

Agenda Item 13
Report PC26/27-07

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	16 July 2026
By	Director of Placemaking
Title of Report	Making of the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Development Plan
Purpose of Report	To make the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the South Downs National Park Authority's (SDNPA) statutory Development Plan

Decision

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the outcome of the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum.**
 - 2. Agree to make the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the SDNPA's Development Plan for the Parish of East Dean & Friston.**
-

Executive Summary

- This report presents the result for the recent West Chiltington Neighbourhood Development Plan community referendum and sets out the decision for the South Downs National Park Authority to legally 'make' the Plan.
 - The part of the parish of West Chiltington within the National Park was designated as a Neighbourhood Area by the South Downs National Park Authority in February 2014.
 - At the community Referendum held in June 2026, 92% voted in support of the Neighbourhood Plan becoming part of the Development Plan for the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Area.
 - The Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Development Plan following a successful referendum. However, the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to 'make' a neighbourhood plan within eight weeks of a referendum.
- I. Introduction**
 - I.1 West Chiltington Parish Council is the 'qualifying body' with the responsibility for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - I.2 The part of the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Area within the South Downs National Park was designated by the South Downs National Park Authority on 17 February 2014. Most of the neighbourhood area is outside the National Park. Horsham District Council is

the lead Local Planning Authority for the neighbourhood plan. A map of the designated area is attached as **Appendix I** to this report.

- 1.3 Work on the Plan was impacted when Natural England issued their Position Statement in September 2021 regarding water abstraction at Hardham near Pulborough. The corresponding requirement for plans and all new development to show water neutrality in the Sussex North Water Resource Zone included the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Area. After a hiatus progress resumed with the Plan being submitted to Horsham District Council as lead Local Planning Authority.
- 1.4 Following Independent Examination and subsequent modifications the Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to community Referendum on 11 June 2026. In this referendum of those voting, 92% voted yes.
- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan is now part of the Development Plan for the part of West Chiltington Neighbourhood Area within the South Downs National Park. The National Park authority is required to take a decision to formally 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan within eight weeks of a successful Referendum, unless to do so would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).

2. West Chiltington Neighbourhood Plan 2023 to 2031

- 2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan covers the parish of West Chiltington. The parish is located 12 miles north of Worthing and 10 miles to the south of Horsham. The parish is north of the middle area of the National Park. That is approximately equally distant from Winchester and Eastbourne at the western and eastern ends respectively of the National Park. Most of the parish is outside the National Park. There is an area of approximately 17 hectares in the southern part of the parish within the National Park. This area includes a section of the River Chilt, the Monkmead Wood Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), and a part of the Hunston Warren Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These two designated sites cover most of this area within the National Park. In this area the National Park boundary is formed by a section of Monkmead Lane. In the north-west of this area the rear gardens of properties on Monkmead Lane form the National Park boundary. There are no residents within the National Park in this area. However, the residential area of West Chiltington Common abuts the National Park boundary.
- 2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies under the groupings of environment/heritage, housing, getting around, employment/enterprise and leisure/community. The most relevant policies for the part of the Neighbourhood Area within the National Park are:
 - Policy H1 Spatial Strategy and Built Up Area Boundaries, which includes a requirement to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the South Downs National Park or its setting.
 - Policy EH1 Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services, which identifies Biodiversity Corridors including one alongside the River Chilt and sets out how development should respond positively to these features.
 - Policy LC5 Designation of Local Green Space, including Monkmead Wood.

There are no allocations for development for the part of the Neighbourhood Area inside the National Park.

- 2.3 Responses have been made by National Park Authority officers at the appropriate stages throughout the preparation of the Plan. These have been made under delegated authority. However, progress on the Plan would have been brought before members at Planning Committee as part of the regular Neighbourhood Planning updates. Responses were made at the pre-submission stage consultation (Regulation 14) – three consultations were

undertaken at this stage - in August 2015, June 2017 and in September 2021 and at the submission stage consultation (Regulation 16) in November 2024.

- 2.4 Horsham District Council as lead Local Planning Authority appointed Mr Andrew Ashcroft as Examiner in May 2025 and he published his Examination report on 11 February 2026. On 20 March 2026 Horsham District Council published a Decision Statement accepting all the Examiner's proposed modifications and agreeing the Plan could proceed to a referendum.
- 2.5 A Referendum took place on Thursday 11 June 2026 with the following results:
 - Turnout 915 (31%)
 - Yes 840 (92%)
 - No 74 (8%)

3. **Making of the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Development Plan**

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 requires that a Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the Development Plan following a successful referendum. However, the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to 'make' a neighbourhood plan within eight weeks of a referendum if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the Plan. The Authority is not subject to this duty if (and only if) the making of the Plan would breach or would otherwise be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
- 3.2 The Examiner concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan with modifications met these legislative obligations/rights. No information has subsequently arisen to suggest the making of the Neighbourhood Plan would be in breach with or incompatible with the legislation.
- 3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan is now part of the Development Plan for that part of the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Area within the National Park along with the South Downs Local Plan and relevant minerals and waste plans.

4. **Next steps**

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended) require Local Planning Authorities to publish a statement setting out their decision to make a Neighbourhood Plan and reasons for making that decision. This statement should be published as soon as practical after the decision is taken. This report forms the National Park Authority's statement under Regulation 19 for this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.2 Following this decision a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan will be made available to the Development Management team at the South Downs National Park Authority. The policies maps will also be entered onto the relevant electronic mapping systems. A copy of the 'made' Neighbourhood Plan will be made available on the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Plan webpage on the Authority's website.

5. **Other implications**

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No. Horsham District Council is the lead Local Planning Authority for the West Chiltington NDP. The National Park Authority has not incurred any direct costs, other than officer time.

Implication	Yes*/No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The Authority seeks to achieve best value in all the work it undertakes on community planning across the South Downs National Park. Working in partnership with parish and district councils is an effective way to share costs and reduce the burden of community planning. In terms of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a parish council is entitled to 25% of CIL – as opposed to the capped 15% - collected from development within the designated Neighbourhood Area once an NDP is 'made'. The parish council can spend those funds on a wide range of matters which support development in the Neighbourhood Area.
Does the proposal seek to further National Park Purposes as required under Section 11A(2) duty of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as amended by Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023?	Yes, the West Chiltington Neighbourhood Development Plan has demonstrated general conformity with the strategic policies in the South Downs Local Plan which seeks to further National Park purposes.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	AIM 1: The South Downs National Park is a nature-rich, resilient working landscape where wildlife flourishes. AIM 2: The South Downs National Park is on track to become net zero by 2040 by mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. AIM 6: Cultural Heritage is conserved, understood, valued, created, and passed on for future generations. AIM 7: A thriving rural economy and local communities sit at the heart of South Downs National Park.
Links to other projects or partner organisations	The Development Plan for the South Downs National Park and Horsham District for the parish. That is for the areas inside and outside the National Park, respectively.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	The West Chiltington NDP includes policies which control development, including aspects which contribute to sustainable development.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	The requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 are considered for appropriate expenditure and programmes undertaken by the Authority.
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Due regard has been taken of the SDNPA's equality duty as contained within the Equalities Act 2010. West Chiltington Parish Council who has the responsibility for preparing the neighbourhood plan have also prepared a Consultation Statement demonstrating how they have consulted the local community and statutory consultees. The Examiner was

Implication	Yes*/No
	satisfied that the consultation and publicity undertaken meets regulatory requirements.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No.
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	No.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No.

6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
A legal challenge to a Neighbourhood Plan can be launched by way of judicial review within six weeks of the Authority publishing a decision to make the Neighbourhood Plan.	Low	Medium	Officers at SDNPA are satisfied the West Chiltonington Neighbourhood Plan meets the legal requirements. Given that they have been through the correct statutory process, including Examination and Referendum, the Authority is obliged to “make” the plan unless making the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).

TIM SLANEY

Director of Placemaking

South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer: Kevin Wright

Tel: 01730 819230

Email: kevin.wright@southdowns.gov.uk

Appendices: I. West Chiltonington Neighbourhood Area

SDNPA Consultees: Director of Placemaking; Chief Finance Officer; Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer; Legal Services.

External Consultees: None

Background Documents: [West Chiltoningon Neighbourhood Plan \(Post Cabinet Version\)](#)
[West Chiltoningon Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement](#)