

SDNPA:SDN Liaison meeting – Thursday 3rd June 2021

Those present:

SDN:

John Templeton - Chichester Society

Mike Tristram - Arun Countryside Trust [was Mid Arun Valley Environmental Survey (MAVES)]

Graham Elvey - Sussex Ramblers

Chris Todd – Transport Action Network and Friends of the Earth

Christopher Napier - Chair of Planning Committee, CPRE Hampshire

Patrick Haworth - Friends of Wolstonbury

Dr Tony Whitbread - Chair of the SDN and President of Sussex Wildlife Trust

Grahame Joseph - Chair Amberley Society

David Johnson Vice Chair

Kia Trainer Director - CPRE Sussex

Vic Ient - SDN

Ruth O'Keeffe - Chair, Friends of Lewes

SDNPA:

Lucy Howard, planning policy manager

Nick Heasman, countryside manager

Alex Pringle, transport officer

Andy Beattie

Andrew Lee countryside, director

Agenda and background papers: (click the link to see the background paper)

- [Whole Estate Plans](#)
- [Housing Development around the National Park](#)
- [South Downs Way - hostel accommodation](#)
- Roads in the National Park:
 - [Call for lower speed limits in the countryside](#)
 - [Quiet Lanes](#)

Meeting 'chat' notes:

From Chris Todd to Everyone: RTPi report: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/7600/rtpi-net-zero-transport-january-2021.pdf>

From Chris Todd to Everyone: Joint letter to Robert Jenrick: <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/joint-letter-may-2021-final.pdf>

From CPRE Sussex to Everyone: Joint letter to MPs

From CPRE Sussex to Everyone: <https://www.cpresussex.org.uk/news/help-us-create-thriving-places-for-people-and-wildlife/>

From Mike Tristram to Everyone: *Liking* the joint SWT CPRE letter to MPs thank you

From Chris Todd to Everyone: Coombes Road (linked to Ikea development) and access to SWT headquarters could be good places to start

From Andy Beattie to Everyone: ty Chris

From CPRE Sussex to Everyone: Ditchling always crops up for us

Whole Estate Plans.

Nick Heaseman, the Countryside Manager of the National Park gave a presentation on WEPS. A copy of this presentation is attached. Opening the discussion, he emphasises that WEPS are not a statutory plan and not a planning document. He mentioned there were a number of new WEPS being processed and that members of both the policy and resources committee and the planning committee had visited the Firle Estate in the process of considering their WEP.

Vic Ient, referring to the SDN briefing document summarised the concern regarding the linkage of a non-statutory document to a statutory local plan, the lack of a clear public consultation arrangements, including the opportunity to consult and view draft plans. He mentioned that Eastbourne Borough Council had not initially widely publicised their WEP draft plan, but after intervention by the Eastbourne Downland Association wider publication was eventually initiated.

Planning Policy Officer, Lucy Howard clarified that WEP are referenced in policy SD25 of the National Park's local plan.

David Johnson was concerned with the power that states have and wants to understand how the National Park helps the public understand WEPS.

Kia Trainer said that CPRE had been very much involved in the Brighton and Hove City Council, WEP. Referring to other WEPS, she said they were concerned about the aspirations contained in WEPS, which give rise to public concern over what the National Park may be about to approve. The Barlavington WEP was cited where, where local people had contacted CPRE for help because of the worry about sand quarrying referenced in the WEP. Andrew Lee said he had spent a lot of time writing to parish councils and local people to allay their concerns over the possibility of quarrying for silica sand mentioned in the WEP. Vic Ient commented that immediately the short consultation period had ended, the Barlavington estate removed the WEP from their agent's website, thus making it difficult to comment on concerns raised.

Christopher Napier added that there had been concerns about the one WEP that had passed through the national park process in Hampshire at the Newton Valence WEP. He added, – what happens about public consultation when WEPs are updated in the future?

Andrew Lee added that to ensure the independence of the Planning Committee to make decisions, WEP are approved by the P&R committee. He added that the revised arrangements for WEPs are to be put to the July meeting of the P&R committee.

In concluding the debate, Tony Whitbread called for better links to the SDN network, saying that the SDN could help with developing better WEP in the future. Like others, he voiced the concerns that the public don't actually know very much about WEP and what their benefit is to the countryside and the National Park. He referenced the Wiston estate, WEP, which was the first plan of its type to be approved by the National Park. Nick Cheeseman responded by saying that WEPs help the estate deal with assets (referring to buildings and barns) which may have become liabilities.

Housing Development around the National Park

Vic Ient referred the meeting to the SDN briefing paper which summarised concerns over large-scale development on the national park borders.

Christopher Napier said that CPRE Hampshire had spent a considerable amount of trying to persuade local authorities to include strong affordable housing policies. He reported that East Hampshire District Council had adopted CPRE's affordability approach. He stressed how it important is to have an up-to-date local plan, which is largely a case in Hampshire but not the case in some councils in Sussex. He said that Southampton had been given an extra 35% in their housing targets which would have the effect of pushing development out into the countryside outside Southampton's boundary.

David Johnson, refer to the importance of "the setting" of the National Park in considering plans on the fringes of the national park boundaries. He also referenced the high level of development in the high Weald AONB. He said that there should be more insistence on the building of houses which have already been given planning permission.

Tony Whitbread said that it seems the government are just driving housing numbers.

Lucy Howard said that the revision to the [NPPF \(see para 175\) now includes a reference to "the setting" of national parks](#). She mentioned that the inspector considering the current mid Sussex plan had specifically asked for national park input because of this new NPPF paragraph. She thought that this was a hopeful sign that consideration will be given to the landscape and the sensitivity of the area around the national park.

Referring to Christopher Napier's point about Southampton, she said that this wasn't the only council to have a major increase in housing requirement by the government. She cited Brighton and Hove city council, which also have 35% increase.

Referring to 'land banking' she said that developers are unlikely to build houses when I can't foresee good profits and that is why existing planning permissions are often 'land banked.' She said, there is one solution to this and that is charging council tax as soon as you give permission. This would have the effect of forcing housing developments to be actually built.

Christopher Napier voiced concerns about meeting climate change targets, the development of car dependent communities in the countryside and that there should be more emphasis on building houses upon brownfield sites.

Andrew Lee said it would be interesting to see new developments tested against net zero targets. He said that the Glover review results are to be consulted on soon and that may give an opportunity to revisit this matter.

Chris Todd referred to developments little further away from the national parks such as the Northern Arc development at Burgess Hill, which is effectively a car dependent development and will bring more cars onto the road in the national park. He referred to the Transport for New Homes group, of which he is a trustee member saying that their advice is to consider sustainable transport when considering new developments.

Mike Tristram asked if para 175 can be used with regard to the Arundel bypass proposal grey route. Lucy Howard thought that this would be a consideration when the government's inspector comes to review the proposal.

South Downs Way - hostel accommodation

Vic Ient summarised the background papers for the meeting. Referring to the lack of hostel accommodation along the 65 mile stretch of the South Downs Way between truly Hill and Winchester. Vic Ient reiterated concerns that youth hostels at Arundel and Winchester had been closed in recent years. He also mentioned the former chair of the SDNPA, Margaret Paren, efforts to work with the diocese of Chichester to open up semi-redundant churches for overnight accommodation.

Andrew Lee mentioned that [Anita Kerwin-Nye, Executive Director of Strategy, Engagement and Commercial at the YHA](#) was going to be appointed to the South Downs National Park partnership board.

Andrew also mentioned the [YHA's programme called 'Generation Green'](#) which is a 16-month funded project that aims to connect young people to nature, create and save jobs, and build an aspirant workforce for a green recovery. He also mentioned the need to get the right sort of accommodation in the right place. **He also mentioned the "paying church proposal" ???**

Grahame Joseph recounted recent problems at Amberley, where an existing and much used, small bothy and campsite alongside the South Downs Way had been sold by WSCC to a private developer. SDNPA did not intervene in the sale and rejected the Parish Council's request for the planning application, for change of use to a holiday-let, to be called in. The site is now hidden behind high security gates and walls making monitoring of use difficult. Tony Whitbread spoke of his concerns of 'planning creep' leading to lost amenity.

Kia Trainer mentioned that they had links with Anita Kerwin-Nye.

Roads in the National Park

Vic Ient summarised the SDN briefing papers on quiet lanes and the need for lower speed limits on minor roads in the national park, suggesting that greater emphasis should be used on the little-known quiet lanes legislation to extend safe cycling and walking provision in the national park where actual infrastructure provision is either not funded or not available. He also referred to the SDN briefing papers concerning 40 mph speed limits in the Ashdown Forest and the New Forest. He noted that it seems to be easy to get speed limits in towns and cities, but when it comes to the countryside there seems to be resistance to such provision, despite the higher accident rate. He referred to the excellent documentation and efforts towards the transport select committee by CPRE on reducing speed limits and quiet lanes.

Christopher Napier mentioned that they had tried very hard to get Hampshire county council to adopt quiet lanes, but without success.

Ruth O’Keeffe mentioned a case in Lewes, where the town is largely covered by a 20 or 30 mph speed limit, but when it comes to narrow lanes leading out to the countryside the speed limit ‘magically’ become 60 mph! She said there had been resistance by the county council to rectifying this problem.

Tony Whitbread said maybe we can work together to try and take this matter forward and we shouldn’t forget the [Missing Link](#) project.

Andy Beattie said that they can pick up the quiet lanes issue with the highways authorities and they could look at revising the SDNPA’s document [Roads in the South Downs](#). He also mentioned the possibility of using [CIL Funding](#) to implement programmes. He went on to summarise and say there is a scale issue, and perhaps working on hotspots would be a better way forward. He suggested working together in the background. This was welcomed by the SDN.

Alex Pringle advised the meeting that the highways authorities did sign up for the section 62[i]. He also referred to a toolbox of measures which can help progress matters.

Tony Whitbread thanked all of the attendees for their contribution and participation, saying that we had run out of time at this meeting but for further discussion, look forward to working with the National Park and SDN members on these matters. He said that arrangements and dates for further meetings will be made and members advised.

He thanked the SDNPA for attending the meeting. The meeting ended at 12:45pm.

[i] Section 62 Advice – General Power of Improvement - The provision of this part of the Highways Act has the effect of empowering or requiring highway authorities and other persons to improve highways for the benefit of the public.