

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### **AUTHORITY MEETING 19 FEBRUARY 2013**

Held at Cowdray Hall, Easebourne, Midhurst, West Sussex at 2.00pm

Present:

Alun Alesbury	Sebastian Anstruther	Ken Bodfish	David Burden	Jo Carr
Janet Coles	Norman Dingemans	Jennifer Gray	Neville Harrison	Barbara Holyome
Doug Jones	Tom Jones	Mark Kemp-Gee	Diana Kershaw	Jeremy Leggett
Margaret Paren (Chair)	Charles Peck	Sue Saville	Sue Seward	Andrew Shaxson
Tom Tupper	Deborah Urquhart	Pete West		

SDNPA Officers: Trevor Beattie (Chief Executive Officer), Tim Slaney (Director of Planning), Hélène Rossiter (Director of Corporate Services), Andrew Lee (Director of Strategy and Partnerships), Phil Belden (Director of Operations), Pete Currell (Partnerships Delivery Manager), Kevin Gardner (Monitoring Officer), Catherine Vaughan (Chief Finance Officer) and Fiona MacLeod (Member Services Manager).

#### **CHAIR OPENING REMARKS**

172. The Chair thanked the Director of Operations and the Area Manager (Eastern) for their presentation on the Cuckmere Estuary and Heritage Coast prior to the meeting and expressed the Authority's appreciation to the partners and members of the public who had also been present.

#### **APOLOGIES**

173. Apologies were received from Nick Bennett, Jim Funnell, David Jenkins and Barry Lipscomb.

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

174. Charles Peck declared a public service interest in Agenda item 10 (Adoption of the Joint East Sussex, South Downs, and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan) as a member of Wealden District Council.
175. Pete West declared a public service interest in Agenda item 10 (Adoption of the Joint East Sussex, South Downs, and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan) as a member of Brighton & Hove City Council.
176. Sebastian Anstruther declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda item 10 (Adoption of the Joint East Sussex, South Downs, and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan) as a minerals landowner in the South Downs.
177. Janet Coles declared a public services interest in Agenda item 11 (Adoption of the Joint Wealden Core Strategy) as a member of Eastbourne Borough Council.
178. Jo Carr declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda item 11 (Adoption of the Joint Wealden Core Strategy) as a landowner within the area referred to in the report.

#### **MINUTES**

179. Subject to the deletion of reference to para 155g in minute 153, the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 11 December 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

180. With reference to Minute 125 (New Housing and Planning Package) the Director of Planning confirmed that clarification was still awaited from government. The view of the English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA) was that national parks should be protected.
181. With reference to Minute 133 (State of the National Park Report), the Director of Strategy and Partnerships reported that the CDs and USB sticks would be available for Members at the Authority meeting on 16 April 2013
182. With reference to Minute 133, (Wooded Heaths Project) the Chief Executive Officer reported that, although the feedback from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had been disappointing, it suggested that the best approach was to resubmit a more tightly defined bid as soon as the National Park Management Plan (NPMP) was in place.
183. With reference to Minute 152 (Response to Ash Die Back Disease), the Director of Operations advised that the Forestry Commission advice was awaited and a progress report would be taken to a future Authority meeting.
184. With reference to Minute 158 (East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy – Way Forward), the South Downs National Park Authority (the Authority) would continue to be invited to attend the East Hampshire District Council Working Group.

### **URGENT MATTERS**

185. No urgent matters were raised.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

186. Mr Roger Foxwell spoke on the level of communication and engagement with farmers and landowners in respect of the Brighton Biosphere bid proposal, and a planning application for temporary rural worker residential development in Newhaven, East Sussex.
187. The Chair advised that a written response to his questions would be provided by officers.

### **NEED FOR PART II EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

188. The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that this item had been part of the revision of the Standing Orders in June 2012 under SO 5.2 (e).
189. Members considered that the report at item 16 on the agenda required discussion which would involve the disclosure of exempt information.
190. **Resolved:** that in respect of item 16 on the agenda, the public, including the press, shall be excluded from the meeting on the basis that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if a member of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Authority, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

### **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PROGRESS REPORT**

191. Report 01/13 on progress since the last report on 11 December 2012 was introduced by the Chief Executive Officer.
192. The Chief Executive Officer updated Authority Members on the following topics:
- National Star Count: responses to the count were being collated from sites such as Ditchling Beacon. There had been a strong local response to the survey which would help to build the case for a possible future dark skies reserve. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) was working with local astronomy groups to map dark skies, and the Star Count had provided an important link to schools and after schools clubs in the South Downs National Park (the Park). Members were pleased to note that the Brecon Beacons had been awarded Dark Skies status on 19 February 2013;

- Cycling Infrastructure: the Department for Transport (DfT) had confirmed that national park authorities would also have access to wider funding options for rural and urban cycling infrastructure initiatives; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-announces-record-62-million-investment-in-cycling>
  - Replace Overhead Lines with Underground Cables: Members' attention was drawn to a matter of accuracy in the report regarding the small scheme at Cocking, which was about to start rather than be completed. The Chief Executive Officer highlighted that these schemes had very important landscape, environmental and community benefits and there was a key role for Ranger Teams to explore undergrounding opportunities with parishes;
  - Access land; there had been a clear message from government that the planned review would not now take place until after the next general election.
193. The Chief Executive Officer reported that an award of £50k from Biffa had been received for the 'Wild About Winchester Downs' initiative in partnership with the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and others, and part of the wider Nature Improvement Area programme.
194. **Resolved:** that the Authority
- 1) notes the progress made by the South Downs National Park Authority since the last Report in December 2012.

### **NEXT STEPS ON ENGAGEMENT FOR THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN (NPMP)**

195. Feedback was given to Members on some of the headline feedback on the NPMP policies discussed in the joint South Downs Partnership workshop in the morning of 19 February 2013. The Chair thanked the Partnership for its contribution to the workshop.
196. The Partnerships Delivery Manager outlined the next steps in the process of developing the National Park Management Plan. The key points were:
- feedback on the draft policies would be invited from stakeholders through workshops and surveys, and from the South Downs Forum during a period of further informal engagement in March;
  - analysis of this feedback would be provided to Members and the South Downs Partnership at the joint workshop on 16 April 2013;
  - a draft NPMP would then be developed to include updated policies and taken to the Authority in June 2013 for approval;
  - the formal public consultation on the draft NPMP would then take place as planned from the end of June 2013.
197. A timetable for the March stakeholder workshops, any of which Members are welcome to attend, was circulated at the meeting.

### **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN**

198. Report 02/13 seeking approval from the Authority for the proposed strategy and timescale for producing a South Downs National Park Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule for the National Park was introduced by the Director of Planning.
199. The Director of Planning highlighted that the timetable was ambitious but achievable, and drew Members' attention to the Terms of Reference of the Local Plan Members Working Group. All Authority Members were reminded that they would be invited to attend future Working Group meetings and that the Terms of Reference provided that, in order to support openness and transparency, regular reports on the activities of the Working Group would be received by the Planning Committee and Authority.
200. The Working Group arrangements were being fully documented and Agendas, attendance lists, and notes were, and would continue to be, available on the Intranet.
201. Reference was made to the draft regulations recently published by government setting out further details of how the CIL would operate. In essence, where there was a neighbourhood

development plan in place, or where permission was granted by a neighbourhood development order, the charging authority must pass 25% of the CIL fund to the parish council in whose area the chargeable development takes place.

202. Where there was no neighbourhood development plan, the amount was 15%, capped at £100 per household in the parish council area per year.
203. It was recognised that rigorous and coherent discussions between the CIL officer and parish councils needed to be built into the timetable to minimise the risk of parish councils misapplying the use of the CIL. Clarification would be sought regarding the split of 25% CIL funding in respect of community hubs producing a Neighbourhood Plan.
204. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
- 1) approves the proposed strategy and timetable for producing a South Downs National Park Local Plan; and
  - 2) approves the proposed strategy and timetable for producing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule for the National Park.

### **ADOPTION OF THE JOINT EAST SUSSEX, SOUTH DOWNS, AND BRIGHTON & HOVE WASTE AND MINERALS PLAN (THE PLAN)**

Sebastian Anstruther left the room at 3.13pm and took no part in the following item.

205. Report 03/13 informing Members of the outcome of the Public examination into the Plan and recommending approval for formal adoption of the Plan by the Authority was introduced by the Director of Planning. Members were updated that East Sussex County Council had adopted the Plan on 12 February 2013.
206. The Planning Advisory Service had expressed interest in the possibility of using the process followed for the adoption of the Plan as a model of best practice and joint working. Members congratulated officers on their work.
207. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
- 1). notes the Main Modification to the Waste and Mineral Plan (WMP) and analysis of responses to the associated consultations;
  - 2). notes the contents of the Inspector's Report and her conclusion that the WMP is legally compliant and 'sound';
  - 3). notes the minor non-material modification made to the WMP; and
  - 4). adopts the WMP, incorporating the Main Modification and minor modifications, as waste and minerals planning policy subject to the Director of Planning (in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee) agreeing any further minor non-material changes to the text of the Waste and minerals plan for East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council.

Sebastian Anstruther rejoined the meeting at 3.20pm.

### **ADOPTION OF THE JOINT WEALDEN DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY**

Jo Carr left the room at 3.20pm and took no part in the following item.

208. Report 04/13 seeking agreement of the Authority to adopt the joint Wealden District Core Strategy was introduced by the Director of Planning.
209. In response to a question regarding the development of strategies for tourism hot spots, rather than piecemeal planning decisions, the Director of Planning explained that in the short term, partners and Rangers could assist officers until the general approach to policies was linked into the NPMP.
210. The Deputy Chair welcomed the adoption of the Core strategy by the Authority.
211. **Resolved:** that the Authority:
- 1). adopts the Wealden District (incorporating part of the South Downs National Park) Core Strategy.

Jo Carr rejoined the meeting at 3.28pm.

### **PROTOCOL FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE SITE VISITS**

212. Report 05/13 to consider whether there would be benefit in allowing other interested parties to attend Planning Committee site visits was introduced by the Director of Planning.
213. Members discussed the perceived need to amend the current Protocol in light of the varying existing Protocols adopted by neighbouring local authorities, logistics, and the fact that parish councils were already statutory consultees on planning applications in their areas.
214. There was no general consensus on the way forward and it was agreed to defer the matter for consideration at a future meeting.
215. **Resolved:** That the item be deferred for further consideration.

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

216. The Authority noted the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 8 November and 13 December 2012 and the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 17 January 2013.
217. The Committee Chair drew members attention to application no SDNP/12/01555/FUL, Land at Southdowns Road, Lewes, East Sussex, where new drawings had been prepared for consideration at a future Planning Committee.
218. It was noted that the minutes of the Planning Committee gave a true reflection of the level of debate by the Planning Committee.

### **RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

219. The Committee Chair welcomed the presentation by the Director of Planning at the Committee meeting on 13 February 2013 and highlighted the level of probing and questioning by the Committee when considering the 2013/14 budget, prior to recommendation for approval at the Authority meeting on 19 March 2013.
220. The Committee Chair expressed disappointment that more Members of the R & P Committee had not attended the Budget Planning Workshop, which had proved informative and useful.

### **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO EXTERNAL BODIES**

221. Members received two reports (Rural West Sussex Partnership, West Sussex Environment and Climate Change Board (WSECCB)).
222. Members' attention was drawn to the two issues from the report on the Rural West Sussex Partnership regarding the potential to utilise the Van Dyke Bureau database, and the three proposed broadband pilot schemes across the National Park.

### **SOUTH DOWNS CENTRE REFURBISHMENT**

223. As agreed earlier in the meeting (Minute 190 refers), the public, including the press, were excluded for the consideration of this item.
224. The meeting considered report 06/13 updating Members on options for the development of the proposed South Downs Centre. The meeting identified certain options to be the subject of more detailed evaluation, to enable consideration at a future meeting (summary of a minute which contains exempt information).

**Chair**

Meeting closed at 4.07 pm