

Introduction

The South Downs National Park Authority decided in May 2022 that it would review parts of its Local Plan in line with Government Policy and to ensure the Plan delivers on corporate priorities relating to Climate Action, ReNature and a National Park for All. The views and input of the local community into the Local Plan Review are vital to us particularly those of our town and parish councils. One way in which town and parish councils can contribute to the Local Plan Review is through a **Parish Priority Statement (PPS)**.

Neighbourhood Priority Statements (NPS) as a concept were introduced in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB), which was published by the Government in May 2022. NPS are statements prepared by local communities that summarise the principal needs and prevailing views for their local area. There is currently very little information available from the Government, but this will be provided at a later date through secondary legislation and regulations.

In the interim we are inviting all our town and parish councils that are located entirely in the National Park or whose main settlement is located in the National Park to prepare a PPS. A full list of these councils is set out in the appendix to this letter. It will not be necessary for the Council to be designated for the purposes of neighbourhood planning in order to do this. The format and content of PPS follows the very broad approach set out in the LURB, to enable any PPS to evolve into NPS as legislation and guidance is provided by Government. Please use the attached template to prepare your PPS, following the template will assist the SDNPA in collating information and reviewing priorities across the National Park. There are guidance notes for each question about the sort of information we are looking for. The PPS should focus on the principal needs and prevailing views of your local community. Please identify any opportunities to contribute to the Authority's priorities on Climate Action, Nature Recovery and a National Park for All. More information on these priorities can be found in the SDNPA Corporate Plan. We have indicated a word limit for each section to ensure the documents are focused on the main issues any text beyond the word limit may not be considered by the Authority.

It is really important to gather the views of as many people as possible, who live, work or visit your parish. The second question of the template asks you how you have consulted with your local community. A PPS that demonstrates a high level of community engagement and support will ensure the document will influence when informing the Local Plan Review process. As a minimum the draft PPS should be published inviting comments from the wider community. Town and Parish Councils should also make particular efforts to engage with hard to reach and underrepresented groups such as young people. To help you with the template we have written a PPS for the hypothetical parish of Greenville.

Please submit your PPS to us at the address below by 20 October 2023. Officers from the Authority will review your PPS and get back to you with any queries. The intention is for all PPS to be considered by our Policy and Resources Committee with the intention of publishing them on our website.

Your PPS will not be made part of the development plan for the National Park, but it will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review. We will consider the principal needs and prevailing views set out in your PPS as we progress the Local Plan Review and update local planning policy. PPS will also be useful when applying for funding from the Authority, for example, from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Sustainable Communities Fund. Finally, your PPS may be useful for funding applications to other bodies. Where a Town or Parish Council have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan the PPS will supplement the Plan not supersede it as the PPS will not form part of the Development Plan.

1. Your Details

Information Required

Response

Contact name

Jenni Toomey

Town or Parish Council

East Chiltington Parish Council

Main contact address

Bowling Green, East Chiltington, Sussex

Main contact telephone number

01273 890621

Main contact email

clerk@eastchiltington.net

Details of public consultation and engagement used in the preparation of the PPS

This PPS draws on evidence from consultation activities undertaken during 2023 that were specifically designed for the purpose of the PPS. It also makes use of a wider evidence base of engagement and consultation by the Parish Council over the previous seven years.

2023 Survey

An online survey of all residents was promoted via the parish website, magazine and social media, including Facebook and Whatsapp groups. A paper version of this survey was made available to those residents without internet access. Total responses were 122. The total number of households in the parish is 173.

2023 Participatory engagement

Participatory engagement activities were undertaken with a diversity of residents as part of the annual Parish Party, 1st July 2023. Overall attendance was around 100 residents.

Consultation on devolution of Hollycroft Field and as background to LLCA

In 2018, consultation was undertaken in advance of the Parish Council acquiring land in the centre of the Parish. This included a series of public meetings and a survey. This consultation also provides wider insights about Parish priorities. In 2016 extensive preparatory work was completed in preparation for a Local Landscape Character Assessment, including Parish transect walks. Though the LLCA was not finalised, the raw data provides valuable additional contextual background for the preparation of the PPS.

Feedback on the draft PPS.

The draft PPS was circulated via the Parish website and promoted on social media. Comments and suggestions from residents were discussed by the Parish Council and incorporated into the finalised version.

Max 100 words

The vision for the future...

What are the three key changes you would like to see in your Parish over the next 15 years? These changes should relate to the priorities set out below. It will also be helpful to explain when you think these changes should happen over the 15 year period.

East Chiltington is an isolated rural hamlet, of which approximately half is in the South Downs National Park, and half outside.

The Parish is currently under threat from a speculative proposal to build a new town of some 3000 houses on a green field site adjacent to the SDNP boundary. **More than 99% of the respondents to our survey are opposed to this proposal.** The proposed new town would permanently destroy a tranquil and isolated greenfield site right next to the South Downs National Park. It would contribute to massive traffic gridlock stretching far beyond the site itself, across an already congested part of the south-east of England. The site is far from major roads and infrastructure; to deliver the plans would require road-building and other interventions that contravene both local and national planning policy with regard to planning, climate change, environmental protection and bio-diversity.

There is a very strong desire to keep East Chiltington largely as it is, preserving its tranquillity, dark skies and natural environment, while enhancing the opportunities for its already vibrant community to come together and supporting our small rural businesses (that include a pub, a blacksmiths, livery stable and visitor accommodation). 98% of responses to our survey cited landscape/nature as the thing that they most value in East Chiltington, with 91% emphasising the Parish's relative isolation/peacefulness. Popular suggestions are:

- More schemes that **preserve and enhance the natural environment and address climate change**. 66% of our survey responses said that these should be a priority for the future. Ideas range from further re-wilding to wildlife corridors, better management of watercourses and community-based renewable energy projects.
- **The development of a community building**, possibly through improved community use of the church, or the development of a small hall. 31% of our survey respondents wanted more community facilities, and the development of such a focal point was seen as important.
- Suggestions relating to **transport and travel** were a priority for 28% of survey respondents. These focused on those that would minimise individual car use, such as car share schemes, or initiatives to support the children's travel to school. Many respondents also mentioned the risks posed by the speed of traffic on our single-track lanes.

Development and management of land

Information required

Response

What type and level of development would you like to see in the parish?

We would support the development of a parish meeting place/hall, possibly through the extended use and development of the church.

Max 100 words

Are there any areas of the Parish you would like to see developed?

No. This question was asked in our survey and a strong majority of respondents (77%) did not identify specific areas for development. We believe that it is important that any enhancement of rural employment opportunities is spread across the Parish and enhances/complements what is already present.

Are there any specific areas you want protected for other uses?

We believe that all areas of the Parish should be protected equally. There are many historic properties and 19 scheduled ancient monuments and a Roman road. The centre of the Parish, with the pub, church, and community-managed fields are highly valued, but so is the overall setting of the Parish, whose entirely rural nature is an important part of the landscape of the SDNP. The majority of residents wish to see the SDNP expanded to protect all of this historic parish for future generations.

Homes

Information required

Response

What type of homes would you like to see in your local community?

There is some support for a small number of homes for local rented use should the land become available for this. If this were to take place, it would be important to ensure that such homes were kept for local residents in perpetuity.

What size of home is needed locally?

The provision of a small number of rentable homes for local residents should reflect the prevailing need at the time. This need should be assessed in relation to the existing social rented provision, which is a mixture of 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

Max 50 words

Any other requirements?

Several survey respondents noted that if any homes were built for local use, these should have the highest possible energy performance and incorporate renewable energy design features, such as heat pumps and solar panels as standard.

Max 100 words

Design

Information Required

Response

Are there any areas of local character which are particularly important to the local community?

East Chiltington contains a number of areas of local character, including five ancient woods and the environs of the Church, which is a Conservation Area. There are also many properties of considerable historic and architectural interest, including a rare example of a medieval farm complex, but for our residents, it is the Parish as a whole that is important: the relationship between the scarp of the Downs and farmland beneath this; with network of single-track lanes, fields and houses that makes the Parish so uniquely unspoilt.

Max 100 words

Particular features of buildings of local character

East Chiltington is one of the seven Bevern Springline parishes at the foot of the Downs. There are only 187 scattered properties but 16 of these are grade 2 listed. What makes many of these so special is their rural isolation and surrounding countryside. They sit well within and enhance the views to and from the National Park. Southover Cottage dates from 1680 and sits outside the park along with 8 other listed properties all threatened by pressure from development.

Max 100 words

The natural environment

Information Required

Response

Opportunities to make nature bigger, better and more joined up

- Further development of existing rewilding initiatives. Currently the field opposite the pub is the site of a range of initiatives in support of community-engaged sustainability: a community orchard, children's forest, allotments, tree nursery. There is scope for extending this to the area to the north of the railway line (the boundary of the SDNP)
 - Protection of chalk streams from pollution and improved flooding management. There have been several incidents of pollution of the Bevern Stream and the area suffers from regular flooding. Residents are keen to see improved management and protection of the stream.
 - Protection and enhancement of hedgerows and field patterns. The area to the North of the railway line contains ancient hedgerows and trees. This could and

should be further protected.

Max 100 words

Jobs

Information Required

Response

Information about business you would like to protect and business opportunities that should be provided

Current main employers: Jolly Sportsman Pub, James Prior Blacksmith; Wootton Farm Stables. There is also a diversity of small businesses based on rural industry and farming (tree surgeons, builders, pest control, etc), along with those that support tourism such as short-term accommodation rentals. Though some East Chiltington residents commute for work, a good number are also employed locally or work from home. This has been greatly enhanced by a successful community project to bring full fibre broadband to the Parish.

Max 100 words

Public spaces

Information Required

Response

Public Open Space, Public realm, Pocket Parks

East Chiltington is an isolated hamlet, entirely surrounded by green space that residents would like to see protected. We have two designated community-owned public areas that residents value greatly: the Hollycroft Field, which has Village Green Status, and is used for general recreation and village events; and the adjacent 'TECT' field, which has a community orchard, children's forest, tree nursery and allotments – and is the subject to an ongoing rewilding initiative.

Max 100 words

Infrastructure

Information Required

Response

Active travel priorities, roads / parking, community buildings needs, waste / water infrastructure, broadband, renewable energy

- Better controls on speed on our single-track lanes. Some respondents suggest further road narrowing of the lanes to prevent access for heavy goods vehicles. We do not recommend this because of the need for farm vehicles to use the lanes. However, initiatives to reduce traffic speed should be further investigated, along with ensuring that visibility on the lanes is maintained.
- A community building/improved community use of the Church. There is currently no community meeting place, other than a marquee that is used for Parish parties. The Church has been used for community events in recent years and there is a strong desire to see this increased. This would necessitate considerable financial investment. An alternative would be some form of small parish hall, again requiring fundraising.
- We are lucky to be served by a new Flexibus service, which has improved travel options for our residents without cars and is greatly valued. Ensuring that funding for this is continued will be important. However, there are still problems for school children to access school because of the lack of bus provision for this.

Finalising your submission

As a reminder, before finalising your submission, please check you have addressed the following:

- **You have completed the details in section 1, including details of public engagement events and consultation activities which have informed the statement. Where possible please identify the percentage of the community that have engaged in the preparation of the PPS.**
- **Please try to summarise the community's views and aspirations as much as possible, do not provide details of individuals who have commented, and bullet points for key priorities where possible.**
- **If you have supporting evidence or information please use a hyperlink to the data where available, and summarise the information as much as possible in the PPS.**

disclaimer

The assessment process and outputs will feed into the Local Plan review process but we cannot guarantee the delivery of specific community aspirations in the South Downs Local Plan policies, allocations or designations.

data protection statement

The information collected in this response form will be used by the National Park Authority, as part of its public task, to inform the local plan-making processes and other relevant Authority documents or processes. This information will then be retained until it is superseded. By responding you are accepting the information within your response, may be made available to the public. Any personal information provided (names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses or other contact details) will not be made public. Please let us know if you do not wish for your information to be shared in this way.

All information held by the South Downs National Park Authority may be subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act. If any information included is sensitive and you would like to have the opportunity to object to its release in the event of a Freedom of Information request, please contact us.

Further details on how we manage your information, including your rights under the GDPR, are available in our Privacy Notice <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/transparency/privacy-statement-2/>

Please tick here to confirm you have read and agree to submit your information in accordance with the disclaimer and data protection statement.

Information required

Response

Print Name : Jenni Toomey

Date 6.9.2023

We ask that forms are returned by email to planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk

If you are unable to return the form by email please post to:
Planning Policy Team, South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Centre, North Street
Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH