



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

TOPIC – SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK, PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2019

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed request, the Leader may require the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

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SUMMARY

This PFH notice sets out a summary of the content of the South Downs Partnership Management Plan, which the City Council has been consulted on and proposes a number of detailed comments to be made by the close of the consultation period.

DECISION

1. That Winchester City Council welcomes and supports the South Downs Partnership Management Plan, which sets out a range of policies under eleven outcomes to deliver its vision "Thriving Communities in Inspirational Landscapes".
2. That the City Council offers a number of detailed comments and suggestions as set out at Appendix 1.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The Council has been consulted on the [draft Partnership Management Plan](#), produced by the National Park Authority following extensive early consultation on issues to be addressed and detailed evidence collated. The Plan sets out a vision, 11 outcomes and 56 policies to establish a comprehensive framework to make the national park a better place in the future.

Members received a presentation from National Park officers on the draft management plan on 11 June, prior to the launch of the consultation period which runs from 1 July to 16 September.

Government legislation requires national parks to comply with two statutory purposes focused on the natural beauty of the area and its special qualities, whilst also having a corresponding social and economic duty, to ensure that the needs of residents and businesses are taken into account in delivering the purposes.

The Plan recognises the pressures for change that are evident locally such as major development pressures and threatened habitats and heritage assets, particularly given the geographic extent of the park and that it lies adjacent to large urban areas. The Plan therefore focuses on matters which are significant and urgent and where collective action will have greater impact. The Plan includes commitments from land managers, communities, businesses and statutory agencies and emphasises that it is a Plan for the entire community not just the National Park Authority although recognising that it will provide the framework for the Park's own business plans. The Plan will be followed by a single Local Plan in 2017, which will provide the spatial representation of the management plan. The single local plan will then replace the joint local plans and core strategies adopted in partnership with local authorities including Winchester.

The management plan therefore provides a similar function to the Winchester District Community Strategy, although its focus is towards the management of land in delivering national park purposes.

The Vision 'Thriving Communities in Inspirational Landscapes', is broken down into 11 outcomes, although these are grouped under three key themes of;

- A thriving living landscape
- People connected with places
- Towards a sustainable future

Under each theme lies a series of detailed policies to be implemented through a comprehensive delivery programme included in the document.

These policies whilst having no statutory planning purpose often reflect matters already established in adopted planning policies and if relevant would be a material consideration in determining planning applications, received in the National Park area.

Having examined the document it is suggested that the comments and observations set out at Appendix 1 to this notice are submitted to the National Park Authority:

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct resource implications. Once approved this management plan would be a material consideration in the determination of planning and non planning proposals within the National Park where relevant.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE PROPOSED DECISION

Officers have been advised of publication of the draft Partnership Management Plan and any comments received have been included in the commentary and observations set out at Appendix 1.

**FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED
FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION
NOTICE**

N/A

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR
OFFICER CONSULTED**

N/A

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/A

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 16.09.13

Councillor Victoria Weston - Portfolio Holder for Built Environment

Appendix 1

Winchester City Council response to SDNP draft Partnership Management Plan

General : WCC welcomes publication of the management plan which provides a comprehensive framework for the delivery of National Park objectives, but offers the following detailed comments for consideration.

A thriving living landscape : WCC has no comments to make on the outcomes and policies which cover topics such as landscape and natural beauty, priority species, cultural heritage and management of heritage assets, water, farming forestry and woodland.

People connected with places : WCC supports the general policies particularly as these include references to volunteering and community led initiatives, but suggests that there should be a reference to sport and leisure opportunities, rather than just outdoor activity and relaxation (Policy 28). There are many countryside pursuits that would both contribute to the local economy but also be compatible with the National Park purposes yet these are not referred to, perhaps reference needs to be made to 'the best of use of natural assets to drive the local economy'? – this could also be applied to Policy 42 which refers to appropriate recreation and tourism facilities. Policy 35 states 'Improve existing transport provision for visitors and communities....', lack of transport in rural areas is a constant issue for Winchester communities, the use of 'improve' suggests that this matter will be instantly resolved, particularly as the policy goes on to state 'especially by increasing the availability of Sunday and evening services'. The most recent rural bus review resulted in many services being reduced or removed in their entirety and given currently public sector funding are unlikely to be reinstated, yet this policy presents a very positive picture which could be misinterpreted. It is therefore suggested that 'improve' is replaced with promote or encourage.

Towards a sustainable future : whilst the introduction to this section and indeed outcomes refer to the local economy, there is no reference to retail as a contributor – this is surprising given the success of local farmers markets and farm diversification schemes and the promotion of sourcing local products. WCC requests this omission is addressed in the final version of the management plan. This section could also be expanded to encouraging wildlife related industries (filming, nature centres, themed tours). Whilst it is recognised that the local plan provides the spatial framework for this document, and Policies 50 – 54 refer to general employment matters should there be reference to retaining a local workforce though provision of inexpensive workspace?

Delivery Framework: the framework attempts to identify partners that will deliver the actions, however many local authorities have in place existing strategies and are already actively implementing a number of the actions. It is suggested that the following are incorporated

Action 83 'Leader' - WCC is not as the lead delivery partner, however, its role is as the accountable body rather than actually leading delivery of projects – the delivery partner should be the Local Action Group.

Action 84 'strengthening local supply chains' – given the success of the Hampshire and Wessex Farmers Markets it is suggested that these are also referred to.

Action 87- 88 & 90 there are numerous local initiatives promoting the local rural economy, including the provision of grant funding and other forms of support and advice – these should be referred to in some form. Also with reference to education,

Sparsholt College provides an extensive range of courses covering land management, equine horticulture etc, therefore this section should refer to a wider range of educational establishments.