;
- Consult development management officers to assess the effectiveness and robustness of any potential policies;
- Digitise any proposals or allocations maps included the NDP to be incorporated into the SDNP development plan; and
- Consider other reasonable requests for support based on the circumstances.

5h) OUR LEGAL DUTIES

- 5.16 We have a legal duty to carry out the following:

- To designate a neighbourhood area for the purposes of neighbourhood planning within nationally set timescales.
- To provide advice and assistance to the Parish Council on the preparation of a NDP;

- To validate, check and publicise a NDP prior to submission for independent examination;
- Appoint an independent examiner in consultation with the Parish Council(s) and meet the costs of performing independent examination and;
- Bring the NDP into force subject to the results of the referendum.

5i) FUNDING

- 5.17 SDNPA will apply to the Government for funding which has been made available for local authorities to provide support to the development of NDPs to help fulfil the support outlined above.
- 5.18 The allocation of discretionary resources, including the giving of grants will be decided by the Director of Planning and may be subject to revision according to circumstances.

5j) REVIEWING NDPS

- 5.19 If a review of a NDP is required the same process as above will be followed with the exception of streamlining the process only where minor changes are required.

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6. FURTHER INFORMATION

6a) PLANNING AID

- 6.1 Planning Aid is a voluntary service linked to the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), which offers free independent and professional advice on planning issues. Planning Aid is aimed at community groups and individuals who have limited resources to participate effectively in planning matters.
- 6.2 The current remit of Planning Aid involves advising community groups in negotiations with the local planning authority, and, if necessary, representing the groups at public examination or inquiry.
- 6.3 Every part of the UK is covered by Planning Aid. Further information on Planning Aid is available on the [RTPI website](#).

6b) MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 6.4 Community involvement and engagement should evolve and develop as circumstances change. This document will be subject to regular review. As the success of community involvement techniques are monitored and reviewed, the results will be fed into the preparation of future planning policy documents and the consideration of significant planning applications.
- 6.5 We have endeavoured to make the SCI flexible enough to deal with changing circumstances; it should only be necessary to revise the document if significant changes have occurred in government legislation or to local policies. The Covid-19 pandemic as an exceptional circumstance required changes to the SCI to reflect the use of different methods of engagement and the alterations to government legislation.

6c) LEGISLATION

- 6.6 In the preparation of the Local Plan and in the determination of planning applications, the SDNPA will have regard for current legislation particularly: the *Human Rights Act (1998)*, *Equality Act (2010)*, the *Freedom of Information Act (2000)* and the *Data Protection Act (2018)*.

7. ABBREVIATIONS

AMR	Authority Monitoring Report
DM	Development Management
DPD	Development Plan Document
LDD	Local Development Document
LDS	Local Development Scheme
LP	Local Plan
LPA	Local Planning Authority
NPA	National Park Authority
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SDNP	South Downs National Park
SDNPA	South Downs National Park Authority
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SOS	Secretary of State
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document

8. GLOSSARY

Authority Monitoring Report

This report looks at the implementation of the *Local Development Scheme* and how well the policies in the Local Development Documents are being achieved.

Development Plan

As set out in section 38 of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)*, an area's development plan consists of adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Development Plan Documents

All Planning Authorities must produce Development Plan Documents, such as the Local Plan. These are spatial documents and are subject to independent examination. There will be a right for those making representations seeking change to be heard at an independent examination.

Digital / Virtual Engagement

A collective term for using digital technology, in forms of software, hardware and infrastructure to share information, discuss ideas, gather views and provide services.

Host Authority

Local authorities partly within the National Park where planning services are provided by local authorities through hosted arrangements (Winchester City Council, East Hampshire District Council, Chichester District Council, Horsham District Council and Lewes District Council)

Local Community

A generic term which includes all individuals (including the general public) and organisations external to the SDNPA that have an interest in a local area. It includes the statutory and other consultees.

Local Development Scheme

This document sets out the timetable for the preparation of the Local Development Documents. It identifies which Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents are to be produced and when.

Local Plan

The plan for the future development of the local area. The Local Plan will set out the vision, objectives and provide the framework for the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans. It will also include a number of criteria-based development management policies needed to achieve the strategy.

National Planning Policy Framework

The Government published the revised *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* on 20 December 2023, and the *National Planning Policy for Waste* on 16 October 2014.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

A community led and developed document, which forms part of the planning policy framework. It is subject to independent examination and a community referendum.

Neighbourhood Forum

Body responsible for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan if there is no Parish or Town Council.

Partnership Management Plan

The National Park *Partnership Management Plan* provides statements on the National Park Authority's policies for managing and carrying out its functions in relation to the National Park and reflects the Purposes and Duty of the National Park Authority. This document sets the context for the planning policy framework of the National Park.

Prior Approval

Some permitted development requires an application to the local planning authority for prior approval. In other specified cases, an application is made to the local planning authority to determine if their prior approval will be required. This allows the local planning authority to consider the proposals, their likely impacts in certain specified matters (e.g. transport and highways) and how these may be mitigated.

Planning law sets out certain classes of permitted development where specific proposals are granted without the need to submit a planning application.

Policies Map

The adopted *Policies Map* illustrates all of the policies and proposals in the Development Plan Documents.

Regulations

Regulations are statutory instruments that provide detail on specified matters in Acts of Parliament. For example, the *Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012)* set out procedures for preparing development plan documents.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders include any person or organisation, local or national, who has a legitimate interest in what happens in our area.

Statement of Community Involvement

This *Statement of Community Involvement* is the South Downs National Park Authority's formal policy to identify how and when local communities and stakeholders will be involved in the preparation of the documents to be included in the South Downs National Park Local Plan. The Statement also governs the development management process for all planning applications within the South Downs National Park.

Supplementary Planning Documents

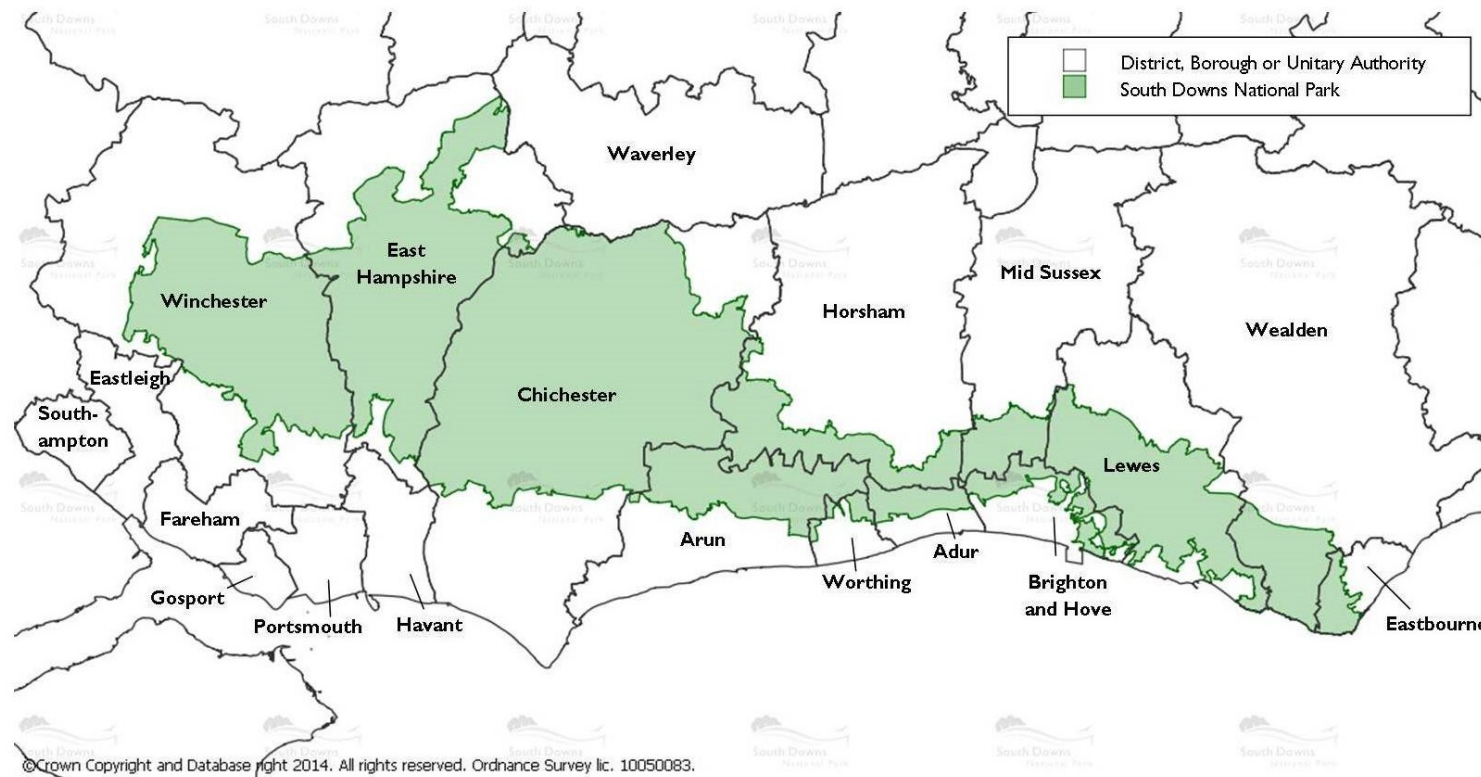
These documents provide supplementary information to the policies in the Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination.

Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainability Appraisal is a tool for appraising policies to ensure that they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, economic and environmental factors). It is required under the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)* to be carried out on all Development Plan Documents and where necessary on Supplementary Planning Documents.

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APPENDIX I: INDICATIVE MAP OF THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK SHOWING LOCAL AUTHORITY BOUNDARIES



APPENDIX 2: PLANNING POLICY WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK

'Development Plan' for the SDNP consists of:

- South Downs Local Plan
- Adopted Joint Minerals and Waste Plans:
 - East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan (2013)
 - East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (2017)
 - Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2013)
 - West Sussex Waste Plan (2014)
 - West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018) (Partial Review March 2021)
- Made Neighbourhood Plans (for details of made Neighbourhood Plans please see the [SDNPA website](#))

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APPENDIX 3: LIST OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION BODIES

3.1 These consultation bodies are those referred to in Regulation 25 of the *Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations (2004, as amended)*. Please note, this list is not exhaustive and relates to successor bodies where reorganisations occur.

Specific Consultees

- County Councils (Hampshire, West Sussex, East Sussex) and Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority
- Adjoining Local Planning Authorities (LPAs)
- Town and Parish Councils both within and adjoining the South Downs National Park
- The Environment Agency (EA)
- Natural England
- Historic England
- National Highways
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- NHS Trusts & Integrated Care Boards
- Active Travel England
- Relevant electricity and gas companies
- Relevant sewerage and water undertakers
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Government Departments
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- Secretary of State for Transport
- The Coal Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency

General Consultees

- Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area;

- Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area and;
- Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the authority's area.

Duty to Cooperate Prescribed Bodies

Where not already listed above, there are prescribed bodies under the Duty to Cooperate, including:

- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Nature Partnership

Draft for Consultation

APPENDIX 4: PROTOCOL FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING AND PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Protocol between the South Downs National Park Authority and Qualifying Bodies on Pre-Application Advice

Purpose

- To invite Qualifying Bodies (QB) to provide a formal response to the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) or the host authorities working on its behalf in regard to pre-application advice requests (the host authorities are Winchester District Council, East Hampshire District Council, Chichester District Council, Horsham District Council and Lewes District Council)
- To enable discussion between the SDNPA and the QBs to ensure concerns / issues are identified as early as possible and dialogue established to explain and where possible resolve any conflict between parties in relation to the proposals

Background

- The SDNPA is the local planning authority for the South Downs National Park
- A qualifying body leads neighbour planning in their designated areas. They are our 'local experts' when there is a neighbourhood development plan (NDP) in place. In the South Downs all QBs are either parish or town councils to date.

Which QBs will be invited to respond to Pre-application advice requests?

- QBs will be invited by email to input into the pre-application process by the SDNPA development management case officer dealing with the application.
- QBs with an NDP at an advanced stage of development will be invited to provide input i.e. the Plan has passed examination and reached the Decision Statement stage of the NDP process (Regulation 19).

When will the SDNPA invite the QB to provide Pre-application input?

- When a pre-application enquiry relates to any site allocated or designated by the NDP in their designated area. This would include housing allocations, local green spaces, named community facilities and safeguarded employment sites.
- When an application proposes a locally significant development in the relevant designated area. What constitutes a locally significant development varies between communities and is a matter of judgement for the case officer in consultation with other officers as necessary.
- The SDNPA will not request input from QBs on householder pre-application enquiries.

How will the input from the QB be used by the SDNPA?

- The response from the QB will be included in the SDNPA's response to the applicant/agent

Further information on pre-application advice can be accessed on the SDNPA website here: [Link to Pre-application advice - further information](#)

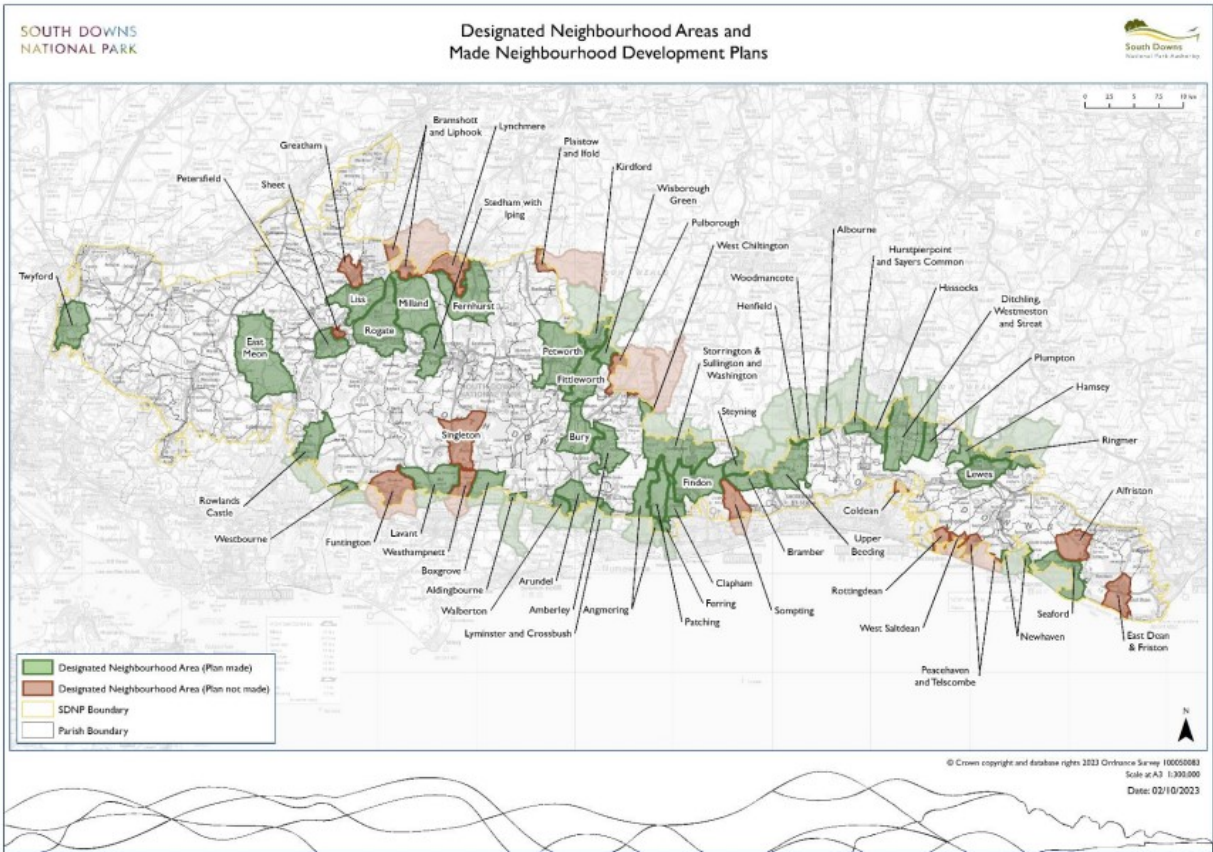
This protocol will be subject to periodic review by the SDNPA in partnership with the QBs.

APPENDIX 5: MINIMUM STATUTORY PUBLICITY REQUIREMENTS

4.1 As a local planning authority we are required by law to publicise all planning applications. This can include advertisements in a local newspaper, site notices and neighbour notifications. Applications are also advertised weekly on the SDNPA’s website.

Nature of Development	Publicity Required
<p>Applications that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are accompanied by an environmental statement; • Are departures from development plan; • Affect a public right of way; or • Are made by the authority. 	<p>Site notice and advert in local newspaper</p>
<p>Major development (which includes Minerals and Waste applications) as defined by Article 2, The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as amended</p>	<p>Site notice and advert in local newspaper</p>
<p>Minor development</p>	<p>Site notice or neighbour notification</p>
<p>Development affecting the setting of a listed building</p>	<p>Advert in local newspaper and either a site notice or neighbour notification</p>
<p>Development affecting the character or appearance of a conservation area</p>	<p>Advertisement in newspaper and either a site notice or neighbour notification</p>
<p>Permitted development requiring prior notification to local planning authority</p>	<p>Site notice posted by developer</p>

APPENDIX 6: MAP OF DESIGNATED NEIGHBOURHOOD AREAS



(Map as at Dec 2023)

APPENDIX 7: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN RELATION TO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Template Draft Agreement

Memorandum of Understanding

between

Example Parish Council and South Downs National Park Authority
in relation to Neighbourhood Planning

I. Background

- I.1 This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the key roles and responsibilities of the main parties involved in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Example. In doing so it confirms the willingness of all parties to work positively together and sets out the protocols and parameters by which the neighbourhood plan will be prepared.
- I.2 The parties are: Example Parish Council (EPC), Example Neighbourhood Steering Group (ENSG) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). (Note: Example Parish Council have delegated the production of the neighbourhood plan to Example Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (ENSG). See Appendix 2 for ENSG Terms of Reference.)
- I.3 The neighbourhood plan will be produced for the designated neighbourhood area of Example as defined by the map in Annex I. The neighbourhood area is wholly / partly within the SDNP and the main centre of population is within the National Park. Therefore, SDNPA is the lead authority for neighbourhood planning for Example Parish Council.
- I.4 The parties will work in cooperation to prepare a planning document for the local community that is suitable for adoption as a Neighbourhood (Development) Plan. Work on the plan and evidence produced for it could also contribute to future development plan documents and / or the Local Plan produced by SDNPA.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 EPC, ENSG and SDNPA are committed to maintaining an open and transparent relationship to enable the effective development of the Example Neighbourhood Plan. The key roles of each party in the neighbourhood planning process are as follows:

Example Parish Council

- 2.2 EPC is the “relevant body”, with legal authority to produce a neighbourhood plan under neighbourhood planning regulations (the relevant body for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act being the parish council for the entire neighbourhood planning area, i.e. the whole Parish). It is the properly elected democratic body representing the entire local community within the parish and is committed to ensuring that the community's views are fully reflected in all local planning decisions within the parish.
- 2.3 The Parish Council will be responsible for the overall content of the neighbourhood plan prepared and for its submission to SDNPA.
- 2.4 The Parish Council will formally agree the final draft neighbourhood plan at a Parish Council meeting prior to submission to SDNPA to ensure the neighbourhood plan is supported by the Parish Council.
- 2.5 The Parish Council will fulfil its duty to have regard for the National Park Purposes when preparing and agreeing a neighbourhood plan proposal for submission to SDNPA.

Example Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

- 2.5 ENSG is a group formed of councillors and residents of Example Parish acting under terms of reference and recognised by Example Parish Council for the purpose of preparing a plan for the future development of the parish.
- 2.6 ENSG, on behalf of the Parish Council and the community of Example Parish, will be responsible for carrying out the work necessary to deliver the neighbourhood plan.
- 2.7 ENSG will:
- i. Seek to involve the whole community and gather the views and opinions of as many groups and organisations in the community as possible in the preparation of the neighbourhood plan. An extensive and inclusive programme of community participation and consultation will be carried out to help develop the plan;
 - ii. Project manage the preparation of the plan, prepare a project plan and budget and regularly report back to the Parish Council on details of progress against timetable and budget on (at least) a monthly basis, and share the project plan with the SDNPA;
 - iii. Act as the main conduit between the Parish Council, the local community, the SDNPA and the relevant district and county councils for neighbourhood planning matters;
 - iv. Submit a description of the scope of the proposed neighbourhood plan to Example Parish Council for its consideration and approval as soon as is practicable;
 - v. Liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to ensure that the Plan is as effective as possible, is fit for purpose and complies with the National Park Purposes and Duty and the strategic elements of the emerging *SDNP Local Plan* (Note: The SDNPA has

statutory purposes and socio-economic responsibilities as specified in the Environment Act (1995): Purpose 1: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. Purpose 2: To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public. Duty: To seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes);

- vi. Ensure that the scope and content of the Neighbourhood Plan is appropriate to the issues raised by the local community, is prepared utilising robust and proportionate evidence and takes full account of Government policy set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Regulations* governing the production of a neighbourhood plan;
- vii. Seek a view from the SDNPA on the requirement or otherwise for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - known as a 'screening opinion', and provide sufficient key information in order for SDNPA to formulate a screening opinion. Should the screening opinion indicate that an SEA be required, the responsibility for meeting this requirement will be met by EPC;
- viii. Share an early draft (pre-submission neighbourhood plan proposal) with SDNPA to check the compatibility of the draft neighbourhood plan with the National Park Purposes and Duty, adopted Local Plan and emerging local policies;
- ix. Submit a final version of the neighbourhood plan proposal to Example Parish Council for its approval prior to the Plan being submitted to SDNPA for Independent Examination; and,
- x. Be responsible for the design, publication and maintenance of a neighbourhood plan webpage to ensure wider awareness of the neighbourhood plan production. The webpage should include an opportunity for people to volunteer to be part of the group.

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2.8 SDNPA has a number of legal duties in relation to the production of a neighbourhood plan. These are:

- i. To publicise and designate a neighbourhood area for the purposes of neighbourhood planning within nationally set timescales.
- ii. To provide advice and assistance to EPC and the ENSG on the preparation of a neighbourhood plan;
- iii. To validate, check and publicise a neighbourhood plan prior to submission for independent examination;
- iv. Appoint an independent examiner in consultation with the Parish Council and meet the costs of performing independent examination;
- v. Bring the neighbourhood plan into force subject to the results of the referendum.

2.9 At the end of the neighbourhood plan process, the plan is made (adopted) by the National Park Authority and to that end it is in the interests of SDNPA to work with EPC and ENSG to deliver a robust, fit for purpose and high quality document for the local community. For these reasons and in the spirit of working together for the

benefit of the local community and in accordance with *Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990)*, SDNPA will provide the further following support to EPC / ENSG for neighbourhood planning activities (Note: Schedule 4B states “Give such advice or assistance to parish councils and designated Neighbourhood Forums as in all the circumstances, they consider appropriate for the purpose of or in connection with facilitating the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans. Also known as the ‘duty to support’. There is no legal requirement to give financial assistance.” [Schedule B of the 1990 Act] (‘duty to support’):

- i. Provide professional and timely advice on neighbourhood plan preparation and other relevant planning matters particularly the Local Plan. The SDNPA will endeavour to acknowledge any request for advice within 5 days and provide a full response within 2 weeks. Where this is not achievable, SDNPA will indicate when a full response can be provided;
 - ii. Provide a view on the requirement or otherwise for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Neighbourhood Plan (known as a ‘screening opinion’). Support and advise as necessary, on the scoping and development of a proportionate SEA including the appropriateness of this forming part of a wider Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Plan, if required;
 - iii. Endeavour to attend meetings and events where possible and useful to developing the neighbourhood plan;
 - iv. Nominate a lead officer at the SDNPA who will be responsible for co-ordinating the input of other technical specialists from within the SDNPA as may be required to support the process. The lead officer will also liaise with the relevant District and County Council on technical matters such as highways and schools where necessary;
 - v. Liaise with the Parish Council and ENSG to ensure that the neighbourhood plan is in conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted / emerging Local Plan;
 - vi. Consult development management officers to assess the effectiveness and robustness of any potential policies;
 - vii. Digitise any proposals or allocations maps included the neighbourhood plan to be incorporated into the SDNP development plan; and
 - viii. Consider other reasonable requests for support based on the circumstances.
- 2.10 SDNPA will apply to the Government for funding which has been made available for local authorities to provide support to the development of Neighbourhood Plans to help fulfil the support outlined above. The allocation of discretionary resources to the Qualifying Body, including the giving of grants will be decided by the Director of Planning and may be subject to revision according to circumstances.

3. Reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding

- 3.1 This Memorandum of Understanding will be kept open to review during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Amendments may be made following agreement between EPC, ENSG and SDNPA.

Signed:

Signed:

Date:

Draft for Consultation

Annex I

Designated Example Neighbourhood Planning Area

Draft for Consultation