

## **SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Held at: 10.00am on 12 December 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, and Andrew Shaxson.

Officers: Mike Hughes (Director of Planning, (Interim)), Rebecca Moutrey (Senior Solicitor), Robert Ainslie (Development Manager), Claire Tester (Planning Policy Manager), Richard Ferguson (Development Management Lead (West)), Philippa Smyth (Principal Planning 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**

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

### **ITEM 2: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

112. The following declarations was made:

- Debbie Curnow-Ford declared a public service interest in Agenda Items 8 as a Bramshott and Liphook Parish Councillor.
- Janet Duncton declared a public service interest in Agenda Item 7 as a West Sussex County Councillor.

### **ITEM 3: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2024**

113. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **ITEM 4: UPDATES ON PREVIOUS COMMITTEE DECISIONS**

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

- SDNP/23/02187/FUL & SDNP/23/02188/FUL – St Cuthmans, Stedham, approved at Planning Committee September 2024, and a decision was issued on 19 November 2024.
- SDNP/23/05251/FUL - Westbury House Nursing Home, East Meon, approved at Planning Committee November 2024, and a decision has been issued.

### **ITEM 5: URGENT ITEMS**

115. There were none.

### **ITEM 6: SDNP/24/02686/FUL - HOCKLEY GOLF CLUB, TWYFORD**

116. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-17) and the update sheet.

117. The following speakers addressed the committee against the application:

- Cllr Chris Corcoran representing Twyford Parish Council.
- Cllr Waine Lawton representing Twyford Parish Council.
- Cllr Susan Cook representing Winchester City Council as a Ward Councillor.

118. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:
- Paul Wynn representing Hockley Golf Club.
  - Jason Holmes representing Hockley Golf Club.
  - Stuart Austin representing IRUK Waste Planning & Consultancy Ltd.
119. In response to speaker comments, Officers made the following comments:
- As the Environment Agency maintain their objection to the proposal the second reason for refusal was considered legitimate and justified.
  - The landscape officer considered there to be fundamental issues with the application which could not be resolved with an onsite meeting or further engagement. An assessment of the proposals could be made through the supporting information submitted. The Landscape Officer had previously visited the site.
120. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-17), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:
- The Officer was thanked for a clear presentation and Hockley Golf Club was thanked for allowing Members to view the site in detail.
  - There was support for the recommendation for refusal, as the application compromised the first purpose of a National Park. Even if the second reason for refusal could be satisfied, this fundamental reason for refusal would remain.
  - Importing 130,000 cubic metres of material onto a chalk downland, which was clearly visible, was unacceptable. The applicants were proposing to create an engineered landform, importing inert sub soil which would fundamentally alter the landscape.
  - The application stated the grassland would be retained and re-laid but Members queried how realistic and possible this would be.? The topsoil could go back on, but the herbage was likely to be damaged whilst stockpiled. The area above the proposed pond was a good example of downland grassland.
  - Was it demonstrated that the catchment area would drain into the new pond?
  - Commended the golf club for wanting to increase their water reserves and resilience so they did not need to abstract water, thus less pressure on the River Itchen. Had they looked at an alternative way of doing this that did not involve importing 130,000 cubic metres of soil? Could a similar feature be created without the need to import so much soil? Had consideration been given into improving the existing lagoon, and installing the irrigation system?
  - How fundamental would the change to the landscape be, as a golf club had existed there for over 110 years? Was there any reason why the imported material could not be controlled – i.e. import chalk onto chalk, with a materials and waste plan? Could there be a condition to import only chalk? Would such a condition be enforceable?
  - What would be the impact of the proposal on the river Itchen? Could an impact assessment be undertaken to ascertain any impacts?
  - The Highways Authority had no objection. The project could result in mud on the highway, could this be managed via condition?
  - The committee had approved other various applications where there was some landscape impact, with proposals that involved drainage plans, soft landscaping and planting. Whilst the context was different as those applications had delivered housing, was there a fundamental difference for this application?
  - Was the current golf range classed as amenity grassland or species rich chalk grassland?
  - The application would result in increased biodiversity and ground water supplies.

- How would the pond retain water?
- The application could account for significant water saving, which was a matter to take into consideration particularly if the management of imported inert materials could be resolved satisfactorily.

121. Members were advised:

- No alternatives to bringing in 130,000 cubic metres of material had been discussed with the applicant. The application was assessed on its own merits with a recommendation before Members.
- It was believed that the landform of the driving range area had been unaltered over the years, and it positively contributed to the chalk downland character. The proposal would change the landform and character, to the detriment of Purpose 1.
- A materials waste plan would be part of a management regime (CL:AIRE), The Environment Agency also regulate this regime. Planning conditions could also be imposed.
- The impact on the River Itchen would need to be a much broader assessment and any assessment would be on land outside of the Applicant's control.
- To prevent mud on the highway, a wheel washing facility was already proposed at the access point and could be conditioned.
- The application differed from other applications and needed to be assessed on its individual merits. In this instance, there would be fundamental impact upon the prevailing open chalk downland landscape character. The landscape scheme and biodiversity enhancements would not mitigate and outweigh this harm.
- The Submission proposed enhancement of the grassland on site.
- The pond would need to be lined to retain water, given it would be situated on chalk.
- Would need to consider whether planning conditions to limit the scope of what material could be imported would be reasonable, in the context of the tests for conditions.
- The maintenance of the course required 9,000 cubic metres of water annually, 3,500 cubic metres from the borehole extraction and the remainder from mains water.

122. **RESOLVED:**

The Committee:

1. That planning permission be refused for the reasons set out in paragraph 9.1 of the report as amended by the update sheet.

**ITEM 7: SDNP/24/03470/REM - LODGE HILL EDUCATION CENTRE, WATERSFIELD**

123. The Officer presented the application and reminded Members of the report (Report PC24/25-18) and the update sheet.

124. The following speakers addressed the committee in support of the application:

- Peter Cleveland as the Agent.

125. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-18), the updates and the public speaker comments and commented as follows:

- The layout was an improvement on the previously submitted plan, they were happy with the appearance and believed a contemporary approach was suitable for the site.
- Did not personally like the design of the proposed houses and would have preferred the design to reflect Sussex architecture.
- It was an isolated site that was well screened by trees.
- Disliked the upper level, looked boxy and lacked character.

- Liked the upper level and was satisfied with the materials being used.
- Would timber cladding be used, if so, would there be provision of sustainability?
- Was not against the principle of the design but concern over the practical application. Could the overhangs be clarified? Green roofs were inadequate if not properly maintained properly. Were they fit for purpose?
- Supported the contemporary appearance found in a forestry operation. Is the tree officer satisfied with the updated tree protection plan?
- Support the contemporary look, could be a future potential SDNPA design award winner.
- Was the impact on the highways reviewed post development to determine whether Highway Authority predictions were borne out
- Would urge the developer to consider rainwater harvesting conditions to conserve and reuse water

126. Members were advised:

- There would be a condition for materials to be approved before implementation which would outline the provision of sustainability.
- Green roofs were proposed only on the garages, the dwellings had standing seam roofs. Condition 5 would go into the agreed detail on the green roofs.
- The tree officer was happy with the updated tree protection plan and Tree Protection Orders (TPO) would be sought for the buffer zone should permission be granted.
- The access was determined at outline stage and was assessed based on five dwellings. The Highways Authority had looked at that application and were content.
- The development went beyond the sustainability credentials currently required by the Authority. The updated Local Plan Review would increase the environmental requirements from future developments.

127. **RESOLVED:**

The Committee:

- I. That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee, to grant planning permission subject to:
  - (i) The satisfactory consideration and resolution of technical matters relating to water neutrality following consultation with Natural England;
  - (ii) The conditions and informatives set out in paragraph 9.1 of this report and the update sheet and any amendments or others required to address technical matters relating to water neutrality.

128. Tim Burr Joined the meeting at 11.40am.

## **ITEM 8: MAKING OF THE BRAMSHOTT & LIPHOOK NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

129. The Officer reminded Members of the report (PC24/25-19).

130. The Committee considered the report by the Director of Planning (Report PC24/25-19) and commented as follows:

- A long and complicated process which had taken nine years to complete with changes to the steering group and discussions over site allocations. Well done to Bramshott and Liphook Parish Council on its completion.
- The referendum turnout was disappointing, but the level of support was positive.

### Agenda Item 3

- How would NDP Policy BL21 accord with, and support, the new regenerative tourism approach in the Local Plan Review?
- Could further information be provided on NDP Policy BL9 in relation to the Dark Night Skies (DNS) policy, dark sky zones, and buffer zone?

131. Members were advised:

- NDP Policy BL21 accords with Adopted South Downs Local Plan Policy SD23 (Sustainable Tourism). The regenerative tourism approach proposed in the Local Plan Review currently has limited (if any) weight. If the South Downs Local Plan Review is adopted in the future with the new regenerative tourism approach, then this would have more weight than NDP Policy BL21 (but only once adopted).
- NDP Policy BL9 applies to the area outside the SDNP, whilst South Downs Local Plan Policy SD8 applies to all areas inside the SDNP.
- The DNS buffer zone might be a material consideration for areas outside of the SDNP but, for the avoidance of doubt, Policy SD8 does not apply outside the SDNP.

132. **RESOLVED:**

The Committee:

1. Noted the outcome of the Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Referendum; and
2. Agreed to make the Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) part of the Development Plan for that part of the Parish within the South Downs National Park (SDNP).

133. The Chair closed the meeting at 11.55am

**CHAIR**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

