

LISS PARISH COUNCIL

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Barbara Bay
South Downs National Park Inquiry Secretariat
4/02 Temple Quay House
2 the Square
Temple Quay
Bristol, BS16PN

Dear Barbara

I refer to the defra letter of 25 October 2007 announcing the re-opening of the South Downs National Park Inquiry, in particular the statement that the Inspector had been asked to indicate any points raised during the further consultation, which caused him to change his recommendations.

Liss Parish Council in their letter of 20 September, a copy of which is attached, raised a number of issues, in particular those relating to the Western Weald, which were either not the subject of previous representations because the Council supported the designated boundary, or stemmed from Landscape Assessors report on the A3 Corridor/Rother Valley that was not available when the original inquiry closed. The Council is, therefore, concerned at the Inspector's statement at the Pre-Inquiry Meeting that the Inquiry should not be used to argue that the Western Weald should be part of the National Park. He felt that this issue fell outside the Terms of Reference given by the Secretary of State.

The Council considers that the deletion of the Western Weald does represent a new issue since the recommendation was never the subject of public scrutiny at the original Inquiry. It follows that the Council does not consider that the Inspector's offer to pass on representations on the Western Weald to the Secretary of State is adequate.

The Council notes that objectors to the additional areas of land are to be given the opportunity to put their case at the re-opened inquiry. The same should apply to proposals to delete areas of land where new information is available or judgements that underpinned the original recommendations are shown to be flawed. The Council considers that this applies to the proposed exclusion of Liss and the Rother Valley where the conclusions of the Landscape Assessor are at variance with other studies undertaken both before and after the closure of the original inquiry.

The Council trusts, therefore, that on reflection and in the interests of natural justice, the Inspector will take oral evidence on the inclusion of the Western Weald and not merely the question of its future AONB status should it be excluded from the National Park. This issue is of great concern to local people, who overwhelmingly support the wider National Park. There

has been only 1 objector to the inclusion of the Parish of Liss, and that from a property developer. On the other hand the Council notes that many of those opposing the deletion of the A3 Corridor/Western Weald come from across the Downs and not just from the affected area.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

R Bowery
Clerk to the Council
1/2/08