

CABINET

15 November 2006

THE SOUTH DOWNS MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONSULTATION DRAFT (UPDATED REPORT)

Contact Officer: Greg White Tel No: 01962 848418

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB1325 – The South Downs Management Plan – Consultation Draft – 11 October 2006
CAB 1177 - The South Downs Management Plan – Delegation of Responsibility - 14 December 2005.
CAB 807 - Report on the South Downs Interim Management Plan - 3 March 2004.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At Cabinet on 11 October, Members decided to defer consideration of Report CAB1325 to enable further consideration of a number of outstanding issues.

Further to discussions with Members since the last Cabinet meeting, the previous recommendations have been revised so as to simplify and clarify them, and are outlined below. Members are asked to bring copies of the previous report (CAB1325) to the meeting to refer to.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Cabinet thanks the South Downs Joint Committee for this opportunity to make comments on its draft South Downs Management Plan, advises the Committee that in general terms the City Council supports the Management Plan's 'vision', key ambitions and policy responses (set out in Appendix A and Appendix B to the previous Report CAB1325) and confirms the Council's willingness to incorporate the relevant principles from the Plan in its emerging Local Development Framework documents.

2. That notwithstanding the above, Cabinet urges the Joint Committee to consider making further adjustments to the form and layout of the Plan, in order to achieve a shorter and simpler document which makes greater use of appendices and begins with an executive summary.

3. That Cabinet broadly endorses the draft Plan's policy response for the protection of this outstanding landscape but, nevertheless, suggests adjustments to balance this approach with provisions that support the need for sustainable growth and change, to meet the needs of local people and business.

4. That Cabinet supports the draft Management Plan's policies for a buoyant local economy but requests that the Plan should make a clearer policy provision for addressing and managing all forms of tourism, and other visits to the South Downs, as part of any integrated marketing strategy.

5. That Cabinet proposes that the issues arising from a lack of affordable housing be given greater prominence in the Management Plan and that further measures be considered to address the problem of affordability, together with those associated economic and social problems which are having an increasingly harmful effect on rural communities in the South Downs.

6. That Cabinet urges that the Plan should make it clear that, in the event of a National Park being confirmed, the Joint Committee expects planning provision for affordable housing, for both key workers and residents of the Park, to be made within the Park's boundaries.

7. That Cabinet supports the Planning Guidelines, as updated and revised, but requests that the Joint Committee reconsiders the issue of applying precise standards (such as in regard to restricting the extension of residential properties in rural areas), as the parameters chosen may not be consistent with those adopted by the various local planning authorities.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

4 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

4.1 This report is of relevance to the Corporate Strategy's Aim of maintaining a high quality of rural and village life, by supporting the rural economy and conserving the rural landscape, together with the Strategy's objective of sustaining and improving the natural environment.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 The Council is responsible for the production of a management plan for that part of the East Hampshire AONB within its area. A draft version of an Interim Management Plan was initially produced by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board and the East Hampshire AONB JAC, on behalf of all the 'South Downs' local authorities – within eastern Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex.

5.2 In taking over the functions and responsibilities of those bodies their immediate successor, the South Downs Joint Committee, has resumed work on the preparation and production of a strategic Management Plan for the South Downs. From the point of view of each individual authority, this represents a far more cost effective approach than would be the case if this work was undertaken independently.

5.3 The City Council already funds the AONB Project Officer. Currently, this contribution to the project's costs amounts to £10,500, for the financial year 2005/06. To date, the Joint Committee has not requested any additional authority contributions to offset the cost of preparing the Management Plan.

- 5.4 The policies in the emerging Management Plan which, in advance of the establishment of any National Park regime it would be the City Council's responsibility to action, are not likely to have additional cost implications, bearing in mind that these are mostly concerned with existing responsibilities, such as the development and implementation of planning policies.

6 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- 6.1 Files and correspondence held in the Chief Executives Department and the Planning Department of the Development Services Directorate.

7 APPENDICES:

None.