

Judges' Citation RTPI South East Awards for Planning Excellence 2019

Category: Excellence in Natural Environment

Commendation: [Lewes Town Council](#), [South Downs National Park Authority](#), [Feria Urbanism](#), [Lewes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group](#) and many local community groups and representatives

Lewes Neighbourhood Plan (Pioneering An Ecosystem Approach To Neighbourhood Planning)

The Lewes Neighbourhood Plan is the first in the UK to practically implement an ecosystem approach in one town.



The awards submission detailed how Lewes Neighbourhood Plan will influence future development of houses, retail and businesses in the town. The Steering Group sought engagement and buy-in from the whole town and its diverse community, and it received a 92% 'yes' vote in its referendum in March 2019.

The "ecosystem approach" relates to the overarching development plan for the area in the South Downs Local Plan, and the Steering Group sought to strengthen the evidence base locally. The approach also directs every new development towards enhancing natural capital and biodiversity at a local level that relates to the wider environment.

The judges admired the ambition of the Steering Group, the thorough, long-term and extensive engagement with the community and stakeholders and the innovative 'Ecosystem Services' approach to plan-making – a first for a Neighbourhood Plan.

The judges felt that the achievements were worthy of being recognised with a Commendation in the RTPI SE Award for Planning Excellence 2019.