

Service Level Agreement identifying performance management measures and procedures to be followed from 1 April 2014

Service Level Agreement for the provision of a SDNPA Development Management Service

Between the South Downs National Park Authority

And

Chichester District Council

I. Context

This Service Level Agreement (SLA) should be considered and applied in the context of the Agency Agreement dated January 2014 which was completed under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 between the SDNPA and Chichester District Council (the host authority). It provides the more detailed specification of the standards of service, outputs and outcomes required by both parties. This SLA relates only to those parts of the authority's development management service that are included in the delegated authority, as set out in the Section 101 legal Agreement.

The SLA includes the responsibilities and standards to be met by both the SDNPA and the host authority. It includes the level of service that should be provided by both parties through jointly agreed performance indicators and the targets to be achieved, and the monitoring and review process to be followed. It will be operative from 1 April 2014 onwards and will continue to operate until such time that either party resolves to terminate the Agency Agreement or agrees to alternative measures. Some measures have already been introduced and these will also continue as above.

The detailed provisions are based partially on the outcome of the Addison Associates MEPS PLUS review carried out jointly during 2011, together with known best practice and following discussions with all authorities involved in this Agreement. The MEPS PLUS review was a joint piece of work which examined processes and procedures followed by all 15 Councils that (at that time) provided a planning service within and outside the National Park. The aim was to identify, introduce and improve best practice right across the South Downs National Park.

The SLA will be the subject of regular review by both parties and will form the basis of regular performance reports on all indicators. It will also be used to help inform the annual negotiations that take place each year for the development management service that is provided by each host authority.

2. **Focus of approach**

The structure of this Service Level Agreement follows the general approach to the processing of planning applications and related development management matters. It has also been designed to follow three key themes:-

Customer focus and outcomes: - The SDNPA's philosophy is to help ensure that all customers receive a good development management service and one that focusses upon them. The SDNPA planning service aims to be at least as good as the best service provided by our most customer focussed partners and also one which improves, year on year.

Quality of service. - The development management service must reflect the importance of the landscape designation and the aims and objectives of the Management Plan for the South Downs National Park, as well as our statutory purposes and duty.

Decisions made and the background to them being made must always be guided by these principles and the importance of the landscape. The service must, therefore, deliver a high quality environment and ensure that these important considerations, enshrined within the purposes and duty of National Parks, are always a key part of the evaluation of all development management decisions.

Performance – A customer focussed service should also be efficient in terms of processes and procedures and must be timely and effective. Appropriate performance management of approaches will help to ensure that both of these important objectives are met.

These three themes apply throughout this SLA and help to drive the measures set out below. These measures should help ensure that the development management service delivered by the SDNPA and the host authority is both effective and robust.

3. **Objectives**

The aims of the SLA are, therefore, designed to help ensure that:

- the cost, type and level of service across all parts of the South Downs National Park is as consistent as possible, including processes and procedures and performance
- the level of service is at least good practice and where possible, best practice
- the services are provided as efficiently and effectively as possible, so as to ensure that good value for money is provided and to help reduce costs, where possible
- Customer satisfaction can be established against known expectations and is then used to help guide future service improvements.
- The potential for confusion and conflict between the relevant authorities, the applicants and the community is minimised, thereby limiting any risk of complaint or legal challenge against processes or decisions.

The SLA has been designed in recognition of the established partnership arrangement between the host authority and the SDNPA and seeks to drive service excellence, reflecting best practice in the delivery of a development management service. It is also based on:-

- Indicators being capable of recording and measurement and reporting from the SDNPA UNIFORM system, where possible.
- The Indicator targets being realistic and relating to best practice.

South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)

Signed –

Date –

Name – Tim Slaney

Role – Director of Planning

Chichester District Council

Signed –

Date –

Name –

Role –

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
A.) <u>Pre-application advice - provision, charging and recording.</u>	i) Information on procedure and cost is publicly available.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Relevant websites.	Implemented from 7 January 2013 onwards.
	ii) Service standards are in place for providing advice for all applications. Written information is available (including validation requirements).	SDNPA and Host Authority	Published timescales and processes are in place for responding to all requests.	Standards to be in place by 1 April 2014.
	iii) A consistent charging regime is in place and is adhered to across the SDNP.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Standard charging regime introduced across the South Downs National Park.	Initial operation from 7 January 2013 and to be reviewed annually thereafter.

	<p>iv) Planning applications that have been the subject of pre-application advice should be processed and determined more quickly.</p>	SDNPA and Host Authority	<p>All minor and other applications that receive and follow pre-application advice are determined within 30 working days from validation.</p>	Performance to be measured from 1 April 2014 onwards.
	<p>v) SDNPA to be advised of all relevant pre-application approaches which have the potential to generate a “significant” application.</p>	Host Authority	<p>All major applications that receive and follow pre-application advice are determined within 60 working days from validation.</p> <p>Record of pre-application approach to be recorded on UNIFORM and Link Officer advised, using template on SDNPA UNIFORM system, within 2 working days.</p>	<p>Performance to be measured from 1 April 2014 onwards.</p> <p>Performance to be measured from 1 April 2014 onwards.</p>

	vi) all pre-application enquiries to be processed on IDOX system	SDNPA and Host Authority	Through the SDNPA system	Implemented January 2013 onwards.
<u>B) Financial arrangements for the recording of pre-application advice fees and implementation of a common charging regime.</u>	<p>i) Records of all pre-application fees received are maintained.</p> <p>ii) SDNPA to hold all planning related fees, including Section 106 payments, pre-application fees and any other fees or payments.</p>	<p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p> <p>SDNPA</p>	<p>Recorded on UNI-form from 7 January 2013 onwards.</p> <p>SDNPA to implement and help publicise arrangements for the collection and holding all fees.</p>	<p>Quarterly returns for all host authorities to be produced by SDNPA from 1 April 2014 onwards.</p> <p>From 1 February 2014 onwards.</p>

C) <u>EIA screening and scoping of applications</u>	Confirm whether all applications fall within Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 at validation stage, in relation to Schedule 3.	SDNPA and Host Authority	SDNPA to prepare a template in UNIFORM for confirmation to be recorded. SDNPA and host authorities to record on SDNPA UNIFORM system within 3 working days of receipt.	Performance to be measured from 1 April 2014 onwards.
D) <u>Validation and registration of applications.</u>	<p>i) Early validation of all valid householder and minor applications.</p> <p>ii) Early validation of all valid major applications.</p>	<p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p> <p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p>	<p>Validation within 3 working days for valid minor and other applications.</p> <p>Validation within 5 working days for valid major applications.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>To be monitored from 1 April 2014 onwards</p> <p>To be monitored from 1 April 2014 onwards be monitored by the SDNPA as part of the host authority annual performance review.</p>

	<p>.</p> <p>iv) Districts to provide County Councils with UPRN for County applications in a timely manner.</p>	Host Authority	Provide UPRN within one working day of request.	
E) <u>Recording and filing</u>, including planning registers and records.	<p>ii) All notes and information should be recorded on an electronic file to provide a clear audit trail.</p>	SDNPA and Host Authority	All relevant notes to be recorded and stored on UNIFORM.	Files to be updated on an on-going daily basis.
F) <u>Statutory advertising - consultations, neighbour notification and site notices.</u>	<p>i) Consultation requirements apply to all authorities and to be undertaken fully in accordance with the SDNPA Statement of</p>	SDNPA and Host Authority	Consultation is undertaken in accordance with the SDNPA Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (not	<p>Site notices to be displayed on all sites.</p> <p>Neighbour notification and all other advertising to be</p>

	Community Involvement		required for tree or any prior approval notifications). Third parties to be advised of applications going to Committees.	undertaken within 10 working days of completing the validation process.
G) <u>Processing of applications.</u>	i) Improvement of outcomes is achieved by working to add value to proposals throughout the processing of all cases.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Completion of “Added value” records on SDNPA UNIFORM system and on-going monitoring and reporting. Added value record to be completed to confirm and demonstrate proportional pro-active working with applicant.	SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports from 1 April 2014 onwards to show if value has been added.
	(ii) all data should be checked for accuracy	SDNPA and Host Authority	Regular checks to be carried out in accordance with SDNPA protocol on a monthly basis	From 1 April 2014 onwards.

H) <u>Site visits and recording</u>	i) All applications are subject to a site visit by the case officer.	SDNPA and Host Authority	All site visits to be undertaken within 15 working days of validation.	SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports from 1 April 2014 onwards.
	ii) Officer site visit date recorded on UNIFORM,	SDNPA and Host Authority	Date of site visit to be recorded in UNIFORM.	SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports from 1 April 2014 onwards.
I) <u>Reports, decisions and conditions.</u>	i) All delegated and Committee applications are the subject of an officer report.	SDNPA and Host Authority	All reports to set out reasons for the recommendation, conditions (where appropriate) and make reference to relevant policies, the Partnership Management Plan and National Park guidance.	Applied to all cases from 1 July 2012 onwards.

	<p>ii) Consistent approach across the National Park for both delegated and Committee reports.</p> <p>iii) Standard conditions to be used, as far as possible</p>	<p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p> <p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p>	<p>Only the approved SDNPA report templates to be used from July 2012 onwards.</p> <p>SDNPA standard conditions and reasons used once developed and agreed.</p>	<p>Applied to all cases from 1 April 2014 onwards.</p> <p>From 1 July 2014.</p>
<p>J) <u>The use of specialist advice</u> (design, archaeology, landscape, ecology)</p>	<p>i) Protocol in place for the use and application of specialist advice across the National Park.</p>	<p>SDNPA</p>	<p>SDNPA to prepare protocol on agreed process and related funding arrangements.</p>	<p>Agreed procedure to be developed by July 2014.</p>

	ii) Protocol to be applied consistently across the National Park.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Once adopted, Protocol to be used by all host authorities and the SDNPA.	Agreed procedure to be operative from July 2014 onwards.
<u>K) Member site visits and protocols.</u>	i) Member site visits to take place before Committee meetings, whenever possible, in order to reduce delays in decisions for customers.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Practices currently vary in different host authorities.	All authorities to work towards operating this arrangement from 1 April 2014 onwards.
	ii) All site visits follow an agreed protocol which has been published by the host authority or the SDNPA.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Individual protocol to be agreed and publicised on host authority and SDNPA websites.	Individual protocols to be published on all websites by 1 April 2014.

<p>L) <u>Public speaking at Planning Committees.</u></p>	<p>i) Publication of individual protocols for public speaking at all Planning committees.</p> <p>ii) Each protocol to provide equality of opportunity for all parties and prior notification by public speakers.</p> <p>iii) Third parties to be advised of applications going to Committees.</p>	<p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p> <p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p> <p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p>	<p>To be available and published on host authority and SDNPA websites by April 2014.</p> <p>To be available and published on host authority and SDNPA websites.</p> <p>To be undertaken fully in accordance with the SDNPA Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).</p>	<p>Compliance of host authority and SDNPA processes to be assessed in April 2014.</p> <p>To be monitored by the SDNPA by October 2014 as part of the host authority annual performance review.</p> <p>From 1 April 2014 onwards.</p>
<p>M) <u>Delivering timely decisions.</u></p>	<p>i) Make sound and timely decisions and all planning and related applications. Processes and procedures are developed, improved</p>	<p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p>	<p>Decisions on 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks.</p> <p>Decisions on 80% of other applications in 8</p>	<p>SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports from 1 April 2014 onwards.</p>

	<p>and adopted to help ensure that timely decisions are reached for customers.</p>		<p>weeks.</p> <p>Decisions on 60% of major applications in 13 weeks or 11 weeks from when SDNPA direction served unless PPA or PAA in place.</p> <p>Decisions on 60% of applications with an EIA in 16 weeks or 14 weeks from when SDNPA direction served unless PPA or PAA in place.</p>	
	<p>ii) Improving performance and speed of decisions.</p>	<p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p>	<p>Processes in place to issue decisions quickly.</p>	<p>.</p> <p>To be monitored by the SDNPA as part of the host authority annual performance review.</p>

<p>N) <u>Section 106 Obligations arrangements</u> to help deliver a common approach to monitoring and compliance.</p>	<p>i) Standard section 106 Agreements to be used, where relevant.</p> <p>ii) All section 106 Agreements (unless routine) to be discussed with the SDNPA.</p> <p>iii) All section 106 Agreements to be recorded electronically and uploaded to DMS by host authority. SDNPA to monitor and publish quarterly summary reports.</p>	<p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p> <p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p> <p>SDNPA and Host Authority</p>	<p>Section 106 template to be prepared and introduced by the SDNPA during 2014.</p> <p>Liaison through Link officers or other officers, as appropriate.</p> <p>All Section 106 Obligations to be recorded in UNIFORM with background information and to be sent to the SDNPA Planning Performance Officer.</p>	<p>From 1 April 2014</p> <p>In place from 1 April 2012 onwards.</p> <p>SDNPA to manage monitoring from 1 April 2014 onwards.</p>
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	iv) Improve the proportion of Section 106 Obligations ready for completion at the time of a resolution or decision to approve an application.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Work towards achieving 50% of all cases. Standard templates to be used where possible and appropriate and advice to be issued to applicants at all stages of processing.	<p>Work to achieve 50% of all obligations being ready for completion at time of resolution to approve from 1 April 2014 onwards.</p> <p>SDNPA to monitor as part of the host authority annual performance review.</p>
O) <u>Enforcement and compliance monitoring.</u>	i) Enforcement policies updated and published to include an acknowledgement, planned assessment processes and a timetable for action.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Enforcement Protocols converged to deliver a more standard approach across the SDNP	From 1 April 2014 onwards.

	<p>ii) Enforcement Strategy developed which will include timescales for action and prioritisation.</p>	SDNPA	SDNPA to develop an Enforcement Strategy in partnership with host authorities and to be adopted and in use from 1 April 2014.	All complaints to be acknowledged at time of receipt from 1 April 2014 onwards.
	<p>iii) Host authorities and SDNPA to work to SDNPA Enforcement Strategy.</p>	SDNPA and Host Authority	Actions and performance to be recorded on SDNPA UNIFORM system and to be monitored and reported from 1 April 2014 onwards.	<p>Strategy under preparation and to be in use from 1 April 2014.</p> <p>SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports and to consider as part of annual performance reviews from 1 April 2014 onwards.</p>

Q) <u>Performance management</u> internally and with the SDNPA.	i) Introduce a robust and customer focussed performance management framework.	SDNPA	Performance framework introduced during 2013/14 for monitoring and reporting on performance from 1 April 2014 onwards.	Performance management framework to be applied from 1 April 2014 onwards.
	ii) SDNPA and host authorities to provide information to help ensure that all performance is appropriately measured and monitored.	SDNPA and Host Authority	SDNPA and Host authorities to enter all agreed and relevant performance data on SDNPA UNiform system.	Performance to be monitored by the SDNPA from 1 April 2014 and publicly reported quarterly from July 2014 onwards.
	iii) Jointly implement the SDNPA Improvement Plan that will follow completion of the 2014 Planning Customer Survey.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Implement all improvement actions to help provide a higher quality Planning service for all customers.	Implement from 1 April 2014 onwards

R) <u>Appeal management.</u>	i) All appeals to be recorded on and managed through SDNPA UNIFORM system.	SDNPA and Host Authority	All appeals recorded on SDNPA UNI-form system.	Recorded on UNIFORM within 2 working days of notification of appeal by PINS.
	ii) All appeal decisions to be recorded on SDNPA UNIFORM system.	SDNPA and Host Authority	All decisions to be recorded SDNPA UNIFORM system.	Within 5 working days of appeal decision being received.
	iii) all appeal decisions to be available to view on public access as soon as possible.	SDNPA and Host Authority	All appeal decisions to be uploaded to DMS	Within 3 working days of receipt from PINS
	iv) High level of overall performance on appeals.	SDNPA and Host Authority	Overall success rate of 70% on SDNPA appeals.	To be monitored through SDNPA UNIFORM system on a quarterly basis.

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