South Downs
National Park Authority

Adur and Worthing Councils

Our Ref: SDNP/24/02737/ADJAUT
Contact Officer: Samuel Bethwaite
Tel. No.: 01730 819271

19th July 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

Neighbouring Authority Consultation

Applicant: Adur and Worthing Councils
Proposal: Adjoining Authority Consultation - Adur and Worthing Council (AWDM/0844/24) - Reconfiguration of part of the customer car park, and provision of a new cycle store.
Location: Car Park South of Units 1 to 4 Downlands Retail Park Lyons Way , Worthing, , ,

Thank you for your correspondence received 4 July 2024, consulting us as a neighbouring authority on the above noted development proposals.

Although the application site is located outside of the National Park, the Council has a statutory duty to consider the Purposes of the National Park when making its determination. The statutory purposes and duty of the National Park are:

> **Purpose 1**: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
> **Purpose 2**: To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
> **Duty**: To seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.

The National Park's comments on the development are as follows:

Thank you for consulting the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) on the above application. The SDNPA makes no comment on the principle of development. The site is approximately 9m from the boundary of the National Park, which runs along the east side of car park. The proposed development for a reconfiguration of the car park to create additional parking spaces, a cycle shelter and extended trolley park would be located in an area where there is pre-existing development, and as such the development would likely result in minor impacts on the setting of the National Park.

Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 strengthens the Section 11A (2) duty of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and requires all relevant authorities including neighbouring local planning authorities to further the National Park's statutory purposes. The first purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. Development within the setting of a national park should be consistent with the section 245 duty, and Paragraph 182 of the NPPF, which now includes specific reference to the setting of National Parks:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, **while any development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."**

It is therefore important to consider direct and indirect effects upon the National Park designated landscape and its setting as well as its special qualities. The LPA officers will therefore need to assess any impacts upon the National Park in order to address the above statutory duty.

The SDNPA would advise that any development within the setting of the Park should positively contribute to ecosystem services and to biodiversity net gain. New planting should all be native and locally characteristic in order to offer meaningful benefits to wildlife and positively contribute to landscape character. Avoid planting which is overly ornamental and may not have significant ecological or landscape benefits.

If new lighting is proposed then it is recommended that consideration also be given to dark night skies, which are a special quality of the National Park. The South Downs National Park is a designated International Dark Sky Reserve and dark skies and tranquillity are both special qualities that need to be protected.

Paragraph 191(c) of the NPPF outlines that development should limit the impact of light pollution on intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. Whilst there will be pre-existing lighting associated with the existing retail park, the SDNPA would encourage any new development to have a sensitive approach to lighting which conforms to the Institute of Lighting Professionals for lighting in environmental zones guidance, and tries to achieve zero upwards light spill in all respects.

Further information/advice on sensitive lighting can be found in the SDNPA's Dark Skies Technical Advice Note which is available via the following link:

https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/DNS-TAN-2021-Main-Document-External-Lighting.pdf

Yours faithfully



MIKE HUGHES
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South Downs National Park Authority

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