

SDNPA – SDLMG Meeting Minutes

Held at: South Downs Centre, North Street, Midhurst, GU29 9DL
10:00 – 12:00 15th September 2014

Present:

Margaret Paren – Chair (MP)	Andrew Lee (AL)
Will Anderson (WA)	James Cooper (JC)
Megan Cameron (MC)	Mike Tristram (MT)
Phil Belden (PB)	Tom Warder (TW)
Angie Blowman (AB)	Christopher Passmore (CP)
Alison Tingley (AT)	Sandra Nichols (SN)
Simon Ward (SW)	

Apologies:

William Wolmer	Sabrina Harcourt Smith
Tom Tupper	Nigel Clutton
Stan Abbott	

1. Welcome & Minutes of last meeting 22nd May

Margaret Paren welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made around the table. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on the 22nd May 2014, were discussed and found to be accurate.

2. Matters Arising

AL gave updates on a number of items from the previous meeting.

Item 4. Local Plan/CIL Consultation. There are a number of Local Plan working group meetings taking place. Lots of evidence is being gathered. The SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) is a current focus and Parish workshops are currently being run to discuss potential housing sites. Further evidence is also being obtained as part of the Employment Land review – in particular looking at the needs for the forestry, tourism, and food & drink sectors. An invitation was made for SDLMG to send a representative to the Employment Land Seminar to be held at the South Downs Centre on 29th September 13.00-16.00 in Midhurst. JC expressed an interest in this.

ACTION. Lucy Howard in the Planning Policy team to send details about the Employment Land workshop to AT for JC and MT.

CIL. There are currently over 140 projects on the emerging CIL Infrastructure Development Plan with a total value of £60M across the park. Projects vary from v small to very large and cover many issues including education, transport, greenspace, and community facilities. AL invited SDLM to put forward any infrastructure projects. The list is always open and more projects are needed particularly in West Sussex. SDNP contact for this is Gareth Giles. JC asked whether we were any nearer to responding to the question from the last meeting relating to the review of settlement boundaries are being reviewed. JC offered to help SDNPA with definition of agricultural workers dwellings. Gareth Giles in AB's team is working on this and JC will be put in touch with Gareth.

ACTION. AB to ensure Gareth and JC are in touch with each other.

Item 6. It was reported that good progress was being made.

Item 8 NELMS. There is an issue regarding the quality of the datasets on which NE is basing its targeting work. The consortium of English Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) has written to Defra on the matter. Trevor Beattie attended a dinner with the new CEO for NE and raised this and other issues.

MT asked for an update on Item 9, Broadband. Angie explained that the initial consultant's report was submitted in mid July to the Senior Management Team. The findings are now being discussed with the County Councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships before being disseminated more widely. This is important so that the SDNPA work is seen as complementary to the thrust of the BDUK national programme not in competition with it.

3. Progress since Summer Meeting and Workshops.

MP gave a brief comment on the unanimous decision of the SDNPA Planning Committee to reject the application by Celtique Energie for exploratory drilling for hydrocarbons at Fernhurst. JC asked what the SDNPA policy would be, should the drilling from outside the National Park, come under it. MP explained SDNPA would then be a statutory consultee as opposed to being the Planning Authority.

AL reflected on the summer workshop, which despite the low turnout from members of the SDLMG he felt had been a very good meeting and a productive format based on the four workshops. There followed a quick update on the four topics covered:

- **Food & Drink Portal**

Work is on-going through the partnership with Natural Partnerships CIC and Southern Co-op. This is currently at Stage 1 to determine criteria, and MT advised that he did feed into the development of these. AB explained that Tourism falls within her team. She explained that Kat Hale is leaving SDNPA soon but that it is hoped to appoint a new Tourism Officer by end of this week. AB will ensure that the project moves forward in the hiatus, she has a meeting with NP CIC in a week and will provide AT with an update probably early October. AL also explained that a draft Food and Drink Policy for the SDNPA itself will be taken to the Policy & Programme committee in October after which the views of the SDLMG would be welcomed.

ACTION. AB to update AT in October regarding the NP CIC meeting.

ACTION. AL to feed back via AT to SDLMG regarding the Food and Drink policy.

- **Payments for Ecosystem Services**

This workshop was the most popular of all with lively debate between those upstream and those downstream on the Rother catchment. The project is currently at Phase 1 - modelling the dynamics of siltation. Phase 2 will look at how to develop a market in payments for ecosystem services – providing new income for farmers in return for changing land management practice.

The SDNPA is also hosting a seminar on 18th September on the topic of water abstraction licences.

Other water projects – eg on the Brighton chalk block are also going ahead. AL urged the SDLMG executive to continue to use its channels to encourage farmers to participate in these schemes. AT explained some responses are coming back to her but should go to Lawrence Gould. MT asked for feedback on whether the communications are working.

ACTION: AB to provide feedback to AT on attendees at seminar on 18th September

- **Woodland Management**

The advice and information provided by Nina Williams proved extremely popular at the workshop. She now has excellent data on ownership on woodlands within the NP and whether the landowners are interested in bringing them into active management, and has made 40 site visits and worked with 100 businesses to date. There has been good joint working between the SDNPA and the Forestry Commission to influence the LEP Growth Deal funding for woodfuel and timber processing. Various ideas are in discussion including wood processing, saw mills, structural timber products. MT mentioned the practical difficulties of harvesting on steep slopes for small woodlands. Mechanical harvesting is difficult and more sensitive solutions may be required. AL advised that Alison Field at the Forestry Commission is very active in championing this work.

JC discussed small contractors and mobile sawmills, and the potential for LEADER funds to match the LEPs investment. MP spoke about the difficulty in getting LEPs interested in small projects. AB advised that proposals for small capital forestry projects should be referred to Leader Local Action Groups.

ACTION. AT to ask Nina Williams to discuss with SDLM Forestry Lead Stan Abbott how best to identify specific woodland management projects which would benefit from investment and opportunities to source funding for those projects.

- **Take the Lead Campaign**

Building on the very successful video animation, summer events and the identification of ambassadors for responsible dog walking, there will be another big push next spring. There is to be a meeting with Brighton Hove Council in a couple of weeks about registration of commercial dog walking businesses.

4. Community Land Trusts

Tom Warder from Action in Rural Sussex was introduced to the meeting and gave an update on the joint SDNPA/AirS/Coast to Capital LEP project on Community Land Trusts.

Notes on the slides (attached)

Slide 4. The rent model was 50% OMV but is now 80%

Slides 7 & 8 (typical outcomes) were shown and discussed – with local people housed in perpetuity via the Rural Exception Site Policy. JC and MP specifically commented on how they looked like “townscapes in a rural village”, something which was felt to be inappropriate and that rural schemes should be used instead – design being of paramount importance in the SDNP.

Slide 10 it was explained that CLT's have been gathering pace over the last 10 years and that they are extensively used in America.

Slide 11 CLT's are “not for profit”, so any profits which are made are put back into projects in the local area.

Slides 12- 15 Examples of CLT's in action.

Slides 17- 21 Examples of CLT's more specifically in National Park locations.

Slides 22 With grants often being difficult to obtain, CLT's are looking at innovative means of obtaining finance.

Some questions were asked afterwards...

MC asked by what process people demonstrate “local connection”? TW explained that this information is drawn from the Local Authority's housing allocation table.

SW was pleased to see acknowledgement that income generated from market housing is often required to cross-subsidise affordable units and asked has the SDNPA embraced this fully? TW responded that SDNPA are drafting the policy. AL explained that these are important issues being very actively discussed amongst Members through the Local Plan process in a series of meetings between now and when the preferred options emerge next year MT asked about how to ensure

proposals come forward? TW explained that AirS is assisting with the targeting of local people in order to get them involved.

TW left the meeting, accompanied by WA, at 11.20am.

5. Undergrounding

AL updated the meeting. SDNPA lead was Andy Beattie but is now Pete Currell. The SDNPA has been successful in influencing the deployment of national funding pots through UK Power Networks. In the SDNP this mostly relates to the undergrounding of low voltage lines— there are no high voltage schemes currently underway in the SDNP, although NPA are hoping to get some funding for mitigation along high voltage routes. Good examples of low voltage undergrounding planned include schemes at Piddinghoe, Saddlescombe and Adur Valley.

Pete Currell is now representing the English National Parks on this issue and working closely with the four Area Ranger teams to bring landowners to the table. There is national funding allocation of £500m, which in the past has been consistently underspent.

MT noted that sometimes engineers don't appreciate the erosion levels in the Park and that there is a danger that in future cables could be dug up by accident. AL confirmed that undergrounding is undertaken at no cost to the landowner.

ACTION: The SDLMG to encourage members to bring forward ideas for schemes and participate in those already planned. Nb PB explained that High voltage =275Kv - 400Kv of which v few in the NP, mid-voltage is 132Kv, low is 12-32Kv.

JC left the meeting at 11.30am.

6. Idox “Enterprise” reporting module on agricultural applications

AL advised the group that the issue of getting consistent reporting on the number of and handling of planning applications related to agriculture came up recently at an NFU meeting. A technical solution is on the horizon via a new enquiry module for Idox which will allow us to design bespoke reports. Help is needed to design the correct search criteria and Carol Brown, (who runs the system) would like to hear from the SDLMG to that effect.

ACTION. AL to put Carol in touch with AT.

7. SDLMG vacancy on South Downs Partnership

MP asked for thanks to be conveyed to David Taylor for his help and support in the past.

MT advised that two names have come forward and it was agreed that George Atkinson should be approached.

ACTION. MP asked for George Atkinson to be approached by MT and acknowledged that busy representatives cannot be expected to make all the meetings – something she would be happy to discuss with the candidate herself.

8. Date of next meeting and AOB

AOB –

ACTION. SW will pick up with Rebecca on the subject of “how best to communicate to members?” with a view to perhaps incorporating something about the ‘Secrets of the High Woods into the next SDLM newsletter.

The next meeting date is not yet in place but should be sometime in the spring ahead of the publication of the preferred options for the emerging Local Plan.

There being no further business MP closed the meeting at 11.42am.