

Notes from the meeting with SDNP at MSDC 15th June 2016

Present:

SDNP:

Roy Little	Planning Link Officer
Margaret Paren	Chair

MSDC

Cllr Gary Wall	Leader - apologies
Judy Holmes	Assistant Chief Executive
Nick Rogers	Development Manager
Steven King	Planning Officer
Cllr Gary Marsh	Councillor – Ardingly & Balcombe and MSDC representative on SDNP
Cllr MacNaughton	Councillor – Ardingly & Balcombe. Planning Portfolio.
Cllr Colin Trumble	Councillor – Hurstpierpoint & Downs
Cllr Anthony Watts Williams	Councillor – Hurstpierpoint & Downs

FPC:

Miles Firth	Parish Councillor
Mark Hind	Parish Councillor
Linda Dyos	Parish Councillor

Background:

The summary was circulated and read.

Main Issues:

- The planning delegation principle was reiterated. SDNP explained that only issues that had wider implications for the national park were called in. This is at the recommendation of Mr Little, and the decision of the SDNPA DM team leader in Midhurst.
- MSDC's District Plan (which provides policy on Gypsies/Travellers) is due to be submitted over the summer so is not yet adopted.
- Similarly, SDNP's Local Plan is further back and is not expected to be submitted for inspection until 2018.
- Until mid-2014, Mid Sussex progressed its District Plan jointly with the SDNP. The area of Mid Sussex within the National Park is now included within the SDNP Local Plan.
- The authorities need to identify sufficient land for permanent Gypsy/Traveller accommodation. Once MSDC can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable G & T sites, that would be a material consideration in relevant applications within the MSDC/Fulking part of the SDNP and would help in the defence of any appeals.
- MSDC are working hard to establish permanent Gypsy/Traveller accommodation as part of the Mid Sussex Traveller Sites Allocations Document
- As an aside, MSDC, other District Councils and WSCC mentioned that they have provided a temporary travellers site, which will ease the issue of moving on seasonal traveller encampments.
- Mr Little is the nominated contact for FPC on all matters related to planning in our area – he encouraged us to maintain regular contact with him. No other contact route was offered although it was suggested that a number of 'rangers' were available for information and education.
- It was recognised that local residents have lost faith in both authorities recently, and do not understand the remit of the SDNP as clearly as they might.

SDNP views on Gypsy/Travellers sites:

This was covered in the previous section. However, their policy will be apparent from the plan, but they will continue to review individual cases and delegate authority unless wider implications are apparent.

Suggested action:

- SDNP rep: Mr Little was requested to attend the next FPC meeting on July 14th. He explained that the number of parish councils in the park made this unlikely, but that he would consider attending the APM (next year). He did not offer any substitute. FPC councillors expressed their disappointment.
However, that Mr Marsh offered to attend one or more FPC meetings in his capacity as a member of the SDNPA Board/Committee.
- Specific contact with SDNP: Mr Little (see earlier)
- SDNP to take all gypsy/Traveller applications in-house: No change to policy, these will be decided on a case by case basis (see earlier)
- Faster response time: not discussed
- Improved planning and transparency: MSDC explained that they are taking steps to improve the process continuously.
 - They are conducting risk assessments primarily based on the complexity of the appeal, rather than the strength of legal representation (which might not be known in advance).
 - They already spend a significant amount on legal representation. But are looking at better ways of providing legal support

Other Business:

Other topics emerged during discussion which included:

Joint plan for four Parishes

FPC is being invited to participate in a four parish neighbourhood plan. It was suggested that this will afford some measure of protection in the interim while the SDNP plan is completed and approved. FPC will respond as soon as the invitation is received.

Review of MSDC plan

Parish Councils are invited to attend a progress update on the MSDC District plan on July 8th. FPC councillors will attend and will use this to explain the situation to residents at the council meeting the following week.

Conifers Planning Deadline

It was confirmed by Mr King that the appellants from Conifers had responded by the deadline of submitting a scheme within three months as specified by the planning inspector.

SDNP activities

SDNP has a range of initiatives that they want to bring to the attention of villages within the national park. These include:

- Access to a range of grants, such as the Sussex Community Foundation
- Volunteering. For example, The South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS) is a voluntary organisation with over 500 members.
- The learning zone where the education team can provide talks and practical session in schools with the park.

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