



12 December 2013

Designation of Upper Beeding neighbourhood area (SDNP part)

The South Downs National Park Authority Planning Committee at its meeting on 13 June 2013 noted that future neighbourhood area applications, where the main centre of population is outside the National Park, will be undertaken through the Scheme of Delegation to Officers. This applies in the case of Upper Beeding's application.

The power to designate a neighbourhood area is exercisable under Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Upper Beeding Parish Council as the 'relevant body' submitted an application for designation of a neighbourhood area to both Local Planning Authorities:- Horsham District Council (HDC) and South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).

The application was publicised and consulted on by the Authorities as required by the Regulations for a minimum 6 week period ending on 21 October 2013. The Neighbourhood Planning Officer at SDNPA consulted with Members of the Authority. No objections were received (and 1 note of support from an SDNPA Member).

It is considered that the proposed neighbourhood area – the part which falls within South Downs National Park – is appropriate to be designated. As already stated Upper Beeding Parish Council is a 'relevant body' to apply for designation. The application consists of or includes the whole area of the parish council. It is the first time an application has been made to the Local Planning Authorities.

In coming to a decision of whether to designate the whole area inside SDNP, the role of Shoreham Cement Works came into particular focus. This is considered to be one of only a few large brownfield development opportunities within the National Park and has direct relevance to the SDNPA planning strategy for the South Downs National Park (the Authority will be publishing its first draft Local Plan – the Preferred Option in 2015). It is likely there will be a policy in the emerging Local Plan which addresses Shoreham Cement Works.

The Authority expressed its concerns relating to the inclusion of the Cement Works within the proposed neighbourhood area to the Clerk of the Parish Council in September 2013. This led Upper Beeding Parish Council to issue a statement (2 October 2013) to SDNPA, setting out how the site will be treated through the neighbourhood planning process – this has been attached to the notification. Together with the National Planning Policy Framework's identification of the purview of Local Plans and neighbourhood plans, this letter supports the designation of the whole of the proposed neighbourhood area. SDNPA will continue to engage with the Parish Council as the neighbourhood plan is developed and through ongoing discussion relating to the Cement Works.

It is not considered there is a case for the area concerned to be designated as a business area.

The reasons set out in Upper Beeding Parish Council's application explaining why the area is appropriate to be designated namely:

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Chief Executive: Trevor Beattie

“The villages of Upper Beeding and Small Dole, together with the small hamlets of Edburton and Truleigh Hill, comprise a single parish within the area of Horsham District Council. The settlements lie between the larger market towns of Henfield to the north and Steyning to the southwest, and form a single coherent community. The population comprises 3,013 registered electors, with a total of approx. 4,500 persons.

The Parish Council formally decided in June 2013 to seek Neighbourhood Planning status. Consideration has been given to “clustering” with one or more neighbouring parishes, but it was felt that the distinctive nature of the community – different in function, population profile, and appearance – made such an idea inappropriate. As evidence of these distinctions, the 2011 Census shows the resident population of Upper Beeding to be younger than in the main neighbouring settlement of Steyning (52% under 44 years old, compared to 44%), poorer (evidenced by 16% detached housing compared to 52%) and worse educated (25% to degree level compared to 43%).

The settlement has some wholly distinctive features, including a medieval church and saltings, and two substantial conservation areas largely comprising 18th century housing. It also has industrial areas lacking in neighbouring parishes, including a disused cement work and quarry, and extensive industrial estates in Small Dole, Golding Barn, and Upper Beeding.

The majority of the land area of the parish falls within the area of the South Downs National Park, but the vast majority of the population lives in the built-up area outside the park. Whilst there are no significant greenfield development sites within the villages, we would seek both to guide “infill” development opportunities, enhance the overstretched infrastructure of the villages, and preserve and improve the appearance and potential of the villages.

A provisional neighbourhood plan committee, comprising a mixture of parish councillors and community representatives, has been formed, and will meet in September 2013 ”

are noted and considered to be an appropriate basis on which to prepare a neighbourhood plan.

It is concluded, therefore that the application for the proposed area for Upper Beeding should be designated. The decision to designate relates only to that part of the neighbourhood area within South Downs National Park. The results of the consultation lend support for the designation.

Through the Joint Working Protocol with Horsham District Council, the Authority has mandated Horsham District Council to issue the decision notice to Upper Beeding Parish Council in respect of this matter. This will provide confirmation to the Parish Council of both Local Planning Authorities decision to designate.

Any further correspondence relating to the designation should be addressed to Andrew Triggs, Planning Policy Officer (Neighbourhood Planning) or Tim Richings (Planning Policy Manager).

ANDREW TRIGGS

Planning Policy Officer (Neighbourhood Planning)
South Downs National Park Authority

UPPER BEEDING PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Steve Coberman

2nd October 2013

Andrew Triggs,
South Downs National Park.
by email

cc: Philip James (HDC)

Dear Andrew,

Upper Beeding Cement Works

Following our meeting on Tuesday 10th September, this is to confirm our position regarding the future of the cement works, and our plans to liaise with the National Park Authority.

As regards the site itself, we have no firm views on what its future might or should be, beyond that it is currently an eyesore, and that any development of financial and/or amenity benefit to the community would be desirable.

We note that your intention is to produce a strategic plan, but that this may not be ready ahead of the proposed publication date of the Neighbourhood Plan. We would therefore welcome any ongoing input from you regarding the evolving direction of your thinking regarding this site.

I would like to make clear that we have no intention of pre-empting or opposing your plans for the site. However, since it is a strategic site within our community, we feel it would be inappropriate to omit it from the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This letter has been tabled at the meeting of the Council on 1st October, and approval to send it to you has been formally minuted.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Coberman
Clerk to the Council