

Report to	South Downs National Park Authority
Date	13 December 2011
By	Director of Planning
Title of Report	Publication (Pre-Submission) of Joint Core Strategy by the South Downs National Park Authority and East Hampshire District Council
Purpose of Report	To seek agreement from Members to publish the proposed Pre-Submission East Hampshire and South Downs National Park Joint Core Strategy for consultation and that the document will then be submitted for Examination, subject to minor amendments

Recommendation: That the National Park Authority:

- 1) agrees the proposed Pre-Submission East Hampshire and South Downs National Park Joint Core Strategy, as attached, is published for the purpose of the submission of representations on soundness and**
 - 2) endorse, subject to any minor amendments agreed by the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the SDNPA Planning Committee, that the Joint Core Strategy be subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State for examination**
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since the South Downs National Park Authority (NPA) commenced operating as the local planning authority for the National Park in April 2011 it has been working closely with East Hampshire District Council on the East Hampshire and South Downs National Park Joint Core Strategy.
- 1.2 This work has culminated in the production of a pre-submission version of the core strategy, **(see Appendix 1)**. The intention of this pre-submission version of the document is that it is published in February 2012 for six weeks in order for representations to be made on the grounds of 'soundness' prior to being submitted to the Secretary of State and made the subject of an examination by an independent Inspector from the Planning Inspector, which will be likely to include roundtable sessions.
- 1.3 Should the inspector find the submitted Joint Core Strategy sound it can then be adopted by the NPA and East Hampshire District Council as providing the strategic planning policy for East Hampshire district, including the part of the National Park within East Hampshire district.

2. Background

- 2.1 East Hampshire district is the fifth largest district within the South Downs National Park.
 - 56% of the district lies within the National Park (29,200 hectares), the second highest proportion of any of the 12 local authority areas within the National Park.
 - it also has about 18% of its population within the National Park (about 30,000 people), again the second highest of any of the districts.
- 2.2 It is a largely rural district, but includes the market town of Petersfield, the second largest

settlement in the South Downs National Park and smaller settlements including Liss, East Meon, Selborne, Chawton, Binsted and Buriton, all within the National Park.

- 2.3 The current planning policy for East Hampshire District is the adopted East Hampshire Local Plan Second Review, which was adopted in March 2006, as one of the last old-style local plans.
- 2.4 For the purposes of the Joint Core Strategy the district is divided into four spatial areas: the part of the district within the South Downs National Park, Whitehill Bordon – where there is the proposal for an Eco-Town (lying immediately to the north and east of the National Park's boundary), the area to the north of South Downs National Park and southern parishes. Over 4000 new homes are proposed at Whitehill Bordon alongside 5500 new jobs and ancillary development associated with a development of this scale.

3. Policies for the South Downs National Park part of the District

- 3.1 The proposed pre-submission version of the Joint Core Strategy highlights that over the next 20 years East Hampshire will experience major changes that are unique to the district. Within the South Downs National Park part of the district, including Petersfield, the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the national park will be conserved and enhanced, while recognising the opportunities to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.
- 3.2 The spatial strategy for the district outlined in the Joint Core Strategy (Policy CP1) highlights that sustainable development will be promoted and secured to maintain the vitality and viability of existing communities, to meet the need for new resource efficient housing and economic growth that is supported by necessary infrastructure and to ensure the protection and the enhancement of the built and natural environment in particular the protection of the special qualities of the South Downs National Park which is fundamental to the Joint Core Strategy.
- 3.3 The spatial strategy policy goes onto say that: "New development must fully acknowledge the constraints and opportunities of the South Downs National Park and the form, scale and location of development must ensure that the duty and purposes of the National Park are delivered. In particular, major new development will only be considered if it supports National Park purposes."

4. Housing and Employment Policies

- 4.1 In Policy CP14 the Joint Core Strategy provides for up to 4000 new dwellings at Whitehill Bordon eco-town and meets the requirement set out in the South East Plan of 4400 new dwellings for the central Hampshire part of the district (including the South Downs National Park) for the period 2006 to 2028, and 1320 dwellings in south Hampshire for 2006 to 2028.
- 4.2 This will be achieved through:
- the completion of existing permissions and allocations,
 - development within the defined settlement policy boundaries of towns and villages, where consistent with maintaining and enhancing their character and quality of life, and
 - greenfield sites in the most accessible settlements, including 330 dwellings in Petersfield.
- 4.3 Policy CP14 also states that within the South Downs National Park any housing provision should meet the needs of the local communities in the National Park area.
- 4.4 It will be for the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan, or if a neighbourhood plan does not progress, for an Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), to allocate the necessary sites for housing taking into account the need to ensure that any impact on the landscape is minimised and mitigated.
- 4.5 Sites for affordable housing will be identified through an Allocations DPD, with up to 25 dwellings identified for Liss and up to 10 dwellings for other settlements with a settlement policy boundary, including Stroud, High Cross, Ropley, Sheet, Steep, Greatham, Selborne, Chawton, Buriton, East Meon, Upper Farringdon, Lower Farringdon, East Worldham and

Binsted. Within the National Park the identification of sites will ensure that there is no conflict with National Park purposes, and any market housing (which will not make up more than 30% of the total dwellings on the site) will be 'low-cost' and should only be permitted to meet the proven need to the local communities in the National Park.

- 4.6 Policy CS23 of the Joint Core Strategy proposes to provide up to two hectares of employment land in Petersfield, preferably including the provision of managed workspace (that is, an enterprise centre).
- 4.7 Policy CS25 highlights that development will be permitted within the National Park for businesses contributing to "conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, promoting opportunities for the understanding and the enjoyment of its qualities, improving the viability of traditional rural businesses and or providing local services for local people." The proposals will need to demonstrate that they: "do not harm the character of the site or its surroundings or do not adversely affect natural beauty, wildlife or cultural heritage and opportunities for recreation."

5. Timetable

- 5.1 East Hampshire District Council's Development Policy Panel considered a report on the pre-submission Joint Core Strategy on 30 November (**Appendix 2**), and their Cabinet will also consider a report at a special meeting on 1 December before their full Council consider a report and the draft document on 7 December.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the pre-submission version of the Joint Core Strategy be published in February 2012 to allow sufficient time for the consultation document to be printed. Provided that the representations received produce only minor changes that do not alter the substance of the strategy set out in the document and can be agreed by the Director of Planning in consultation with the Chair of SDNPA Planning Committee together with their counter-parts at East Hampshire District Council, the Joint Core Strategy will be submitted for Examination in May 2012.

6. Resources

- 6.1 The NPA has a protocol for joint working with East Hampshire District Council and provides financial resources and NPA officer time to help produce the Joint Core Strategy, which was agreed by the NPA Planning Committee at its meeting of 13 June 2011.
- 6.2 The cost to the SDNPA in 2011-12 of the joint working with East Hampshire is about £123,000. There will also be substantial cost for the SDNPA for the continued joint working with East Hampshire District Council into 2012/13, including for the Examination in Public. The 13 June 2011 NPA Planning Committee report indicated that approximately £150,000 will be required to meet the costs.

7. Risk management

- 7.1 Risk - without comprehensive, sound and up-to-date planning policy for the National Park, underpinned by a robust evidence base, the NPA risks losing:
- (i) control of being able to determine what is inappropriate new development, through losing planning appeals, and
 - (ii) opportunities to guide and facilitate appropriate new development and highlighting the quality of development that is being sought for the National Park.

Mitigation - the risks will be significantly reduced by the timely preparation of a sound Joint Core Strategy.

- 7.2 Risk – that representations at the pre-submission stage require an alteration of such significance to the general strategy of the Core Strategy that it would require a further round of public consultation and hence delay to the process.

Mitigation – the representations received through the pre-submission (publication) consultation will be considered by officers at East Hampshire District Council and the

SDNPA. There have already been several opportunities to comment on the Core Strategy at earlier stages of the process and the basis of the policies is considered to be sound (including by Critical Friends from Chelmsford Borough Council). Should a significant alteration be considered necessary that requires a further round of consultation (either for the whole of part of the Core Strategy) then it should be pursued as quickly as possible

- 7.3 Risk: that the submitted Joint Core Strategy is judged unsound (leading to (i) and (ii) in paragraph 7.1).

Mitigation – the robust evidence base, comprehensive community engagement and advice from Critical Friends reduces the risk of the Joint Core Strategy being found sound.

- 7.4 Risk – Perception that the SDNPA is promoting inappropriate development.

Mitigation – a clear communications strategy will need to set out how the NPA has reduced the potential for inappropriate levels of development and on-going consultation.

8. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

- 8.1 There are not considered to be any implications arising from this report for human rights, equalities or health and safety.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 Planning Policy officers from East Hampshire District Council have been consulted in the production of this report.

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Appendices	1. Pre-Submission Joint East Hampshire and South Downs National Park Core Strategy 2. East Hampshire District Council Development Plan Panel Report 30 November 2011
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Head of Operations, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer & Senior Solicitor.
Background Documents	none