

South Downs National Park Public Inquiry
(Re-opened)

**Note on
Hewetts Solicitors' Letter
(LR2)**

by



May 2008

1 Note on Additional Representation – Hewetts Solicitors

1.1 The South Downs Campaign (SDC) would like to make a short statement regarding one of the additional representations that the Inspector indicated he was going to accept during the inquiry on the morning of Thursday 8 May, 2008. This representation has been made by Hewetts Solicitors (Inquiry Document No. LR2).

1.2 In their letter, Hewetts Solicitors claim that:

“In certain reports which we have read (and we cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of the reports) it has been suggested by at least one member of the South Downs Campaign (“SDC”) that if certain tracks of land, e.g. “the Western Weald” are not designated as part of the National Park, such areas of land will automatically lose the status of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”

1.3 Apart from the fact that Hewetts Solicitors provide no evidence to back up their claim, as they acknowledge, any such reports may not be accurate in any event. Therefore the SDC considers that this letter is highly speculative. The letter is also not clear as to whether the member of the SDC was speaking on behalf of the SDC or for their own organisation (which happens to be a member of the SDC).

1.4 The SDC obviously cannot comment on what might or might not have been seen by Hewetts Solicitors but can only comment on the accuracy of the comments attributed to the SDC. The SDC would like to make it clear that it has never said that the Western Weald would automatically lose its AONB status if it was not included in the South Downs National Park.

1.5 The SDC has been very careful to explain that the AONB status of parts (not the whole) of the Western Weald would be at risk were the Landscape Assessor's comments on the quality of the 'A3 corridor' and the Sandy Arable Farmlands in the Lower Rother Valley to stand. The SDC remains concerned by this issue.

1.6 For clarity, the SDC also remains concerned about the future of the non-AONB land that has been designated National Park in the Western Weald. Without a full boundary setting and public consultation process on a possible Western Weald AONB, this land could not be safeguarded were it to be left outside the South Downs National Park. And in any event, this land would have no national landscape designation and therefore be at risk while it awaited the AONB process to develop and a draft boundary to be drawn up (which could take some time).

1.7 The SDC trusts that this statement clarifies its position.