

Countryside Access Strategy Review Board of the Place Scrutiny Committee

Comments to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on the proposals for the Future Management of Countryside Sites

Membership: Councillors Martin Clarke (Chair of Review Board), Bob Bowdler, Nigel Enever, Pat Rodohan, Stephen Shing.

Background

The Review Board was established by the Place Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 June 2018 to make comments on the proposals for the future management of the Council's countryside sites included within the Countryside Access Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

The Review Board has met on four occasions to review the proposals and has visited Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP), which is one of the key sites covered by the proposals. The Review Board has examined the proposals and recommendations contained in the report to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment at the meeting to be held on 17 June 2019.

Scrutiny Comments to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The Review Board, on behalf of the Place Scrutiny Committee, requests that the Lead Member takes into account the following comments and recommendations when making a decision about the future management of the countryside sites.

The majority of the Review Board supports the recommendations to transfer the management of the countryside sites as outlined in the report to the Lead Member. One member of the Review Board does not support the transfer of Seven Sister Country Park (SSCP) to an outside organisation, but does support the transfer of the other countryside sites.

The Board is keen that the community use of the countryside sites is preserved into the future, in line with the current site uses and site protections. For Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) the Review Board recommends that in order to protect future community use:

- 1) Additional safeguards are included in the clawback clause of the transfer agreement (recommendation 2(b)) to ensure that ESCC has the right of first refusal to take ownership of the site, should the site be further transferred; and
- 2) East Sussex County Council has elected Member representation on the Board of any company formed to manage Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP), as well as continuing to be represented on the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Board.

Councillor Martin Clarke
Chair of the Review Board