

13 June 2022

Town/Parish Clerk
By email only

Dear Colleagues

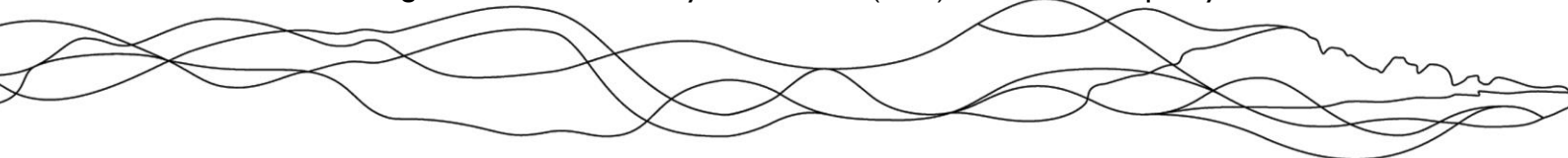
Review of the South Downs Local Plan

I am writing to you about the review of the South Downs Local Plan and to ask for your help in preparing it. The National Park Authority would like to work collaboratively with its town and parish councils to deliver the Local Plan Review. The South Downs National Park needs properly managed development that conserves and enhances the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage for which it was designated. The original Local Plan was adopted in July 2019. The National Park Authority has made the decision to start a review in line with Government policy and in order to deliver more through planning on its corporate priorities of addressing the Climate Emergency, Nature Recovery and creating a National Park for All. It will be a review and not a completely new plan. It will be done under a challenging financial environment, with a three year flat cash settlement from the Government for the National Park Authority at a time of inflation and fast rising costs. It will also be done at a time of national changes to planning with the recent publication of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. [Here is a link](#) to the full Authority report on the Local Plan Review.

The South Downs National Park covers 1,600 km² of England's most iconic lowland landscapes and the National Park Authority is grateful for the local expertise provided by its town and parish councils. There are three evidence based studies supporting the Local Plan Review, which we are asking your input on:

1. We are launching a Call for Sites in July 2022 and would be grateful if you sent in details of sites you have local knowledge of, which may be available and suitable for a range of uses including new homes, employment and renewable energy. Full details will be posted on our website shortly about the sort of sites we are interested in and how to make a submission.
2. We will be starting work on reviewing our Settlement Facilities Study, which lists the number and type of facilities and services provided in individual settlements across the National Park. This study helps to inform the Authority of the sustainability of individual settlements. A proforma for you to fill out and return to us will be sent out shortly.
3. A large number of Local Green Spaces are already designated in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). If you think there are any further green spaces in your town or parish that merit designation please fill out the Local Green Space proforma that will be sent out shortly.

As part of the Local Plan Review, we will be looking at development need across the National Park and for individual settlements. We will then be seeking development sites to meet this need through our Land Availability Assessment (LAA). Government policy states



that we do not have to meet our objectively assessed development need in full, because we are a National Park, but we should not leave any stones unturned looking for suitable sites. We will allocate sites for a range of uses in our Local Plan Review and will work collaboratively with you in a number of ways. We will arrange 121 meetings with the town and parish councils of the following main settlements: Lewes, Petersfield, Midhurst, Easebourne, Liss, Petworth and Lewes. We will also arrange a virtual workshop for all our town and parish councils with optional 121 sessions (resources permitting) this winter to talk specifically about housing provision figures and the findings of the LAA. This workshop will be open to all town and parish councils both wholly and partly in the National Park. Following on from this we will invite town and parish councils to submit relevant local information on sites that officers can take into consideration in the allocation process. Your comments will help shape potential allocations in your parishes.

There are forty NDPs currently made part of the development plan of the National Park. Regrettably we will only be able to offer feedback at the statutory stages of preparing an NDP namely pre-submission and submission. Some technical support and funding is available from Locality and details can be found on their [website](#). Rather than prepare an NDP for your parish/town we would encourage you to work collaboratively with us on our Local Plan Review. If your parish/town council is designated as a qualifying body, you may also be interested in preparing a Neighbourhood Priorities Statement to summarise the principal needs and prevailing views of your local community. These were identified in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and further details are awaited on these from the Government. In the interim, we will provide a proforma for town and parish councils.

The intention is to publish the draft Local Plan Review with allocations in autumn 2023 when all the town and parish councils will be encouraged to submit formal representations. There will also be a formal Pre-Submission consultation the following year. Leading up to the first consultation here are the main opportunities for you to feed into the Local Plan Review:

- Up to 30 September 2022 to respond to the Call for Sites, Settlement Facilities Study and Local Green Spaces
- Larger settlement meetings (virtual) to be held in November 2022
- Workshop for all town/parish councils with optional 121 surgeries to discuss development provision figures, interim findings of the LAA, Settlement Facilities Study and Local Green Spaces to be held in December 2022
- Up to 31 January 2023 to feedback on the workshop

I do look forward to working with you on the Local Plan Review. Please contact us on planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk if you have any queries about this letter.

Yours faithfully



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