

**DRAFT SOUTH DOWNS WAY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2008-2013  
COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM FOR WEST SUSSEX  
COMMENTS 31st JANUARY 2008**

**COMMENTS MADE BY CAFWS MEMBERS 23<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY 2008**

**General**

- Need to acknowledge and remember the needs of local users, as well as visitors, in the Plan i.e. include the wider network but do not isolate local users
- The wider issue of management of the number of visitors versus the number of car parks must be addressed
- Disappointed that there is no reference to the status of various sections of the South Downs Way (SDW) in the draft, and in particular no reference to carriage drivers being able to use the restricted byway sections. The restricted byways sections of the Trail are much valued by carriage drivers and any upgrade of status to enable them to use more sections would be welcomed to work towards their aspirations for a long distance track for carriage drivers.
- Horse box parking is still an issue, and the situation has been aggravated in the last few years with Forestry Commission installing height barriers on several of their car parks, so it is not satisfactory to 'seek to maintain the existing level'.
- Support the action to improve road crossings along the SDW where dangerous. New permissive routes may be required (e.g. at Pyecombe Golf Course)

**Funding**

- Stakeholder commitment key for funding and delivery
- Ongoing dialogue with Planning Authorities for Section 106 gains should be documented in the Plan. Mention should also be made of Lottery Funding etc opportunities.
- Use the National Trail as a means of securing local funding for local users

**Action Plans**

- Agree that Action Plans need to have a partnership approach to succeed
- Will there be the integration into the same goals and service levels provided by the South Downs Joint Committee regarding Rights of Way etc, for example Action Plan no 32 (Working with local, County, and regional Tourism organisations to promote the Trail as an important attraction in the South Downs)

## **Comments made by email from the Vice-Chairman, Peter Brown**

### **General**

- The document is not based on any assessment of the present situation and as a result, there should be a review, however brief, of the present regime and how successful it had been. This would lead to identifying the principle issues rather than reciting the items from the last Plan that have not been completed.
- An update on the changes relating to access and the environment since the last Plan would be useful, in particular the new Access to Open Country under the CROW Act 2000.
- The Plan should fully identify existing staff and resources and suggest if these are sufficient
- The situation in the Meon Valley is a key issue and deserves more information. Other areas where there are specific solutions being pursued should be spelt out.

### **Performance Targets**

- Because of the lack of background information, the device of using performance targets falls flat! If we do not know how many problems there are, how can we conclude whether the target is appropriate?

### **4.2 Strategic Aims**

- Maximising the economic benefits of the Trail - should be 'optimum' benefits rather than 'maximum'

### **4.2 Management Objectives**

- Should be numbered 4.3 so other sections/sub-sections will also need to be renumbered accordingly
- Second bullet point - managing the trail and its corridors – needs to include a reference to safety either as a new bullet point or added to the second bullet point

### **The Action Plan**

- Needs to be clearer how the actions were identified as does not refer to any identified problems

### **Managing the Trail**

- New access land along the route presents new opportunities for circular routes not always on public rights of ways
- Again, more emphasis needed on the Meon Valley
- Action 7 – 'resolve all outstanding route anomalies in East and West Sussex' - how many outstanding problems are there?
- Action 10 – 'support the provision of more visitor accommodation, especially low cost accommodation, in areas with low provision, provided it is not in conflict with landscape & sustainability issues' - clarification needed on how this will be achieved

- Action 11 – ‘seek to provide more SDW water points along the route that are accessible 24hrs/ day, especially in Hampshire and maintain existing’ - need to know how many more water points are required, as without this statistical information, the performance figures will be meaningless
- Expected to see reference to conflict resolution and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) included

### **Promoting the South Downs Way and providing information to Trail users**

- Target 7 – ‘at least one new interpretation or art project is completed each year’ – there has been no justification for arts projects as such, so why is this a target?
- Action 22 - Evaluate the pilot pod-cast project in Hampshire and expand the model to other areas of the SDW if appropriate’ - this sound interesting and should have been described earlier
- Suggest should refer to and embrace involvement in the now regular Walking Festivals
- There is a need to specifically mention meetings with the user groups, with the potential for an annual meeting

### **Maximising Social and Economic Benefits**

- Target 12 – ‘increase the number of Green Tourism Business Award holders promoted by the SDW each year’ - please clarify. If businesses are supporting the SDW, then need to say how and why
- 35 – ‘Seek links with new partners to jointly further the healthy lifestyle agenda’ - Brighton & Hove City Council should be a key partner
- Beneficial to mention the number of small business running walking holidays in this section