

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Held at: 10.00am on 14 November 2024 at The Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre.

Present: Heather Baker (Chair), Tim Burr, Antonia Cox, Alun Alesbury, John Cross, Debbie Curnow-Ford Janet Duncton, John Hyland, Gary Marsh, Stephen McAuliffe, Robert Mocatta, Andrew Shaxson and Daniel Stewart-Roberts.

Officers: Mike Hughes (Director of Planning (Interim)), Rebecca Moutrey (Senior Solicitor), Robert Ainslie (Development Manager), Robert Campbell (Senior Planning Enforcement Officer), Richard Ferguson (Development Management Lead (West)), Katharine Stuart (Planning Policy Lead), Claire Tester (Planning Policy Manager), Amy Tyler-Jones (Planning Policy Lead), Richard Fryer (Senior Governance Officer) and Jane Roberts (Governance Officer).

OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and informed those present that South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Members had a primary responsibility for ensuring that the Authority furthered the National Park Purposes and Duty. That Members regarded themselves first and foremost as Members of the Authority, and would act in the best interests of the National Park as a whole, rather than as representatives of their appointing body or any interest groups.

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

85. Apologies for absence were received from Daniel Stewart-Roberts.

ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

86. The following declarations was made:

- John Hyland declared a public service interest in Agenda Items 7 as was acquainted to the public speaker.
- Robert Mocatta declared a public service interest in Agenda Item and 9 as an East Hampshire District Councillor, Hampshire County Councillor, a resident of the village, and he was also acquainted with all the public speakers.

ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2024

87. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ITEM 4: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

88. The following updates were given by the Development Manager:

- SDNP/24/00588/CND – Land north of A3 Junction, Petersfield, had now been approved.
- SDNP/2104092/OUT - Petersfield Golf Club, Petersfield. The decision had been appealed by the applicant.
- SDNP/20/04118/FUL – The Queens Hotel, Selborne, the inquiry had not yet been completed.
- SDNP/20/03365/FUL - Meadow Farm, Bordon the applicant had complied with the enforcement team and the site was currently being used as a base by SSE.

ITEM 5: URGENT ITEMS

89. There were none.

ITEM 6: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: SUMMER ENGAGEMENT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS

90. The Officer reminded Members of the report (PC24/25-13) and the update sheet.

91. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-13) and commented as follows:
- In relation to the last Local Plan (LP) early engagement, were there any glaring gaps from the responses received?
 - It was a comprehensive document.
 - Members had previously gone through the detail at a Member workshop.
 - Would have liked to have seen a higher number of responses given the number of people living within the South Downs National Park (SDNP), with 120,000 residents with only 700 responses.
 - Needed to engage more with the District Councils. It appeared the National Park was working separately to District Council Planning Authorities, but it was not.
 - Were communities that live around the boundaries of the SDNP actively contacted? Should the Local Plan engage with people outside the park?
 - Some Local Authorities were concerned the SDNPA was not doing enough in regard to housing numbers.
 - Had Parish Councils responded?
 - There was concern over the timeline and impact on the economy between now and until June 2027. What was the status of the plan between now and adoption? Could the Planning Committee take account of emerging policy in decisions before adoption?
 - The LP was an extremely complex subject, how far outside the park would the Authority consider going for consultations?
 - The proportion of the Parishes that had responded to the consultation was quite low, although it was to be expected that the number of responses would be higher once sites had been detailed.
 - People only tended to object in serious numbers if something terrible was going to be proposed. The response numbers suggest that the SDNPA was not doing things seriously wrong and nothing untoward is being proposed.
 - Could more detail be provided on Regulation 18 and its stage in the process?
 - Had the reasons for unhappiness detailed in the report at p25 been considered?
 - There did not seem to be enough on climate change and net zero emissions.
 - Respondents had mentioned that there were not enough homes for local people and the report did not mention starter homes.
 - Publishing pre-app details was an issue that parish councils often raised. Would like to see all relevant details included on the system, not just responses as it could be hard to understand the responses without the original plans. Could the earlier documents be watermarked as pre-application?
 - The public should be looking at the live application, not outdated plans that were no longer valid.
 - Members should judge the application before them and not what was irrelevant on a previous application.
 - It was important for potential applicants to be guided through the pre-application process to help deliver better applications. Whilst sharing them might be well intentioned, there were many practical difficulties.
92. Members were advised:

- The last LP early engagement received 400 comments, this time 700 comments were received.
- Throughout the summer the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) went to events within the SDNP and around the edge of the park. Also received online comments, with 40% of those being from people who had visited the park but lived outside of the SDNP.
- There were more residents to reach, and Officers could explore working through Local Authorities. The responses were to procedural documents with no policies or sites. A larger response was expected to the Regulation 18 consultation.
- Many Parish Councils had responded on behalf of their Parishioners.
- There was considerable work involved in progressing an LP. The examination would take at least 6 months, and the timetable could not be shortened. Between now and June 2027 would have to look at the individual planning applications and their context on their own merits.
- The closer the LP was to adoption, the more it could be referred to it. Once it had been through Regulation 18, and if people were comfortable with the policies, then more weight could gradually be given to the policies before adoption.
- Regulation 18 was the first statutory consultation under the existing planning system. It required enough content that people could engage with it. This would be followed by the Regulation 19 consultation.
- Regarding reasons for unhappiness, people were asked about the vision up until 2050, 85% that responded were happy with this and the reasons why some weren't are set out in the summary report.
- Feedback on the vision would be considered through the review of the Partnership Management Plan.
- All pre application details used to be online and this proved unworkable. If a parish council requested specific pre-application plans, they could be provided. Uploading all pre-applications plans would incur an administrative burden, led to the potential for public confusion and could lead to reticence from potential applicants to engage with the pre-application process. The Authority would continue to publish the SDNPA pre-application response (not the pre-application drawings) where a relevant planning application was then submitted and in this respect the Authority went further than most LPAs.

93. RESOLVED:

The Committee:

1. Noted the outcomes of the summer engagement (Appendix 1);
2. Approved the revised Project Initiation Document for the South Downs Local Plan Review (Appendix 2);
3. Approved the revised Local Development Scheme (Appendix 3) and
4. Approved the revised Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix 4) subject to the amendment set out in the update sheet;
5. Delegated to the Director of Planning any minor and presentational changes to the documents approved in recommendations 2-4.

ITEM 7: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: REGULATION 18 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

94. The Officer reminded Members of the report (PC24/25-14) and the update sheet and provided a verbal update on an incorrect placement of p406 that would be corrected in the final report.

95. The following speaker addressed the committee against the report:
- Cllr Danny Lee, Councillor for Central Meon Valley, representing himself and the Central Meon Valley residents.
96. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-14) the updates and commented as follows:
- Could District and County Councillors be contacted to engage in the Local Plan review via their Member services?
 - Could the code SD have a key letter attached so it so it would be easier for the public to understand? For example, SDH would be Housing, SDC would be Countryside.
 - The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) should be congratulated on sending the site information to local representatives. Members of SDNPA should help with the distribution of consultations to their Local Councils and Parishes, as they had their own full list of contacts.
 - Could Officers ensure that when the Regulation 18 document goes out to the public, people were aware that this was their opportunity to comment on the future plan as Regulation 19 was focused on legal matters.
 - Could there be a definition of the term 'regenerative' in the policy document?
 - Regarding gypsy and travellers on p210, nothing was mentioned about Chichester, could that be included?
 - Needed to include a definition of heritage asset and their setting, there was no list of heritage assets, would that be included?
 - There seemed to be a discrepancy in the water use. Page 261 listed 85 litres, and page 268 listed 90 litres. Should these figures be the same?
 - Regarding the reference to renewable energy projects on page 271. Was there a need to state that other sites could be put forward?
 - Could there be clarification on blue space mentioned on page 326, to be within 15 minutes of green and blue space.
 - Burial grounds and cemeteries were included presumably because they were not to be used in the same way as other areas of open space. Was that correct?
 - Chichester District Council had recently employed a liaison officer for the gypsy and traveller community, had other District Councils done the same?
 - SD21, public art needing to reflect and respect context. Could a nuance be included in the sub clause to say that this wouldn't always be appropriate?
 - Core policies and the new eco system services SD2 and SD25 gave the impression that sites dependant on private car use would become more difficult to fit within the policies. Was this the intention?
 - Could goods from Kent be included in goods to be sold from vineyards as they were a neighbouring county?
 - Would we get the housing stock needed for the delivery of housing? Housing developers should be asked to comment on the delivery of housing since the last adopted plan in 2019, to ask about constrains and hurdles to overcome.
 - SD28 needed to be looked at, as to what it would do to accelerate affordable housing.
 - Community Land Trusts could be used to provide social housing, however there seemed to be a lack of them with the South Downs National Park (SDNP).
 - Planning Permission had been given, but there seemed to be a lack of housing built. Page 217 of the Community Involvement Plan mentioned who was to be involved, a strategy

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was needed, and that sector needed a prescription to deliver the housing. Would like to see engagement with the development sector expanded upon.

- Community Land Trusts were engaged with delivering housing but were limited in what they could provide.
- The document conformed well with the workshop sessions that Members had attended. Would strongly support the wording of regenerative and its clarification. Pleased to see regenerative tourism. The key purpose of the National Park was to preserve the landscape.
- Welcomed the outline of the policy around County Hall, Lewes.
- Could housing numbers be included within the consultation and should it be published without them? Was the Authority ready to consult on Regulation 18 given the many uncertainties?
- What was the downside of not committing to the current timetable?
- Did not want to produce a situation where there were issues on sites with the housing numbers, and potentially would need to find other sites to make up the total number of houses delivered on unsuitable sites.
- Could the public be asked qualitatively on housing needs, e.g. a need for downsizing, an invitation on the qualitative type of housing rather than just quantity.
- East Hampshire housing need should be discussed.
- Would public footpaths be linked to the footpath network? Currently says on a site-by-site basis.
- What development proposals of SD20 would be taken into the consultation?
- Would all supplementary documents, including Technical Advice Notes (TAN's) be included in the LP review?

97. Members were advised:

- District and County Councillors could be added to the consultation database.
- There were some difficulties in navigating the document due to its size and the amount of information included. The navigation of the document would be looked into as part of the presentation and an index added to the policies section.
- It would be made clear that Regulation 18 would be the main opportunity to comment.
- Further information would be added to the Community Involvement Plan to say how the development sector would be engaged.
- Heritage assets were defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and this would be added into the preamble for SD12.
- The definition of 'regenerative' would be looked at but could be summarised as making things better rather than just keeping the status quo and doing no harm.
- The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for East Hampshire was finalised and was published on the East Hampshire website. A joint GTAA document was being finalised that would cover the whole of the SDNP including Chichester.
- There was no discrepancy in the water usage numbers. The need for water neutrality in the Sussex North zone meant that 85 litres per person, per day was the correct limit for this area. For the rest of the SDNP the proposed Sustainable construction policy requires a limit of 90 litres.
- Renewable energy projects worked around the same principle as other allocations, those listed were the initial and would be included in Regulation 18. Other sites would

be likely to be submitted in response to that consultation. Criteria three of that policy covered any community led proposals and would be assessed under those criteria.

- The wording of the preamble to SD46 would be changed to green and/or blue space as it was more difficult to ensure that everywhere was close to blue space.
- A separate engagement process would need to be done with the gypsy and traveller community. Unfortunately, not enough sites had come forward. A meeting had been scheduled between the new Chichester Liaison officer and the SDNPA.
- The clause referred to in SD21 was in the adopted policy rather than a proposed amendment. It was not possible for policies to cover all eventualities. If material considerations indicated otherwise, then an exception to the policy could be made.
- SDNPA Policies including SD2, SD25 and national policies were steering towards the need for less travel and the use of private car. It was about giving people more power to make choices to benefit the climate.
- Regarding goods to be sold from vineyards, with Kent close to eastern end of the SDNP Officers did not object to its inclusion as the policy was seeking to reduce food miles.
- The development community were geared up to respond and they were on the SDNPA database and would engage. There would need to be a viability report to underpin the whole plan. The SDNPA fought hard for affordable housing and had a good track record of success on brown and green field sites.
- The legislation was not specific as to what a Regulation 18 consultation had to include. There was no requirement that housing numbers be included at this stage. It was very difficult to say what the housing need was, due to national changes, and what the supply would be, as the numbers would inevitably change. The Authority included the policies, with the sites and would require feedback from this. Developers and adjacent Local Planning authorities would feedback on numbers anyway.
- Would advise leaving SD26 as it stands but the accompanying documentation could provide some context (including draft housing numbers) and we could ask some qualitative questions about types of housing needed.
- SD20, criterion 2 has been amended to include require development proposals to connect and contribute to the rights of way network.
- All supplementary planning documents would remain unchanged provided that the LP review was progressed (as is planned) under the existing planning system. Technical Advice Notes had no formal weight but would be retained. Officers would consider a new Technical Advice Note on regenerative design. Parish Priority Statements were not a formal part of the planning process but part of the evidence base for the Local Plan review.

98. RESOLVED:

The Committee:

1. Agree the Community Involvement Plan for the Regulation 18 consultation (Appendix 1) subject to the considerations and comments of the Committee being addressed.

Recommend to NPA :

2. That, subject to any comments of the Planning Committee being considered, the National Park Authority approves the Regulation 18 consultation for the South Downs Local Plan Review (Appendix 2).
3. To delegate authority to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee and the Chair of the Authority, to make any minor and presentational changes required to the Regulation 18 consultation document.

99. The meeting adjourned for a short comfort break.

ITEM 8: ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

100. The Officer reminded Members of the report (PC24/25-15).
101. The following speaker addressed the committee against the report:
- Cllr Danny Lee, Councillor for Central Meon Valley, representing himself and the Central Meon Valley residents.
102. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-15) the updates and commented as follows:
- Host authorities deal with the majority of enforcement for SDNPA, and this was not the direct day to day responsibility of the in-house SDNPA team.
 - The report notes 242 enforcement cases received and 149 closed, which seemed quite a number outstanding. Did the SDNPA team have problems with the number of cases being closed?
 - The trajectory of cases was going down, was that correct?
 - It seemed 85% of District Council case work was related to post-planning consent issues around breach of conditions. Why did it seem the in-house SDNPA was so successful, or were there a lack of breach of condition notices?
103. Members were advised:
- Winchester City Council was the host authority who dealt with the enforcement work in the speaker's area. The link officer liaised with host authorities and would speak to Winchester regarding the matters raised.
 - The enforcement process can take some time, with various external consultees and statutory bodies consulted.
 - Some cases took years to resolve due to their complexities, and these were kept open, which could show apparent discrepancies in the figures. The SDNPA did not artificially close cases and anything at appeal was kept open. The SDNPA currently had 45-50 SDNPA cases open, Winchester did have a higher number, and the Authority would liaise with Winchester City Council.
 - The Link officer supported the host authorities and was dealing with the Soberton site.
 - There were more cases than cleared during Covid-19 pandemic. However, the lower number of cases, did not necessarily show better compliance.
 - Good compliance from the start meant fewer breaches of condition and in general no breach of condition has had a cause to create a beach of condition notice. There were other ways to deal with breach of conditions than a notice.
104. **RESOLVED:**
- The Committee noted the update on enforcement action.

ITEM 9: SDNP/23/05251/FUL- WESTBURY HOUSE NURSING HOME, EAST MEON

105. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-16) and the update sheet.
106. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
- Jonathan Moritz – as a local resident.
 - David Butcher- representing West Meon Flood Group.
 - Scot Masker – as the Agent.
107. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-16), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:

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- Interesting site to visit, could see a lot of benefits from the development of the site, and the Officers had completed a lot of work to secure enhancements and get the plans right. The new drive was the same length from the road as the historic access.
- The building had much embedded carbon and hoped that materials would be reused to be cost effective.
- Condition 5 appears to limit construction to take place until the house was demolished.
- The gates at Coombe Lane would need to be in keeping with the local rural character area and concerned what could be allowed within permitted development.
- Was the house still liable in principle for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)?
- Was sad to see the building in its current state, and there were lots of buildings of its type throughout the country. The East Meon Flood Group would wish for enhancements to the site.
- A good piece of traditional architecture, and the site needed something appropriate to the landscape and Hampshire. In its context it would work and would not object to the new entrance at the western end of the site.
- Could anything be salvaged from the existing property to the new building? Could the portico on the old house be used on the stable block?
- Could there be a condition be set to ensure something from the old house was included in the new build?
- Fantastic historic site, and good to see Condition 14 on heritage and work on the River Meon. Grateful for the work with the applicants over the years and congratulated the Officers for their work.
- Condition 5 should show quantum levels.

108. Members were advised:

- The house was still liable for CIL.
- There had been dialogue with the applicants on salvaging from the existing house for the new property. The portico cap stones and tops were being considered to be re-used and were looking to be salvaged. Would survey the materials and salvage what they can, including using materials in the features of the site.
- Condition 13, criterion d, detailed the scope and salvage of existing materials.
- In terms of levels, there were photographs on the levels, and fairly accurate information on the cut and fill. Condition 5 would narrow those down and work on the detail.
- The new access was intended to have a rural character and appearance. Also, approval of these details was subject to a condition and an informative would be included on the decision to set out the parameters/principles of what officers would like to see.

109. **RESOLVED:**

- I. That planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 9.2 of the report and the addition of an informative detailing the parameters for the design and appearance of the new Coombe Lane entrance.

110. The Chair closed the meeting at 13.36pm

CHAIR

Signed: _____