

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Held at: 10.00am on 10 April 2025 at The Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre.

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

Other SDNPA Member: Tim Burr and Vanessa Rowlands.

Officers: Robert Ainslie (Development Manager), Rebecca Moutrey (Senior Solicitor), Claire Tester (Planning Policy Manager), Richard Ferguson (Development Management Lead (West)), David Boyson (Conservation Officer), Lewis Ford (Senior Planning Policy Officer), 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

182. There were apologies for absence from Daniel Stewart-Roberts.

ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

183. The following declarations were made:

- Alan Alesbury declared a public service interest for agenda items 6 and 7 as he was acquainted with Counsel representing the Applicant.
- Robert Mocatta declared a public service interest for agenda items 6, 7, 9 and 10 as a Hampshire County Councillor and East Hampshire District Councillor. He was also acquainted with the public speaker Cllr Jamie Matthews, who was a Petersfield Town Councillor speaking against agenda Items 6 and 7.

ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2025

184. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 March 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair with the following amendment:

- Paragraph 163, apologies for absence from Debbie Curnow-Ford.

ITEM 4: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

185. The following updates were provided by the Development Manager:

- Rampion Two had been approved by the Secretary of State.
- SDNP/23/02973/FUL, Lewes Bus Station, was considered by the committee on 12 September 2024 and a decision had been issued on 3 April 2025.
- SDNP/23/04750/CND, Lambing Yard, Hambledon was considered by the committee on 12 September 2024 and an appeal had been submitted and would be decided by written representation.

ITEM 5: URGENT ITEMS

186. There were none.

ITEM 6: SDNP/24/01907/REM - LAND NORTH OF BUCKMORE FARM, PETERSFIELD

187. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-29), the addendum report, the update sheet, and provided a verbal update which included proposed changes to conditions 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9.
188. The following speakers addressed the committee against the application:
- Cllr. Jamie Matthews representing Petersfield Town Council.
189. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-29), the addendum report, the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
- Was the starting point of the access road into the site fixed? It might be better located to the west of the site.
 - Why was a heavily engineered access being considered. Was the access road being raised due to drainage issues?
 - What was the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) profile and its visual impact?
 - Would the raised humps in the road be installed once the housing site was built?
 - Large construction lorries going at speed could impact the root system of the nearby trees so the speed of the vehicles would need to be controlled. There was also concern over potential lateral movement impacting the trees.
 - Could Officers confirm the status of the open space?
 - The trees supported wildlife and the site was important for bats, with the Barbastelle bat recorded as being present at the site. There had been no bat roost assessment and there would need to be a lighting assessment as light spill couldn't be known without knowing the bat roost locations. The severance of the tree line to facilitate access could impact bats but Members were aware that the access road needed to go through the tree line.
 - If there was no lighting along the road, would there be lighting at the pedestrian crossing and the raised table?
 - There should be an ecological assessment subject to the road safety audit.
 - Concern was expressed that the application was premature without the results of the road safety audit. How could permission be granted if the Highways Authority objected?
 - Decisions around road safety should be made by the Planning Committee, not delegated to the Director of Planning.
 - The Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan had this area designated as a green space. Could any further conditions be put in place to align the road in a better place, and could those conditions be delegated to the director of planning?
 - Did the proposed relocation of the access have any impact on the drainage for the site? Would it cause issues elsewhere that had not been considered?
 - Did the Road Safety Audit comply with Hampshire's technical guidance LTP4?
 - Concern that this appeared to be an irregular, contrived and unsafe route.
 - Preferred the winding route to a straight road.
 - Could Officers clarify the conditions which the applicant had proposed some amendments to?
190. Members were advised:

Agenda Item 3

- That the application sought approval for the Reserved Matters of access, scale, layout, appearance, landscaping for this length of new access. This was in effect all the detailed design matters for this element of the access following the Outline Permission.
- The road access point from the south was fixed due to earlier Reserved Matters approval for the road running through the permitted employment site
- The road is designed with a raised table to slow traffic navigating the bends.
- The SuDS basin onsite was relatively shallow Condition 4 dealt with the levels and the landscaping would assist in softening its visual impact or engineered appearance.
- The building of the road and the timing of the installation of the raised bumps would be the decision of the developer.
- The road was abutted by some earth re-grading so lateral movement was not a pressing concern.
- The open space was confirmed as Local Green Space in the Petersfield Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- The road was not proposed to the lit, and the ecologist had raised no objection to the application. The route of the road was viewed as having the least impact on the tree belt. The loss of understorey shrubs would be off set with proposed increased native planting.
- If the need for lighting was raised further, it could be conditioned.
- It was clarified that the proposed recommendation was not to grant permission but to delegate that decision to the Director of Planning to consider the satisfactory resolution of the Highway Safety Matters, and if they aren't resolved, the Director was directed to refuse the application
- A Road Safety Audit had been received but further consultation with the Highways Authority was required. the designing engineers believed it was safe to have a pedestrian crossing and raised table without lighting.
- There was no known impact on surface water in the local green space following the re-design of the access. The proposed SuDS feature would accommodate the water from the road itself, and the culvert around the ditch would allow water to be free flowing through the ditch alongside the trees.
- Officers could not comment on the very technical documents of the Highways Authority's standards and policy.
- The applicant had proposed some changes to conditions three, four, seven, eight and nine.

191. It was agreed that recommendation 1i) be amended to insert the words '*which will consider lighting impacts*' after highway safety matters and to amend 1ii) to add at the end '*and any necessary amendments to address the reasonable concerns of the applicant*'.

192. **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee, to grant approval of the Reserved Matters reference SDNP/24/01907/REM subject to:
 - (i) The satisfactory resolution of highway safety matters, which will consider lighting impacts, including receipt of a Road Safety Audit
 - (ii) The conditions set out at paragraph 9.2 of the report and any amendments or other conditions required to address highway safety matters, as necessary and any necessary amendments to address the reasonable concerns of the applicant.
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning to refuse the application,

with appropriate reasons, if the highway safety matters are not satisfactorily resolved within six months of the 10 April 2024 planning committee meeting.

ITEM 7: SDNP/24/03588/REM - LAND NORTH OF BUCKMORE FARM, PETERSFIELD

193. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-30) the addendum report and the update sheet.
194. The following speakers addressed the committee against the application:
- Cllr. Jamie Matthews representing Petersfield Town Council.
195. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
- Jacqueline Mulliner representing Dandara Southern Ltd
 - James Taylor representing Dandara Southern Ltd
 - Tim Horne representing himself.
196. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-30), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
- The design and materials would need to be changed to ensure the proposal was in keeping with the local character and context of Petersfield. The scheme was a missed opportunity to be more landscape led.
 - Could the location of the acoustic barrier be confirmed? Could the details of barrier be clarified?
 - There seemed missed opportunities in design, especially around gable ends, corner plots, and street interest.
 - It was a poor design and layout.
 - It was acknowledged that this was a demanding site but it was felt that more could be achieved.
 - Would the public right of way be suspended during site construction?
 - Could Officers confirm why the recommendation was for refusal rather than deferment?
 - There was concern the applicant had not addressed Officers concerns around design and layout, which would suggest a non-responsive approach.
 - Was it correct that the wetland rush habitat 'sterilised' 25% of the site area?
 - The rush meadow should have been viewed as a landscape opportunity in the design rather than as a constraint.
 - What was the density of housing area east of the site?
 - Concern over the ground water issues. Where would the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) be located? Would there need to be a lot of hidden culverting? Was there a risk a wet winter could inundate the site?
 - Appreciated the effort to protect the trees on the 2.63 hectare site. Was there a risk the trees could be impacted by additional water from the site?
 - Was there an incursion into the area of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the southeast side of the site. Moving plant on during the construction phase could harm tree roots and Root Protection Areas (RPA) may be impacted.
 - Sympathy for the developer insofar as the site benefits from outline permission for up to 85 houses and it's on the periphery of the Town close to the A3 and a business park. Was the rush pasture more valuable than providing homes for people? A contemporary approach to design did not need to be boring and bland, and a deferral could allow time for design issues to be addressed.

- The SDNPA had a primary purpose in protecting biodiversity, and an ecological impact assessment needed to be included.
- Access to the town, recreation ground and public right of way were resolvable within the layout of the scheme
- What would be the length of a deferment should one be proposed?
- Rush pasture should not be confused with a reed bed. A rush pasture would need to be managed.

197. Members were advised:

- That the application sought Reserved Matters approval for the detailed design of the housing and open space – namely scale, layout, access, appearance, landscaping, following the Outline Permission.
- The application was supported by a noise assessment to safeguard the amenities of the properties near the A3. The position of the acoustic barrier was to mitigate the noise from the road. It would be a three-metre-high timber barrier.
- If the works were approved, maintaining access for the existing public right of way would need to be discussed with the Applicant. but the Recommendation before Members is to refuse the application.
- The recommendation was for refusal rather than deferment because Officers were of the opinion that whilst a deferral could allow time to resolve technical matters, there were fundamental design and layout issues that would not be easily resolved.
- An exact figure for the area of the rush pasture was not available but the applicant's estimate of 25% appeared reasonable.
- The density of the housing to the east was unknown but might not be high given it's a mix of detached and semi-detached houses. On site, the proposals equated to approximately 37 dwellings per hectare.
- The SuDS scheme was primarily a pipe to pond solution.
- Whilst the Tree Officer had not raised an explicit objection in regard to the proximity of the buildings to trees, the Landscape Officer took a different view.
- The Tree Officer had been asked specifically on the proximity of SuDS basins and they did not raise an objection.
- Any decision to defer would require clarification from Members as to what their concerns were and what needed to be addressed.
- The length of a deferment was difficult to estimate given the amendments to the scheme envisaged. The application would also need to be subject to a re-consultation exercise. The timeframe would likely be more than 3 months in order to reach the next committee.

198. **RESOLVED:** That the application be deferred to allow the applicant the opportunity to address the Committee's concerns relating to the following:

- Appearance and sense of place with consideration of the relevance to Petersfield context whether contemporary or not contemporary;
- Layout
- Materials/urban design;
- Landscaping for 85 dwellings; and
- with *specific* regard to paragraphs 4.5 and 4.11 of the Planning Committee report.

199. The meeting adjourned for a short comfort break at 12.25

200. Vanessa Rowlands and Tim Burr joined the meeting at 12.31

ITEM 8: SELBORNE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLAN (CAAMP)

201. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-31).
202. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-31), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
- It was an excellent piece of work, Selborne was a most attractive village, and the proposed extension to the conservation should be supported.
 - The Queens Hotel was now known as The Jubilee Tap.
203. Members were advised:
- The reference to the Queens Hotel would be amended to its current name The Jubilee Tap.
204. **RESOLVED:** The Committee:
1. Endorsed and adopted the Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan, forming Appendix I to this report, for the purposes of development management and to inform the wider activities of the National Park Authority and its partners, subject to the minor amendments discussed and agreed by the Planning Committee.
 2. Approved three extensions to the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area, as described in paragraph 1.6 and shown on Figure 4I of the CAAMP.

ITEM 9: UPDATE ON DUTY TO COOPERATE

205. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-32) and the update sheet.
206. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-32), and the update and commented as follows:
- When the Unitary Authorities come in, would they be included on the list along with the Mayor?
 - The full adoption of the Chichester Local Plan was expected to occur at the end of Summer 2025.
 - Would the East Hampshire District Council comment stating that Petersfield, Liphook and Liss should take more development, be set against the purposes and duties of the National Park?
207. Members were advised:
- When the Unitary Authorities come in, a revised cooperation and alignment strategy would be required to take account of the changes.
 - The Regulation 18 consultation of the Local Plan included the provision to explore other sites as they came forward. The Authority was currently reviewing all sites submitted to see whether there was any potential for increasing numbers in settlements, and that assessment would need to take into account the National Park's purposes and duties.
208. **RESOLVED:** The Committee noted the contents of this report
209. Robert Mocatta left the meeting at 1.01pm

ITEM 10: PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BILL AND WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

210. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-33) and the update sheet.

211. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-33), and the update and commented as follows:
- Would Members need to pass an exam to obtain a certificate? What would be the requirement if a Member sat on the planning committee of more than one authority?
 - Given the Government's stated ambition to deliver growth, and the Authority's experience in delivering mitigation sites, the National Park, rather than Natural England seemed the right delivery body for Environmental Delivery Plans.
212. Members were advised:
- Regulations had not yet been produced detailing the requirements for members of Planning Committees, but it was likely that members sitting on two different Local Planning Authority Planning Committees would need to be trained for both.
213. **RESOLVED:** The Committee noted the contents of this report.

ITEM II: COMMUNITY PLANNING UPDATE

214. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-34) and the update sheet.
215. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-34), and the updates and commented as follows:
- 43 parishes had submitted Parish Priority Statements (PPS). Was there a way to update parishes with how they were being used without overly burdening officers?
 - What percentage of parishes participated?
 - Was there any overlap between parishes submitting NDPs, P/VDSs, and PPSs?
 - Was there a need to sell the benefits to parishes of completing PPS?
 - Would it be acceptable for a cluster of parishes to deliver a single PPS?
216. Members were advised:
- There were 176 town and parish councils across the SDNP, but these did not cover the whole of the SDNP. Of the 176 town and parish councils; 43 (or circa 25%) had submitted Parish Priority Statements (PPS); 11 (or circa 6%) had prepared Parish or Village Design Statements (P/VDS) which have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents; and 45 (or circa 25%) had made Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). The next update in October could clarify these figures.
 - A PPS could be two sides of A4 and the Authority would encourage parishes of all sizes to submit a PPS to set out their aspirations for the future and identify any local issues in relation to planning matters. Parishes could be updated on the use of PPS and encouraged to prepare more through the Spring SDNPA planning newsletter.
 - There were some overlaps of submitted community plans. Liss, for example, had a NDP, PDS, and a PPS. Out of the 43 submitted PPSs, 26 were from areas which did not have a NDP and/or a P/VDS.
 - Officers would be happy to encourage participation through the Planning Newsletter, especially in the context of Local Government reorganisation.
 - Clusters of parishes preparing and submitting a single PPS would be acceptable.
217. **RESOLVED:** The Committee noted the progress to date on the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans, Parish and Village Design Statements, and Parish Priorities Statements across the South Downs National Park
218. The Chair closed the meeting at 1.28pm

CHAIR

Signed: _____