

**EXTRACT FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CALL-IN HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2009**

**ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**1.00PM 6 OCTOBER 2009**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Morgan (Chairman); Older, Davey, Davis, Drake, Randall, Smart and Wells

**Also Present:** Councillors Duncan and Mitchell

**24 CALL-IN REQUEST: DOWNLAND MANAGEMENT - 24 SEPTEMBER  
ENVIRONMENT CMM DECISION**

- 24.1 Councillor Mitchell introduced her call-in request dated 24 September. She said the report to Cabinet Member Meeting had not included information that had been promised to wildlife representatives and to June ECSOSC meeting about managing downland in areas prior to grazing being introduced and for those areas that would not be grazed. The policy should have been made clear in the report in relation to the collection of grass mowings, and the views of the conservation and wildlife groups on this issue should have been sought and included in the report.
- 24.2 Councillor Mitchell also referred to a letter from the Sussex Wildlife Trust which was in support of increased grazing but with some concerns. In her view the CMM decision should be referred back to allow for the inclusion of additional information and for consultation with conservation and wildlife groups.
- 24.3 The Chairman was disappointed that the 24 September Environment CMM report did not take account of the representations that had been made on behalf of ECSOSC at 30 July Environment CMM.
- 24.4 Three representatives of conservation and wildlife groups told the meeting that they were pleased with the positive steps being taken with downland grazing plans. However they were displeased that there had been no consultation with wildlife groups and volunteers who had high levels of expertise. Not collecting grass mowings as an intermediate measure was seen as a cut in service and/or budget, allowing the spread of rough grass at the expense of downland species which had taken many years of protection to become established.
- 24.5 Wildlife groups circulated photographs and argued there was a danger that biodiversity could be lost.

- 24.6 The Cabinet Member said he appreciated the work and commitment by all those involved and understood the concerns.
- 24.7 Councillor Theobald queried the reason for the call-in. He said he and officers had met and consulted on May 28 with Gill Taylor (Friends of Hollingbury and Burstead Woods), Bernard Evans (Friends of Sheepecote Valley), Phil Belden (Brighton Urban Wildlife Group) and Dave Bangs. The decisions on the grazing plans were stated in the decision record to be 'subject to full consultation with ward councillors and residents' (report Appendix 10 refers).
- 24.8 Following discussion the Committee unanimously agreed to refer the matter back to Environment CMM.
- 24.9 The Chairman thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting.
- 24.10 **RESOLVED** – That the Downland Management decision be referred back to CMM for reconsideration due to:
- The lack of consultation with local conversation and wildlife groups
  - The lack of information in the CMM report relating to cutting and composting of sites not being grazed
  - Lack of analysis evident in the CMM report of the impact of the downland mowing policy on a site by site basis