

Are planning policies the same across the whole of the National Park?

Not at the present time. On 1st April 2011, we will inherit the planning policies that are currently operated by the 15 LPAs across the National Park. While these are generally consistent in their approach to the National Park, there are some differences. However, these do provide the policy basis on which many decisions will be made. By July 2011, we will have prepared a programme for developing our own planning policy framework, including our own Local Development Framework and our Core Strategy. Once these have been prepared and adopted, then more consistent planning policies will apply across the National Park.

How will the SDNPA make sure that high standards of service are provided on its behalf?

Comprehensive consultation arrangements have been established to make sure there is regular and effective liaison between the SDNPA and the 15 LPAs. Four SDNPA Link Officers will be working within or visiting the LPAs on a regular basis to discuss all aspects of planning. They will act as the link between the LPAs and colleagues at the SDNPA. A set of performance standards will also be used to assess the standard and quality of service provided by the LPAs, on an on-going basis.

What about Enforcement? Do I contact the SDNPA if I wish to report possible unauthorised activity?

No. Please continue to contact your local authority's Planning Enforcement team. Enforcement forms an important part of the Agency Agreements, with the LPAs continuing to provide this service on behalf of the SDNPA. The local authority will keep the SDNPA informed of progress on investigations and the SDNPA will provide advice and support, as required.

And who will deal with planning appeals?

All planning appeals will still need to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk), and can be submitted on-line on the Planning Portal (www.planningportal.gov.uk)

Again, appeals also form part of the Agency Agreements, so the LPA will continue to deal with most appeals in the National Park. However, the SDNPA may deal with some more complex cases itself, or may help the LPA with other cases by providing witnesses or other forms or expert advice.

Can I find further information or answers to Frequently asked Questions (FAQs) from the 15 LPAs within the National Park?

Yes – a lot of more detailed information is available from the 15 LPAs who have their own FAQs on their own websites.

If I have a complaint about the service provided by my Local Planning authority, or the SDNPA, who do I approach?

All complaints should be submitted to the relevant local planning authority. It will deal with your complaint through its own published complaints protocol. A process has also been developed for dealing with complaints relating to planning work within the National Park, that are not satisfactorily resolved by the LPA.

How do I contact the SDNPA?

We can be contacted using the following details:-

Contact us

Planning Services
South Downs National Park Authority
Rosemary's Parlour
North Street
Midhurst
West Sussex
GU29 9SB

Telephone: **0300 303 1053**
Email: info@southdowns.gov.uk

Feb 2011



Planning - frequently asked questions

www.southdowns.gov.uk

Frequently asked questions

When does the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) become a formal planning authority?

On 1st April 2011, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) will become a statutory Planning Authority, with responsibility for all planning applications and other planning matters within the National Park boundary.

Where can I check the National Park boundary?

The National Park stretches some 100 miles from Winchester in the west to Eastbourne in the east. For a detailed boundary map, please look on the South Downs website, www.southdowns.gov.uk.

How many planning applications will be submitted in the National Park every year?

It is anticipated that there will be up to 4,000 planning applications submitted within the National Park, making the SDNPA the 8th biggest planning authority in the country in terms of workload.

Will the SDNPA process all those applications itself?

No – the great majority (about 97%) will, in fact, be dealt with by the 15 existing Local Planning Authorities under Agency Agreements with the SDNPA. Each of the 15 local authorities, whose boundaries fall partially within the National Park, will provide the majority of the planning service on behalf of the SDNPA under a legal agreement, signed between each Local Authority and the SDNPA. This is a unique partnership arrangement for a National Park.

Which applications will the SDNPA deal with itself then?

The SDNPA expects to deal with up to about 150 planning applications each year. These will be the more significant types of development which potentially generate particular, special or really major issues for the National Park. Guidance has been prepared to help customers understand the type of “significant” application that the SDNPA may wish to deal with itself, and further information can be found on our website, www.southdowns.gov.uk.

From where will I be able to obtain pre-application or other planning advice?

Just as at present, you should seek this from your normal LPA. Practices vary to some degree throughout the 15 LPAs in the National Park, but all offer the service in some form. Details are normally available on each LPAs website or by contacting them directly by telephone.

How can I find out if I need planning permission?

The Planning Portal website (www.planningportal.gov.uk) provides a variety of useful information, including an Interactive House which shows a range of different scenarios relating to planning applications. You should also be able to obtain help and advice from your LPA.

Where do I submit my planning applications from 1st April 2011?

The 15 existing Local Planning Authorities will be hosting all planning applications submitted in the National Park from 1st April 2011. Each of these authorities, to varying degrees, has a part of its area within the National Park and the rest of its area outside. Therefore:-

- If you wish to submit your application in paper form and the proposal is within the National Park, then you should continue to submit your planning application to your normal local District or County Council.
- If you submit your application electronically through the Planning Portal, this will automatically be routed to the relevant local planning authority for you, as at present
- The local planning authority will identify all applications in the National Park in a separate way to their other planning applications (those outside the National Park boundary) to help avoid confusion. All correspondence relating to an application in the National Park will be clearly identified through branding. This will include a logo and contact details for the local planning authority and the person who is dealing with the application;
- Applications outside the National Park will continue to be submitted to your local Council, just as they are now.

What about the planning fee? Do I send that to the SDNPA?

No. If your application requires a planning fee, then this should accompany the application and should be paid directly to your local planning authority.

Aren't local planning authorities setting their own fees soon?

The Government is proposing to introduce locally set fees in the near future and consultation will be undertaken before this happens. However, fees could change quite a lot as a result of these proposals.

I have heard that some planning applications will not be determined by the SDNPA – is this true?

Yes it is. As a result of the Agency Agreements, which are designed to help ensure that most planning decisions are taken locally, about 97% of all National Park applications will be determined by the 15 LPAs on behalf of the SDNPA. The following guidelines will normally apply:-

- If a planning application is considered to be ‘significant’, then it will be determined by the SDNPA. The application will still be submitted to the relevant local planning authority and it will be accessible through their public access system. Once it has been registered, it will then be passed to the SDNPA for determination.
- The great majority of applications submitted will continue to be determined by the relevant local planning authority, working in partnership with the SDNPA. They might be decided by committee or by officers under delegated powers.
- The SDNPA has a reserve power to determine any application itself. Although this power will be used very sparingly, the SDNPA will be able to ‘call in’ an application for its own determination if it is considered to be ‘significant’. Close partnership working arrangements between the LPAs and the SDNPA are in place to help ensure that the great majority of applications continue to be dealt with by the 15 LPAs.

Who should I contact about my planning application?

All communications regarding a planning application (letters, emails, phone calls) should be to the relevant local planning authority. Once validated, the LPAs will provide applicants and agents with contact details for each application.

Who should I make representations on a planning application or planning matter to?

All representations should be made directly to the LPA, just as they are at present. If the SDNPA decides to determine an application itself, then correspondence can be sent to either the LPA or the SDNPA. All representations will still be seen and considered by the SDNPA, even though they have been sent to the LPA.