

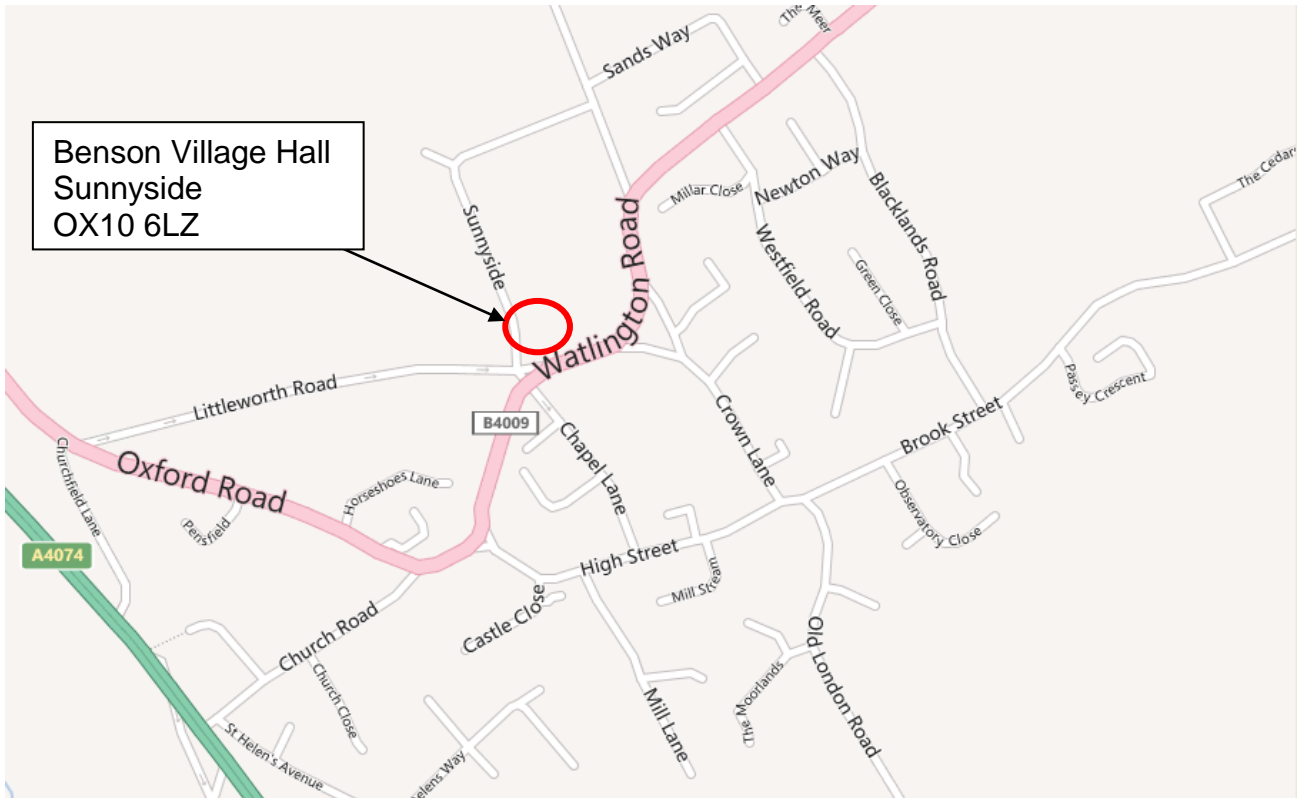


Board Meeting

10.00 a.m. 29th March
Village Hall
Benson nr Wallingford, South Oxfordshire

Agenda

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------------|
| 1. | Apologies | 10.00 - 10.01 |
| 2. | Declarations of Interest | 10.01 - 10.02 |
| 3. | Minutes of Previous Meeting | 10.03 - 10.06 |
| 4. | Matters Arising | 10.06 - 10.11 |
| 5. | Public Question Time | 10.11 - 10.13 |
| 6. | Report from the Executive Committee | 10.13 - 10.23 |
| 7. | Report of Effectiveness of internal (financial) control | 10.23- 10.25 |
| 8. | Report on Budget 2012-2013 | 10.25 - 10.45 |
| 9. | Draft Business Plan 2012-2013 | 10.45 - 11.00 |
| 10. | Report from the Planning Committee | 11.00 - 11.15 |
| 11. | Report on NPPF | 11.15 - 11.35 |
| 12. | Report on Luton | 11.35 - 11.55 |
| 13. | Report on Historic Farmsteads Survey | 11.55 - 12.10 |
| 14. | High Speed 2 | 12.10 - 12.30 |
| 15. | Proposal for a Chilterns Tourism Web Site | 12.30 - 12.45 |
| 16. | Research grants and prize | 12.45 - 12.55 |
| 17. | Review of the Management Plan for the AONB | 12.55 - 1.00 |
| 18. | Arrangements for the Board Member's tour (for information) | |
| 20. | Date of Future Meetings | |





**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD
HELD ON THURSDAY 19th JANUARY 2012 at The Baptist Hall, TRING AT 10.00
AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.30PM**

Member	Appointing Body
Appointed by Local Authorities	
Cllr Anna Badcock	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr David Barnard	North Herts District Council
Cllr Roger Emmett	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr David Nimmo Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Brian Norman	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Richard Pushman	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Chris Richards	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Chiltern District Council
Cllr Bill Storey	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Dave Taylor	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Alan Walters	South Buckinghamshire District Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State	
Heather Barrett-Mold	Secretary of State
Mike Fox (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Helen Tuffs	Secretary of State
John Willson	Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils	
Cllr Mary Goldsmith	Oxfordshire
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
Cllr Shirley Judges	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Barbara Wallis	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

Officers	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
Neil Jackson	CCB
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Dr Simon Mortimer, Ray Payne and Kevin Mayne

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were declared

53. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments were made:

John Wilson was added to the attendees, Kevin Mayne was removed from the apologies and the 'd' was removed from the word cost on item 41.

54. Matters Arising

1. Re item 43: the "Boris Island" plans have been rushed out. This could change everything for Heathrow. The Luton Airport development plans will also affect the Chiltern AONB. The timing may allow for the matter to be discussed at the next Board meeting. The Luton Airport development plans have infrastructure implications. Dave Taylor offered to organise a presentation by Luton Airport at the next Board meeting.
2. Item 44. The Board had not been successful in its bid for a Chiltern Chalk Nature Improvement Area grant.
3. Item 44. The Government has not given reassurances that they will apply the National Ecosystem Assessment approach to their own activities.
4. Item 47. Promoting wood fuel. Following a mild winter the domestic market has dropped.

55. Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

56. Election to the Executive Committee.

This item was moved up the agenda with agreement of the meeting.

Following the resignation of Kevin Mayne, a new member, who is also a Secretary of State appointee has to be elected to the Executive Committee. Ray Payne was proposed, seconded and unanimously elected to the Executive Committee.

57. Report from the Executive Committee

The members received the report of the Chief Officer

At its meeting on 7th December 2011 the Executive Committee:

1. Received a report on the financial position to the end of October. There were no significant issues to report.
2. Received a report on the Medium Term Financial plan 2002-20105 and additional matters covering salary increments, allowances and incentives.
3. Received a report on the responses from Parish and Town councils to the request to provide financial support.
4. Approved a report on celebrating the Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
5. Received a report on High Speed 2
6. Received the Chief Officer's report.

The Board:

- 1. NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.**
- 2. DECIDED to postpone the Review of the Member's Allowance scheme and review the proposal in 2013.**
- 3. APPROVED the proposed cost of living award of 1% applied to staff salaries and members allowances.**
- 4. APPROVED the changes to the mileage payments and essential car user allowances.**
- 5. APPROVED the unfreezing of discretionary performance related salary increments for 2012-2013.**
- 6. NOTED the proposed review of options for the staff incentive scheme.**

58. Report from the Planning Committee

Members received the report from the Planning Officer, the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee on 30th November 2011 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following were noted:

1. Barbara Wallis had stepped down as Chairman and Bettina Kirkham was nominated and elected as Chairman of the Committee.
2. The High Speed 2 update
3. Feedback from the AONB Planning conference 2011. The feedback provided was overall very positive and the field trip to Matthew's brickyard at Bellingdon was regarded by many as inspirational.
4. Feedback from the Planning Forum and an update on visits to local authorities. Following the feedback it had been resolved that the Planning Forum should continue in its present format. The visits to local authorities to try and re-invigorate the Forum had been successful and will continue in early 2012.
5. Planning Training for Town and Parish Councils for early summer 2012.

The committee had approved the setting up of a short series of events during the summer of 2012. There are a number of topics to be discussed. The costs would be covered by a small fee.

6. Proposed student research project- implications of internet land sales.

Students at Oxford Brookes had been approached about this research project and the matter will be reported at future meetings.

7. The Committee was informed about Development Plan Responses made under delegated powers and planning applications on which the Board had been consulted on.

8. The Committee had been given a planning applications update.

- 1. The Board NOTED the report from the Planning Committee.**

59. Report on High Speed 2

The Chief Officer reported that the Government had announced on 10th January 2012 its intention to proceed to the next stage on the current preferred line along the Misbourne Valley and seek Parliament's approval in 2013. The route changes included some improvements to the Chilterns, but other changes given less prominence, were negative. The Governments had given little weight to the outcome of the public consultation (55,000 responses) which was overwhelmingly critical, with responses to some questions registering objections rates of up to 90%. There had been considerable media coverage and the Board has played a full part in voicing objections to the proposal.

Neil Jackson, CCB Conservation and Landscape Officer, gave a presentation explaining the proposed changes.

Following the announcement by the Secretary of State:

1. The Board needs to undertake a detailed analysis of the effects of the proposed changes to design and alignment.
2. Having made an initial assessment the changes do not significantly affect either the environmental or business case therefore the Board should maintain its opposition to the plan.
3. The Board needs to take note of the legal advice on options for opposing the railway. It is not proposed that the Board initiates any legal challenge or provides funding towards legal fees. If appropriate the Board should consider indirect support for any legal challenge which it believes would result in reducing or avoiding damage to the AONB.
4. HS2Ltd has confirmed it will commission an Environmental Impact Assessment. The Board must ensure it is consulted at all stages including interpretation of the findings.
5. HS2Ltd has indicated that during 2012 it intends to create a number of Community and Environmental Fora. the Board must seek involvement in each.
6. The Board must be prepared to work closely with HS2 Ltd to ensure the best possible outcome for the AONB, if the railway is to be built.
7. The Board must continue to press for the Business plan for HS2 to be revised to incorporate monetised value on the environmental impacts, based on the National Ecosystem Appraisals approach adopted by the Government in June 2011.
8. In view of the likelihood of additional mitigation, it is crucial that the Board continues to work closely with environmental bodies, local action groups and local authorities. The good relationships with local MPs will be vital in the run up to the presentation of a Hybrid Bill to Parliament in late 2013.

The issue was discussed at length by the members.

1. **The Board MAINTAINS its opposition to the Railway as it will cause major and irreversible damage to the AONB.**
2. **The Board DECIDED that in 2012 involvement with the Environmental Impact Assessment, the new fora to be created by HS2 Ltd, and scrutiny of mitigation and design are a high priority in the Board's overall work programme.**

- 3. The Board DECIDED to allocate funding as required from the Development Reserve, subject to authority being given by the Executive Committee.**

60. Report on the Water White Paper- Water for Life

The Chalk Streams Project Officer, Allen Beechey, briefed the Board on the Government's Water White Paper launched 8th December 2011. It sets out its vision for water management in the future. The paper aims to address the key challenges of protecting the health of the rivers and lakes, maintaining water infrastructure and managing water resources effectively.

Despite of £90 billion investment in the Water Industry since privatisation, water supplies in many areas of the country are stressed and only a quarter of water bodies are healthy because of over abstraction and pollution. Low flow and pollution are the chief reasons the 9 rivers in the Chilterns do not attain Good Ecological Status or Potential according to Water Framework Directive standards. The proposed changes to the abstraction legislation will be too late to address the issue of over-abstraction in the Chilterns in time for the Water Framework Directive reporting deadline in 2027. The White Paper falls short on strategy how to deal with the problems in the Chilterns.

This type of legislation does not occur very often. The White Paper is not ambitious enough to make much progress. The Board will make a submission to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

Members posed questions and comments were made.

- 1. The Board NOTED the Government's policies and strategies to manage water resources.**
- 2. The Board WILL MAKE a submission to the Committee registering the Board's concern that the measurers do not go far enough and are unlikely to be successful in the Chilterns.**

61. Progress report on the Chilterns' Commons Project.

In June 2011 the Heritage Lottery Fund approved a grant of £403,000 for a project to enhance the conservation, understanding and enjoyment of common land in the Chilterns which will run from July 2011 to June 2015. Rachel Sanderson was appointed as the project manager in August 2011.

She gave a report on the programme of works on commons and training events held so far and planned. The members provided feedback and comment on the excellent work carried out and planned.

- 1. The Board NOTED the progress to date.**
- 2. The Board provided feedback on the achievements to date and the planned programme.**

62. Celebrating the Olympics and the Jubilee

The Chief Officer reported that the Executive Committee was of the view that the Board should mark the 2012 Olympics, the Paralympics and the Queen's 60th Jubilee and recommended that a budget of up to £3,000 be allocated from the Development Reserve. The Boards suggestions and feedback was sought on the most appropriate ways to mark the occasions. After discussion it was proposed to concentrate on the Jubilee.

Some discussion took place on marking the Paralympics as Buckinghamshire is the spiritual home of these games.

12.25 Cllr Chris Richards left the meeting.

12.28 Cllr Roger Emmett left the meeting.

1. **The Board members provided suggestions on how the Board could celebrate the Olympics incl the Paralympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.**
2. **The Board AGREED to a provisional budget of £3,000 being created from the Development Reserve.**

63. Works Programme update to December 2011.

1. **The Board NOTED the works programme update to December 2011.**

64. Date of next meeting:

Thursday 29 March 2012 location tbc.

65. Dates of Future meetings:

Thursday 21st June 2012, Wednesday 17th October 2012. Locations to be confirmed.

The meeting closed 12.30

The Chairman..... Date.....

Item 6 Report from the Executive Committee

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: At its meeting on 2nd March the Executive Committee:

1. Received and approved a report on the financial position to the end of January 2012. There were no significant issues to report.
2. Approved a draft budget for 2012-2013.
3. Received a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2012-2015.
4. Approved an allocation of £17,000 from the Development Reserve
5. Reviewed and amended the Risk Register.
6. Approved a report on the performance of the internal audit.
7. Approved the Treasury Management Report
8. Received a report on High Speed 2.
9. Received the Chief Officer's report.

Financial Report to the end of January 2012

1. The Finance Officer presented his report on the financial position to the end of January. There were no exceptional items to report. The end of year forecast had been amended to show a small surplus of approx £9,000 compared to an initial forecast of a deficit of £18,000. The principle reason was the higher than expected contributions from local authorities.

Budget 2012-2013

2. The committee discussed and approved a draft budget for 2012-2013. This is considered under Item 8 of the agenda for this meeting.

Medium Term Financial Plan

3. The Committee approved the revised medium term plan. It had been revised based on the predicted out turn for 2011-2012. The Board remains on target to achieve a balanced budget by 2015 based on a programme of reduction in its core expenditure, raising additional income from new sources including parish and town councils, and

limited use of the Budget Equalisation Reserve and the Development Reserve.

Allocation of Development reserves

4. In line with the Board's policy of making available up to £30,000 in 2012-13 from the Development Reserve for work and projects for which there are insufficient funds in the core budget, the Committee approved the following allocations;
 1. £5,000 towards the cost of the Land Use Survey
 2. £5,000 towards a Research Grants Fund (see Item 16)
 3. £3,000 for IT replacement
 4. £3,000 towards the Box Woodland Project.

Review of the Risk Register

5. The Committee reviews the Risk Register twice a year. It approved the latest review with one exception. It believed that sufficient steps had been taken to reduce the likely impact of a major IT failure.

Report on the Internal Auditor

6. The Accounts and Audit Regulations require that an annual review be undertaken of the effectiveness of internal audit. The Board's internal audit service is provided by staff from the Shared Internal Audit Service at Hertfordshire County Council.
7. The Committee approved the report which praised the internal auditor's performance.

Report on Treasury Management

8. The Committee approved the report. There were no major issues to report. As interest rates remain low and the Board has adopted a treasury management strategy based on very low risk investment in major British clearing banks, returns were low.

Recommendation

1. **To note those decisions made under delegated authority.**

Item 7

Effectiveness of System of Internal Control

Author: Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 require that “the relevant body must conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control...which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.” This review must be minuted as reviewed by the full Board.

Purpose of Report: To present a review of the system of internal control for consideration of the Board.

Background

1. The amendment to the Accounts and Audit Regulations require that this review be conducted by the full Board.
2. Internal control measures should include the identification and management of risk, financial control systems and the provision of an effective internal audit service.

Risk Management

3. The Executive Committee reviews the Risk Register at 6 monthly intervals. It is designed to be a working document that enables the continuous review of any emerging risks facing the Board.
4. The Register describes each risk and allocates a risk score regarding the likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact that risk would have on the Board. Risks are categorised as green, amber or red.
5. Each risk is then reviewed against the control measures that can be applied to remove or mitigate that risk. The scores are then re-worked to reflect those controls.
6. The Executive Committee reviewed the latest version of the Register on 2 March 2012 and concluded that the risks faced by the Board are controlled effectively.

Financial Control Systems

7. Financial control systems cover day to day activity by staff and reviews of financial performance by Members.

8. A set of Financial Regulations and Financial Instructions are in place to govern financial practice. These include such matters as segregation of duties – e.g. the same person cannot order goods and approve payment of the invoice.
9. Bank accounts and control accounts are reconciled monthly to ensure that no unusual transactions have taken place.
10. Computer access rights are controlled so that only relevant staff have access to the full set of computerised financial systems.
11. Budget monitoring information is produced monthly and all budget holders are required to respond to the Chief Officer and Finance Officer. Each budget holder signs an acceptance of their individual budget responsibilities. Each meeting of the Executive Committee receives the latest monthly budget monitoring report.
12. A review of the Board's insurance arrangements is being conducted to ensure that risks are covered appropriately and value for money secured.

Internal Audit Service

13. An internal audit service is provided by staff from the Shared Internal Audit Service of Hertfordshire County Council.
14. The Executive Committee conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of the service. On 2 March 2012 the Committee expressed satisfaction with the service provided.
15. The 2012 audit was conducted on 22 February, the findings from which will be presented to Members in due course. Matters covered during the course of the audit included:
 - Treasury management and investment strategies.
 - The management of risk.
 - The arrangements for budgetary control and staff and member responsibilities.
 - Use of debit cards.
 - Insurance strategies.
 - Generation of income from sales, events, talks, consultation fees etc.

Recommendations:

1. **To review and approve the arrangements in place to ensure an effective system of internal control, including the management of risk.**

Item 8

Budget 2012-13

Author: Chris Smith Finance Officer
Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary A budget for the financial year 2012-13 budget has been prepared and reviewed by the Executive Committee.

Purpose of Report: To recommend a 2012-13 budget pending confirmation of grant income from local authorities.

Background

16. At its meeting on 2 March 2012 the Executive Committee considered a draft of a budget for 2012-13, and approved a final version for recommendation to the Board.
17. The budget largely provides for “Business as usual” for the forthcoming year whilst recognising that further economies will need to be sought from 2013-14 onwards.
18. The main changes to the budget compared to 2011-12 are:
 1. A staff cost of living increase of 1% will be awarded from 1 April 2012. The same increase will apply to Members’ allowances.
 2. The discretionary salary increment based on performance is reinstated
 3. Mileage payments are adjusted in line with current HMRC rates.
 4. Car allowances are increased by inflation.
 5. Website expenditure is reduced significantly
 6. A Countryside Management small works budget has been created by moving funds from elsewhere
 7. All HS2 expenditure will be met from the existing earmarked reserve
 8. An Access for All Improvements budget has been created by moving funds from elsewhere
 9. Defra income reflects the reduction announced at the start of the four year grant settlement

10. Local authority income reflects the reduction assumed in the four year plan, although grant allocations are still to be confirmed. Town and Parish Council grants are included at £3,000.
11. The Sustainable Development Fund will be maintained at £40,000 by applying £22,100 of core income.
19. The Committee decided not to proceed with the planned review of Members' allowances in 2012-13.
20. These changes will provide for a total draft budget for core expenditure of £558,265, a reduction of £13,215 over the current year.
21. With the exception of the Sustainable Development Fund non-core activity will be funded by a combination of income and reserves.
22. The net results will be to apply £2,255 from the Budget Equalisation Reserve, £5,000 from the Development Reserve (for the Land Management Survey) and £22,120 from earmarked reserves.

Recommendations:

2. **To approve the budget for the financial year 2012-13.**

BUDGET 2012-13				
Description	Annual Budget 2011-12 £	Revised Budget 2011-12 £	Annual Budget 2012-13 £	Notes
Expenditure				
Department 100:				
Promotion and Awareness				
Core expenditure:				
Information Officer & E&A Officer	(88,315)	(88,195)	(90,385)	
Travel and subsistence	(1,700)	(1,700)	(1,700)	
Subscriptions magazines / newspapers	(400)	(525)	(525)	
Web site	(13,000)	(19,760)	(1,750)	
Printing & distribution costs	(2,400)	(1,860)	(1,900)	
Events and exhibitions	(1,500)	(1,300)	(1,500)	
Miscellaneous	(400)	(200)	(200)	
Core projects:				
103 Countryside Festival	(4,510)	(5,185)	(5,185)	
105 Annual Report	(1,100)	(1,180)	(1,180)	
106 Annual Forum	(2,000)	(935)	(1,500)	
107 Chalk and Trees	(13,365)	(12,365)	(12,365)	
108 Environmental education	(2,500)	(1,500)	(1,000)	
109 Getting Close to Nature	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	
110 Enjoying Woodlands	(3,500)	(3,500)	(3,500)	
111 Environmental Tourism	(1,000)	(550)	(1,000)	
112 Chilterns Awards	(500)	-		
113 Historic Environment	(2,000)	(1,850)	(2,000)	
Sub total	(139,190)	(141,605)	(126,690)	

BUDGET 2012-13				
Description	Annual Budget	Revised Budget	Annual Budget	Notes
	2011-12	2011-12	2012-13	
	£	£	£	
Department 200:				
Countryside Management				
Core expenditure:				
Countryside & FLU Officer	(73,345)	(72,620)	(74,570)	
Travel and subsistence	(2,000)	(1,100)	(1,200)	
Publications	(250)	(100)	(100)	
Events / exhibitions	(300)	(200)	(300)	
Miscellaneous	(200)	(200)	(200)	
Core projects:				
203 Commons	(7,000)	(7,000)	(5,000)	Including £4,000 applied to Commons Project
204 Chalk grassland group	(3,000)	(3,000)	(1,000)	
205 Land management survey	-	-	(5,000)	From Development Reserve
206 State of Environment Report	(2,000)	(1,600)	(1,600)	
207 Support for Trees & Woods Mgt	(3,500)	(3,500)	(3,500)	
209 Ancient Woodland Survey	(5,000)	(15,000)		
210 Small Works	-	-	(4,000)	New budget funded from reductions to 203 and 204
Sub total	(96,595)	(104,320)	(96,470)	

BUDGET 2012-13				
Description	Annual Budget	Revised Budget	Annual Budget	Notes
	2011-12	2011-12	2012-13	
	£	£	£	
Department 300:				
Planning and development				
300 Core expenditure:				
Planning Officer	(59,280)	(59,230)	(61,085)	
Travel & subsistence	(1,180)	(1,180)	(1,180)	
Miscellaneous	(150)	(150)	(150)	
Core projects:				
301 Planning Committee	(570)	(570)	(520)	
302 Planning conference	(1,200)	(1,200)	(1,200)	Expenditure matched by income
303 Design Guidance	-	(25)	(25)	
304 Building design awards	(1,500)	(1,500)	(1,500)	
305 Technical assistance / training	(1,500)	(1,500)	(1,700)	Includes £200 for parish and town council training
309 Wood Fuel Group	(500)	(500)	-	
310 Planning Policies	(1,500)	-	(1,500)	
311 High Speed Two	(1,000)	(3,000)	(5,000)	All expenditure to be met from earmarked reserve
Sub total	(68,380)	(68,855)	(73,860)	

BUDGET 2012-13				
Description	Annual Budget 2011-12 £	Revised Budget 2011-12 £	Annual Budget 2012-13 £	Notes
Department 400:				
Recreation and Access				
Core expenditure:				
Access Officer	(25,635)	(25,495)	(26,555)	
Travel and subsistence	(500)	(500)	(500)	
Miscellaneous	(100)	(150)	(150)	
Core projects:				
401 Access public'ns incl. Country Walks	(3,100)	(2,580)	(2,000)	
402 Access conference	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	Expenditure matched by income
404 Access for all Improvements	-	-	(1,100)	New budget funded from 401
405 Cycling in the Chilterns	(3,000)	(4,320)	(3,000)	
Sub total	(33,335)	(34,045)	(34,305)	
Department 500:				
Corporate Services				
Core expenditure:				
Chief Officer / Admin Officer	(99,405)	(101,430)	(104,435)	
Travel and subsistence	(1,750)	(1,750)	(1,750)	
Staff training	(2,555)	(2,000)	(2,000)	
Incentive scheme distribution	-	(3,500)	-	
Premises	(27,570)	(26,803)	(26,805)	
Office costs	(14,115)	(14,905)	(12,705)	
Office furniture & equipment	(1,000)	(750)	(750)	
IT (incl OS licences)	(10,470)	(6,275)	(8,275)	
Photography	-	-	(2,000)	
Meetings & events	(375)	(435)	(435)	
Finance	(19,810)	(18,450)	(16,865)	
Personnel	(1,580)	(1,580)	(1,580)	
Legal services	(6,000)	(4,500)	(3,000)	
Insurance	(8,200)	(8,550)	(8,550)	
Miscellaneous	(565)	(565)	(565)	
Sub total	(193,395)	(191,493)	(189,715)	

BUDGET 2012-13				
Description	Annual Budget 2011-12 £	Revised Budget 2011-12 £	Annual Budget 2012-13 £	Notes
Department 600				
Member Services				
Core expenditure:				
Members' allowances	(34,320)	(31,890)	(32,025)	Excludes SDF Panel allowances
Board member training	(1,750)	(1,500)	(1,500)	
Board meetings	(1,355)	(750)	(1,000)	
Miscellaneous	(50)	(50)	(50)	
Core projects:				
601 Executive Committee	(150)	(150)	(150)	
Sub total	(37,625)	(34,340)	(34,725)	
Central Budgets				
Inflation on non staff costs	-		-	Absorbed in cash limited budgets
502 Project support budget	(2,960)	(2,960)	(2,500)	
Sub total	(2,960)	(2,960)	(2,500)	
TOTAL CORE EXPENDITURE	(571,480)	(577,618)	(558,265)	
Other expenditure				
Contribution to SE Protected Landscapes Co-ordinator	(2,000)	(2,458)	(3,000)	
Merchandise purchases	-	-	-	
Project expenditure:				
- Chilterns Chalk Streams (Core)	(37,865)	(37,865)	(37,095)	
- Chilterns Chalk Streams (Projects)	-	(45,210)	(67,300)	
- Sustainable Development Fund	(40,000)	(40,000)	(40,000)	Including SDF Panel allowances
- Ancient Woodland Survey	(18,000)	(41,660)	(15,620)	
- Friends of Red Kites	(1,000)	(1,000)	-	
- EU Timber Project	-	(4,500)		
- Chilterns Commons Project	(78,835)	(53,970)	(122,725)	
GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(749,180)	(804,281)	(844,005)	

BUDGET 2012-13				
Description	Annual Budget 2011-12 £	Revised Budget 2011-12 £	Annual Budget 2012-13 £	Notes
Income				
Defra: Core	465,305	459,295	439,490	To meet 80% of core expenditure
Local Authorities	75,335	105,085	96,630	
Town and Parish Councils	-	2,500	3,000	
Merchandise sales	5,000	5,000	4,000	
Other earned income	29,655	32,829	27,990	
Red Kite donations	1,000	100	-	Moved to general income
Sub total	576,295	604,809	571,110	
Defra: SDF	19,320	25,330	17,900	
Defra: Chalk Streams	19,220	19,220	17,800	
Chalk Streams external income	18,645	63,855	85,095	
Ancient Woodland Survey external income	18,000	14,400	-	
Chilterns Commons Project: HLF	53,130	26,975	106,500	
Chilterns Commons Project: other	25,705	26,995	16,225	
GRAND TOTAL INCOME	730,315	781,584	814,630	
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)	(18,865)	(22,697)	(29,375)	
RESERVE MOVEMENTS:				
Restricted Reserves:				
- Red Kites Reserve	-	(900)		
- Chalk Streams Reserve	-	-	(1,500)	
Earmarked Reserves:				
- Budget Equalisation Reserve applied	(18,865)	-	(2,255)	To meet core deficit & SDF shortfall
- Development Reserve applied	-	-	(5,000)	For land Management Survey
- Development Reserve increased	-	9,963	-	
- Woodland Research applied	-	(31,760)	(15,620)	For Ancient Woodland Survey
- HS2 Reserve applied	-	-	(5,000)	
TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES	(18,865)	(22,697)	(29,375)	

BUDGET 2012-13				
Description	Annual Budget 2011-12 £	Revised Budget 2011-12 £	Annual Budget 2012-13 £	Notes

Item 9

Draft Business Plan 2012-2013

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: A draft business plan has been prepared which comprises three main elements; budget, other resources; and work plan.

Purpose of Report: To present the draft business plan for approval and adoption for 2012-2013.

n.b Due to the expense of printing and posting the Business Plan it is being circulated in electronic form and is available to download from the web site. Printed copies are available on request.

Background

1. Following consideration of the draft budget for 2012-2013 by the Executive Committee on 2nd March the full draft Business Plan has been prepared and is presented to the Board for approval.
2. The format has been kept the same as for recent years and the main elements are the budget, description of other resources and the work plan. In effect the business plan describes how the Board will be delivering its contribution to the implementation of the AONB Management Plan in the year ahead.
3. Inevitably the resources available from Government and the local authorities are reducing year on year, but with the use of reserves and by generating what is called “earned income” the level of activity and its breadth is largely unchanged.
4. An ongoing challenge is to attract funds for projects from, for example, the Heritage Lottery Fund. At the time of writing some project have secure funding, e.g. the Commons Project, but other bids are in the process of being prepared. It must be hoped that a high proportion of those applications will be successful and specific parts of the work programme will get a major boost during the year. Due to this relative uncertainty an update on the work programme will be provided to the Board on a regular basis.
5. Finally, the impact of HS2 is difficult to predict. Without doubt the time commitment during the last three years has diverted attention from some areas of work. For example, the Thames Strategy has largely stalled during the past two years and the planned initiative to promote the management of hedgerows and field trees has made limited progress. If during the next 12 months the time commitment to the railway reduces these areas of work will be give special attention.

Recommendation

1. To approve the Business Plan for 2012-2013

Item 10

Report from the Planning Committee

Author: Colin White - Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 8th February. The following items were discussed:

1. High Speed 2 update
2. Planning training for Parish and Town Councils
3. Chilterns Buildings Design Awards
4. Student research project
5. Responses to development plans
6. Responses to planning applications

Purpose of Report: To bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee and decisions taken under delegated powers.

High Speed 2 update

1. The Committee was informed about recent activity in connection with HS2 and particularly the implications arising from the announcement that the Government is to proceed towards a Hybrid Bill in 2013. Changes to: the route; depths of cuttings and location and length of tunnels were all highlighted and noted.

Planning training for Parish and Town Councils

2. The Committee approved the following dates for the planning training for Parish and Town Councils – Tuesday 26th and Thursday 28th June and Monday 2nd July. Events would take place in the southern, mid and northern parts of the AONB. Topics would include the National Planning Policy Framework and production of Neighbourhood Plans. The costs for undertaking the training would be met by a charge (£10 per person with offers for those Parish and Town Councils that had made a previous financial contribution to the Board's work).

Chilterns Buildings Design Awards

3. This year's Design Awards scheme is in progress. The Awards have been offered in conjunction with The Chiltern Society for many years and it was felt appropriate that the awards ceremony should be given a refresh. It was resolved that it would be an evening event starting at 6.30pm with light refreshments, there would be a limited number of talks and the event would conclude at about 8.30pm. Previous winners will be approached for sponsorship and a suitable venue will be investigated and booked. The Ceremony will take place on 14th June.

Student research project – implications of internet land sales

4. A student from Oxford Brookes University Planning School is undertaking a research project for the Board on the outcome of the internet based land sales whereby fields were sub divided into house sized plots. Many of those sites were sold off 5 or more years ago. This study will help identify what has happened to them. The report will be available in May 2012.

Development Plan Responses

5. The development plans responses detailed below were approved by the Committee.

Dacorum BC Pre-submission Core Strategy

6. The Board welcomed and generally supported the strategy (particularly the way that it dealt with the AONB and Design Guide), though made comments about: the consistent use of terminology related to the AONB ('conserve and enhance'); the need for cross references; the need to ensure landscaping isn't just seeking to hide development; the need to take account of the setting of the AONB in connection with developments that are in close proximity to its boundary, and the need to identify the AONB boundary on various figures.

Wycombe DC Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7. The Board suggested that 20% of CIL funds should be passed back to local communities. The Board welcomed the inclusion of Green Infrastructure within the infrastructure delivery plan and suggested various types of land use that should be considered for inclusion. The Board welcomed various proposals and suggested that a number should be extended to link to the AONB.

Aylesbury Vale DC Growth Scenarios consultation

8. Though not expressing a preference for any particular growth scenario the Board felt that any distribution should not affect the natural beauty of the AONB. Any growth within the AONB or its setting will need to fully consider this in order to ensure that development conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the AONB and its setting.

Central Beds Council Heath and Reach, Toddington and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan

9. The Board welcomed the prominence given to the Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns. The Board requested that it be involved in the production of any Masterplan for the Luton Northern Bypass (and the Committee agreed to set up a sub group to examine this issue). The Board made comments about references to parts of the Chilterns Cycleway being on 'fast, rural roads, many of which are heavily trafficked', the implication being that use of some of the route would be dangerous.

Further details of the development plans responses and all other papers can be viewed at:

http://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/ConservationBoard/Board_Meetings/PI_agenda_080212.pdf

Planning applications update

10. Prior to the main part of the meeting the Committee had received a presentation in connection with a proposal for a wind turbine at Lower Waldrige Farm, Ford (4 miles north of Princes Risborough)
11. The Committee heard that so far this year details of 144 planning applications or appeals have been brought to the attention of, or requested by, the Planning Officer. 143 of these had been responded to, with 29 being the subject of formal representations (26 objections and 3 supports). 15 of the applications have been determined with 11 in line with the Board's comments and 4 not in line.
12. The Committee also approved a series of changes to the standard 'not commenting' letter which is used in connection with many consultations.

Recommendation

1. **The Board notes the report from the Planning Committee.**

Item 11

Report on National Planning Policy Framework

Author Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: The Government published a Draft National Planning Policy Framework in July 2011 for a consultation which closed on 17th October. The Board submitted a detailed response along with many other key organisations. Government has been examining the responses and a final version will be published very shortly.

Purpose of Report To bring to the Board's attention the key issues arising from the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Background

1. The Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was subject to a period of public consultation which lasted from 25th July to 17th October 2011. At its meeting on 19th October 2011 the Board approved a detailed response to the consultation which had already been discussed by the Planning Committee in September and previously circulated to Board members.
2. A key driver for the Government was a reduction in the number of pages of guidance and policy (from over 1,000 to about 60). With such drastic reductions some important detail was lost, particularly in connection with protected landscapes. Though Ministers claimed that AONBs were protected this was not reflected in the draft NPPF.
3. The Board's response detailed the following key issues (amongst many others):
 - a. Concern that the policy applicable to protected landscapes did not reflect the previous position (PPS7 and Regional Strategy).
 - b. Removal of the 'brownfield first' policy.
 - c. The perceived shift away from a plan-led system to one that would be development-led, particularly where plans are 'absent, silent, indeterminate or out of date'.
 - d. Downgrading and lack of policy in connection with design advice and its adoption as SPD.
 - e. The need for a proper definition of 'sustainable development'.
 - f. The need for consistency when referring to protected landscapes ('conserve and enhance natural beauty').
 - g. Concern that economic growth is the priority for the NPPF at the expense of the environmental and social aspects of sustainable development.

- h. Concern about inconsistencies, particularly in connection with the 'presumption in favour of development'.
 - i. Concern about the requirement for an extra 20% (at least) of housing growth.
 - j. Concern about the weakening of the policy in connection with biodiversity.
 - k. Concern about the lack of policy in connection with the protection of local distinctiveness.
 - l. Concern about the weakening of the policy in connection with the protection of the countryside for its own sake.
 - m. Concern about the lack of reference to visual components of tranquillity and impacts of light pollution on dark skies.
 - n. Concern about the lack of glossary references to 'AONB', 'natural beauty' and 'major development'.
4. During the consultation period there was a significant amount of adverse publicity, with key representations being made by organisations such as the National Trust, Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Royal Town Planning Institute as well as many commentators in the press. There were over 10,000 responses and arising from discussions that are believed to have taken place, it was understood that some key changes would emerge.
5. The Communities and Local Government Committee sat late in 2011 and its report was published in December 2011. The key recommendations from that report are as follows:
- a. The drafting of the NPPF should be more precise and consistent, even if this results in the document being longer.
 - b. Any new, clear, definition of 'sustainable development' must contain elements of the Brundtland report, the 2005 sustainable development strategy and a need to achieve all aspects of sustainable development.
 - c. The presumption in favour of development should be redefined as a 'presumption in favour of development consistent with the Local Plan'.
 - d. The NPPF should unambiguously reflect the statutory supremacy of Local Plans.
 - e. The relationship between the NPPF, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans needs to be set out clearly particularly where there is conflict and the NPPF must clarify whether the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan takes precedence.
 - f. A strictly limited time period should be allowed to put Local Plans in place.
 - g. To enable Local Plans to be kept up to date a 'light touch' system of approval of changes should be put in place.
 - h. The 'brownfield first' principle should be strongly stated in the NPPF.
 - i. The NPPF should make it explicit that local authorities can prioritise the use of brownfield land if they adopt a six year housing supply target (i.e. the extra 20%).

- j. Windfall sites should be included alongside identified brownfield land.
 - k. The Government should clarify that unsustainable development will not be allowed to proceed as a result of appeals against local authorities which have not allocated a full six year supply.
 - l. The NPPF should reflect the existing 'town centre first' policy and the sequential test should remain a requirement rather than a preference.
 - m. There is a strong case for a short consultation to allow practitioners to make comments on the technical aspects of the revised NPPF (though this was refuted by the Minister Greg Clark as he felt that the detailed responses had provided all the relevant information to enable changes without further consultation).
6. It is understood that although the final NPPF has not yet published it is likely to be available very shortly. A supplementary paper will be circulated prior to the meeting.

Recommendation

1. **That the Board notes the key issues arising from the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework.**

Item 12 Report on Luton and Outlier Strategic Issues

Author Bettina Kirkham Chairman, Planning Committee
Barbara Wallis Member, Planning Committee
Steve Rodrick Chief Officer
Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: The report summarises four strategic issues affecting the AONB around Luton and the Outlier including: the proposed expansion of Luton Airport; proposed Luton Northern By-pass; review of the AONB Boundary; and Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Strategy. All these issues are interlinked.

Purpose of Report To raise awareness of these issues and to propose the creation of a working group to develop the Board's response.

Background

1. A number of strategically important issues affecting the AONB around Luton have arisen which will require a response from the Board in the next few months. They are interlinked and it is helpful if they are considered together at this stage. In due course, with the benefit of this wider context, individual responses will need to be formulated. The issues are:
 - Expansion of Luton airport.
 - Luton Northern By-pass.
 - Central Beds Council's development strategy.
 - Review of the AONB Boundary in North Hertfordshire and around Totternhoe.

Expansion of Luton Airport

2. The proposal by London Luton Airport Limited (LLAL) is for an expansion of passenger numbers from 9m p.a. to 18m p.a. by 2025. This will involve extending the taxi ways within the existing curtilage of the airport but not building a second runway. Additional terminal buildings and car parking will be required. Based on the assumption that the aircraft type will remain as at present, the number of aircraft movements will double.
3. The four key issues to be investigated are:
 1. Impact of over flying aircraft, especially at night.
 2. Impact on traffic flows.
 3. Visibility of new buildings.
 4. Noise impact of taxiing aircraft.

4. The government will be publishing its aviation strategy later this year but has ruled out additional runways at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. The Department for Transport has significantly downgraded its forecast for modal shift from domestic flights to high speed rail. It is no longer forecasting that approximately 7 million passengers a year would shift, but 4.5 million, a reduction of 35%.
5. Comments have been sought in connection with the proposals (which are the emerging preferred option) though the information that is available to view on the associated website is very poor. The production of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is mentioned which will require a Scoping Report to be published for consultation first. The Board will be engaged with this process to ensure that the wider implications (as detailed above) are addressed in any EIA.
6. Following the close of the current consultation period (26th March) LLAL anticipate further work being done on the preferred option to the end of April, with the feedback that is received being considered in the same period. LLAL also anticipate submitting a planning application in April. Such short timescales mean that proper consideration cannot be given to any feedback that is provided and will equally mean that there will be no opportunity to reconsider the scope of the EIA.
7. The recently adopted Noise Action Plan (2010-2015) has a key action to 'assess the impact of London Luton Airport traffic on the Chilterns AONB and explore potential for operational improvements'. The timescale for this is 2013. The Board will ensure that it is closely involved in the implementation of this as well as other key actions which relate to noise issues with potential implications for the AONB.
8. The Board's response at this stage (submitted prior to the Board meeting) should therefore express concern:
 - a. About the premature nature of the proposal which is not incorporated within an overall national aviation strategy at present;
 - b. That with such short timescales between initial consultation and the submission of a planning application no account would have been taken of any feedback given;
 - c. That the public consultation material is poorly produced, very difficult to read and will lead to lack of engagement;
 - d. About the likely impacts of over flying aircraft, especially at night, on the tranquillity and enjoyment of the AONB, which should clearly be fully assessed as part of the EIA process;
 - e. About the likely impact on traffic flows within the AONB, and
 - f. About the noise impacts of taxiing aircraft.

Luton Northern By-pass

9. There has long been a proposal for a Luton Northern by-pass, linking the M1 and A6 with a possible extension east towards the A505 (Luton to Hitchin road). A number of alignments have been considered, the outer one of which runs through the AONB. The land between the northern edge of Luton and the proposed route is currently farmed and is likely to be allocated for housing. Currently the AONB boundary is approximately one kilometre to the north of the nearest housing. (Map1)
10. This route is likely to be included in the draft development strategy to be published by Central Bedfordshire Council later this year. That plan will also identify whether the land between the current area of housing and proposed by pass will be allocated for housing and/or other development.
11. The key issues are;
 1. Development of a major road through the AONB.
 2. Development of land adjacent to, and possibly within, the AONB.
 3. Adverse impact on the setting of the AONB.
 4. Need for enhanced access and managed green space in and around new housing areas.

Central Beds Development Strategy

12. The Central Beds Development Strategy will replace the adopted Core Strategy for the former Mid Beds area and the Joint Core Strategy for the Luton and Southern Central Beds area which was abandoned before adoption late in 2011.
13. The Strategy will seek to identify land for housing and employment uses as well as other key issues. Evidence gathering is ongoing at present and comments will be submitted on the issues and options discussion paper which was recently issued. These will focus on the need to ensure that whatever level of growth is likely to be proposed, the AONB is fully considered and its natural beauty conserved and enhanced.
14. Comments will feed into the draft development strategy which is likely to be published in June 2012. The formal publication stage is likely to take place late in 2012 with submission to the Secretary of State in mid-2013. The Board will have a number of opportunities to comment on the strategy and to seek to influence its content.

Review of AONB Boundary

15. Natural England has lifted its moratorium on the review of AONB boundaries. It is currently committed to reviewing the boundaries of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths and Surrey Hills AONBs. To underpin this process it is expected to publish, this spring, guidance on the designation criteria for AONBs.

16. North Herts DC has already lodged a request that the boundary of the Chilterns AONB be revised with a view to extending the area covered, largely to the south east of the existing outlier, i.e. to the south of the A505.
17. Last September a sub group of the Board examined a small number of sections of the AONB boundary between Chinnor and Bledlow and concluded there was a case for reviewing the boundary in each instance. It provided some support for the argument that there are likely to be considerable sections of the AONB boundary which, in the light of the new criteria, may justify a review. In the case of the outlier there is an argument that a relatively large area, perhaps as large as 100 sq. kms merits consideration as part of the AONB.
18. Similarly the whole of Totternhoe (north west of Dunstable) is currently outside the AONB. It comprises a notable chalk spur jutting out into the vale below. There are a number of important sites including the Norman motte and bailey castle site, chalk grassland, common land, and the impressive Maiden Bower Iron age hill fort.

Recommendations

2. **To respond to the public consultation and anticipated planning application on the proposed expansion of Luton airport highlighting concerns about noise pollution in particular.**
3. **To comment on the proposed Luton northern bypass objecting to the route through the AONB.**
4. **To form a sub group to consider the major planning and development issues raised by the plans for expansion of Luton Airport and strategic issues arising from the Central Bedfordshire Council development strategy.**
5. **To instruct the sub group to prepare a report for the Board on the case for reviewing the AONB boundary in North Hertfordshire and Totternhoe.**

Item 13

Report on Historic Farmsteads Survey

Author Barbara Wallis Member, Planning Committee and
Historic Environment Group
Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: The report provides the background to a proposed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project to survey Chilterns Historic Farmsteads.

Purpose of Report To seek approval from the Board to submit an application to the HLF for funding for a project to survey historic Chilterns farmsteads.

Background

2. The Chilterns Historic Environment Group identified the lack of knowledge about the historic farm buildings of the Chilterns and a concern that many were either not in good condition or were being developed inappropriately. There has been a successful project with nearly identical aims in the Nidderdale AONB so it was decided to investigate the scope to set up a project to tackle these issues.
3. With advice from building experts in the County Councils, English Heritage, the Chiltern Open Air Museum, The Chiltern Society, it was decided that it would be appropriate to develop the project for consideration by the Board and, if there is support, for an application to be made to the Heritage Lottery fund.
4. The project would aim to be, using trained volunteers, to identify, survey and record the condition of traditional farm buildings in the Chilterns AONB. The information would be used to encourage appropriate conservation and care by all those who have an interest in such buildings (owners, tenants, planners and conservation officers). It would help to raise awareness and improve understanding of the condition, location and current use of traditional farm buildings in the Chilterns and their contribution to landscape character and settlement patterns.
5. The project would also add to the historic environment record and to provide a resource for use by farmers and others. It would help to conserve and enhance the historic environment of the Chilterns AONB for the benefit of current and future generations and would enable the wider public to have a greater appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment of the Chilterns through access to information and events like open farm days.
6. The project would involve a significant number of activities including the following:

- a. Collation of existing data
 - b. Training of volunteers
 - c. Liaison with owners and other interested parties
 - d. Survey of buildings and recording of information
 - e. Preparation of condition reports with recommendations and statements of significance
 - f. Publication of accessible online archives
 - g. Promotion and dissemination of information
 - h. Engagement with local communities including the farming community
 - i. Increase the use of the Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation report
 - j. Walks and talks
 - k. Recruitment of a part-time project officer
7. To encourage involvement by owners the information on individual buildings would not be published without their agreement nor used to formally list a building.
8. The project is likely to last for 3 years and a bid would be made for £75,000. The main cost to the Board will be in officer time. It may be that the Board will be required to provide a small amount of cash match funding (less than £5,000 p.a.), which could be allocated from the Development Reserve. A costed proposal will be considered by the Executive Committee in May. It is hoped to submit a full application during the summer with the aim of starting the project, if the grant application is successful, before the end of 2012.

Recommendation

- 6. That the Board provides feedback on this proposal and authorises a bid to be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund**

Item 14

Report on HS2

Author Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary Following the Secretary of State's announcement on 10th January that the government intended to proceed to the next stage the Board has concentrated on analysing the impact of the proposed route alignment and indirectly supporting the case for a judicial review.

Purpose of Report To inform the Committee of the Board's ongoing involvement with opposing HS2

Next Steps (as per the Board meeting held on 19th January 2012)

Impact of Design Changes

1. **Following the announcement the Board needs to undertake a detailed analysis of the effects of the proposed changes to design and alignment.**
 - 1.1 A detailed analysis has been undertaken of the proposed changes in alignment and design. The changed alignment near Amersham and longer, bored, tunnel to the north of Old Amersham are broadly welcomed (but with some reservations). The shallower cuttings north of South Heath represent a significant worsening of the design. One outcome will be a significant reduction in the production of spoil, but the shallower cuttings mean the line will be visible on the skyline and could only be screened by creating bunds from excavated spoil. This is poor design and unacceptable.
 - 1.2 A programme of proposed design improvements and other environmental mitigation and enhancements which the Board would wish to see if Parliament were to give the go ahead, are currently being prepared.
 - 1.3 A letter was sent to the Secretary of State regretting her decision but inviting her, amongst other changes, to reconsider a tunnel for the full length of the line through the Chilterns.

Legal Challenges

2. **The Board needs to take note of legal advice on options for opposing the railway. It is not proposed that the Board puts its name to any legal challenge or provides funding towards legal fees. If appropriate the Board could provide indirect support for any legal challenge which it believes would result in reducing or avoiding damage to the AONB.**

- 2.1 Legal challenges have been submitted by the 51M group of local authorities and HS2 Action Alliance. The Board supports the challenge by the HS2AA, but is not party to the action nor providing any funding.
- 2.2 The basis of the HS2AA challenge is that the Government has not complied with relevant EU legislation intended to protect the environment.
- 2.3 The process initially involves submission of a pre-action letter explaining why there is a belief the Government has acted unlawfully. The government is invited to withdraw its proposals and has 14 days to do so. In the (certain) event they do not, the legality of the decision is challenged – the Judicial Review.
- 2.4 The pre-action letters were submitted in mid February. The government has responded and stated it will not withdraw its plans. The matter will now proceed to court with an application for a judicial review. If successful the government will be required to prepare genuine alternative scenarios with supporting information on which it will consult the public. This process is likely to take up to 2 years.
- 2.5 Separately a complaint has been made to the EU, by the Wildlife Trusts, that the Government has breached EU legislation and regulation intended to protect the environment. If the EU believes this claim has any foundation it will invite the UK Government to respond. If it is not satisfied with the response it may take action itself including referral to the European Court of Justice. The process usually takes several years, but the Government's published timetable may accelerate any action the EU may take.

Environmental Impact Assessment

3. **HS2 Ltd has now confirmed it will commission an Environmental Impact Assessment. This is a piece of work that the Board must take a direct and continuous involvement in to ensure all potential impacts are included.**
 - 3.1 HS2 Ltd has commissioned an EIA and has written to landowners seeking access to their land to undertake survey work. An inducement of £1,000 is being provided as landowners are not legally obliged to provide access. This agreement has been brokered by the CLA and NFU. HS2 Ltd has approached a number of organisations which hold potentially useful data including the local authorities, wildlife trusts and record centres. Thus far, it seems, most are not co-operating unless and until HS2 Ltd agree to recompense them for any costs including staff time. The Board has not been approached so far but does hold

the up to date revision to the ancient woodland records which have not yet been published.

Environmental, Planning and Community Fora

4. **HS2 Ltd has indicated that during 2012 it intends to create a community, planning and environmental fora. The Board must seek involvement in each. This is likely to require both staff and Board members being nominated to take part to ensure good coverage and attendance.**
 - 4.1 This matter was discussed with Sir Brian Briscoe, chairman of HS2 Ltd in November who verbally agreed the Board would be invited to join all three fora. Following a written reminder of this understanding HS2 Ltd has since formally invited the Board to attend the two community forums covering the Chilterns and the Planning Forum for Bucks/Herts.
 - 4.2 However, the membership of the Environmental Forum is be restricted to a small number of Government agencies only (Natural England, English Heritage, Environment Agency). The Board has written to the Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd complaining about the narrow membership and suggesting broadening its membership, not least to include the Board and voluntary bodies such as the Wildlife Trusts.
 - 4.3 Both Buckinghamshire County Council and Chiltern District Council will boycott the initial meetings having requested a postponement as, in their opinion, the first meetings are being held prematurely.
 - 4.4 Verbal reports will be give to the Board on the meetings being held in Chalfont St.Giles on 19th March and Wendover on 20th March. If time permits a written report will be circulated after the papers are distributed but prior to the meeting on 29th March.

Revised Business Plan

5. **In line with the Transport Select Committee Report the Board must continue to press for the business plan for HS2 to be revised to incorporate a monetised value on the environmental impacts, based on the National Ecosystem Appraisals approach adopted by Government in June 2012.**
 - 5.1 The chairman has written to the Secretary of State highlighting the shortcomings of the revised business plan and inviting her to revise it further by including a cost of the environmental impact and the negative impact on the economy of the area affected by the line. N.b the business case includes a figure for the Wider Economic Impact (WEI) but not a balancing figure for negative

impacts. Nor does it include, for example, the lost revenue to airlines if passengers switch from plane to train.

- 5.2 The Secretary of State was also invited to confirm that her department would be implementing the National Ecosystem Assessment approach advocated by DEFRA only last year.
- 5.3 The DfT document “High Speed Rail – Investing in Britain’s Future” published on 10th January on page 27, para 57 it states:

“Taking these into account, the benefit cost ratio for the network rises to 1.8-2.5, although **it should be noted that there are additional dis-benefits, such as the impact on the natural landscape, which have not currently been quantified and which would need to be considered in assessing overall value for money.**”
- 5.4 A letter has been sent to the Secretary of State asking when this vital work will be done. David Lidington, MP is meeting Justine Greening shortly and has been asked to raise this issue with her directly.

Liaison with Local Groups, Local Authorities and MPs

6. **It is crucial that the Board continues to work closely with environmental bodies, local action groups and local authorities. The Board has also built good relationships with local MPs which will be even more vital in the run up to the presentation of a Hybrid Bill to Parliament in late 2013.**
 - 6.1 Meetings have been held with Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham) and David Lidington (Aylesbury). A meeting is scheduled with Dominic Grieve (Beaconsfield). The Board is continuing to convene a regular meeting of local authorities and local action groups in the Chilterns. It is usually attended by Cllr Martin Tett (Leader of Bucks CC) and Cllr Nick Rose (Leader of Chiltern DC).

Recommendations

1. **To maintain an active campaigning role to stop HS2.**
2. **In the event that Parliament gives the go ahead for HS2 to have made sure that the design minimises the impact on the communities, economy and environment of the Chilterns**
3. **That if approached by HS2 Ltd for information, to only release it if all costs are covered in full by HS2 Ltd.**
4. **To actively participate in the HS2 Ltd. fora providing they are felt to be constructive and worthwhile.**

Item 15

Chilterns Tourism Promotion Programme

Author: Annette Venters, Access Officer

Summary: The Board is a member of the newly created Chilterns Tourism Network which wishes to develop a web site specially to attract tourists from outside the area. It is proposed to develop this site alongside that of the AONB web site which primarily appeals to residents and day visitors - the two sites will share several technical arrangements to avoid having to pay for, and manage, two complementary web sites. The new web site is part of a wider tourism promotional campaign for which a bid is being submitted to the Chilterns LEADER programme.

Purpose of the Report: To seek approval from the Board on the proposal to develop a Chilterns tourism web site and approve a contribution of £3,000 in 2012-2013 from the Development Reserve towards the project.

Background

1. A partnership of local tourism businesses, public bodies and the voluntary sector (over 70 in total) has recently been formed, known as the Chilterns Tourism Network, to promote tourism in the Chilterns. The regional tourist boards no longer provide the sort of promotional support the area needs so the network is now proposing to run its own 12 month long campaign to promote the area, a central part of which is as a web site designed specifically to attract staying visitors from outside the area.
2. Currently there are over 50 million leisure visits per annum to the Chilterns but less than 2% are by visitors staying overnight (excludes those visiting friends and relatives). Feedback from accommodation providers suggests relatively low occupancy at weekends and out of season. This also highlights that, currently, much of their business is dependent upon business travellers staying Monday-Thursday.
3. The main elements of this programme are; the development of a tourism web site (portal), a promotional campaign spread over 12 months undertaken by a tourism/PR consultant; and a 'Sense of Place' toolkit with marketing material to help tourism businesses promote the Chilterns in their own marketing.

The web site

3. Two options were considered:
 1. To build an entirely new site to complement the AONB web site.
 2. To link the two web sites to share technical arrangements but designed to appeal to different markets.
4. The second option was chosen in order to reduce operating costs and ensure there is no competition for traffic and advertising between the AONB web site and new tourist site.
5. The tourism web portal will be built on the same technical platform as the existing Chilterns AONB site and maintained as part of the overall Chilterns AONB site. There won't be a separate hosting fee for the tourism site and it will share the same Content Management System as the Chilterns AONB site.
6. It will have its own address, for example www.visitchilterns.co.uk
7. It will have its own home page and site menu with some additional tourism pages. The key difference is that the new pages will have the information that any visitor wants to know if they are to plan a visit. For example this would include information on accommodation, places to eat, activities and events which would not ordinarily be on the AONB web site. The new site would cover the wider Chilterns, not just the AONB, and would promote, for example, the proximity of Oxford, Windsor and London.
8. It will be aimed at potential visitors from outside the area who have little, even no, awareness of the Chilterns as a place to visit. The site must tempt people to visit and stay, explain why the Chilterns is special and make it easy to plan their trip.
9. A primary role of the site will be to signpost the many tourism related sites which will be helpful in planning a visit. The new tourism pages will be designed to be updated easily and won't require intensive input in future. The main content-heavy sections are already on the Chilterns AONB site and being maintained by the Board's staff.
10. The broad appeal of the tourism part of the site should increase the levels of traffic to the current AONB web site and enhance the potential to attract advertisers and sponsors.

Ownership and management of the site

11. The tourism web portal will be owned and managed by the Conservation Board and will carry the Chilterns AONB brand. The Chilterns Tourism Network will have an input into the development and management of the site and this joint working and sharing of expertise

will be welcomed, especially as several businesses have pledged to provide funding.

12. The new web site is part of a wider programme to promote tourism by the Chilterns Tourism Network. The total cost is estimated to be £30,000 and a bid will be made to the Chilterns LEADER programme for a grant of £20,000.
13. The cost of the web site will be up to £8,000. A part time consultant will be engaged at a cost of £14,000 and £7,000 will be allocated to developing marketing materials on the Chilterns to be used by tourism businesses as part of their own marketing. This programme will run until October 2013.
14. After October 2013 the Conservation Board will be responsible for updating the tourism pages. The Chilterns Tourism Network are committed to the project and will be encouraged to continue their support, including sharing the financial cost.
15. The Board is being requested to allocate £3,000 from the Development Reserve in 2012 to enable the project to go ahead if the LEADER grant application is successful. Normally this bid would be submitted to the Executive Committee for scrutiny, but as it does not meet again until 24th May the approval of the Board is being sought to enable a start as soon possible. The balance of funding is being sought from participating businesses and Bucks Business First, one of the local enterprise partnerships.

Recommendations

- 1. To support the proposed Chilterns Tourism Promotion Programme**
- 2. To approve the specific proposed arrangement for developing the new Chilterns tourism web site as part of the AONB web site.**
- 3. To allocate £3,000 from the Development Reserve in 2012.**

Item 16 **Research Grants and Prize**

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: Based on an outline framework research strategy it is proposed to create a fund of up to £5,000 per annum to support research projects. Initially this will be targeted at M.Sc students. It is also proposed to create the Chilterns Research prize with a small cash award of up to £200.

Purpose of Report: To consider the proposal to approve the research grants scheme and research prize

Background

1. At its meeting in January the Board discussed the need to develop and formalise its links with the many tertiary educational and research establishments in and around the Chilterns. A sub group has met to prepare a simple research framework. On March 2nd the Executive Committee approved an allocation of up to £5,000 from the Development Reserve to support research activity which could not be incorporated within a funded project.
2. The sub group considered how best to use the research fund and recommends that, initially, it is targeted to M.Sc level students with a maximum grant of £500.
3. Due to the timing in the 2012 the grants would have to be awarded to students who have already selected the subject of their thesis. Eligibility would depend upon demonstrating that it is relevant to the AONB and Management Plan objectives.
4. In future years the award scheme would be promoted sufficiently early (by October) to influence the selection of thesis subjects thus providing a better fit especially with topical issues.
5. There are a very large number of potential academic institutions to work with, and the breadth of the Board's remit covers a wide range of academic disciplines. For practical reasons it makes sense to develop closer links with a smaller number of partners. The initial list of preferred partners includes:
 - Bedfordshire University
 - Bucks New University
 - Cranfield University
 - Hertfordshire University
 - Open University
 - Oxford University
 - Oxford Brookes University

- Reading University
(not in order of preference).
6. These are large institutions so the most relevant departments and post graduate courses are being identified.
 7. **Relevant fields include:**
 - Biodiversity
 - Landscape
 - Land Management
 - Forestry
 - Agriculture
 - Hydrology
 - Impact of Climate Change
 - Economics of land management
 - Community engagement
 - Historic Environment
 - Planning, Development and Design
 - Traffic and Transport
 - Tourism
 - Information Management
 - Cultural Development
 8. Applicants will have to show how their research topic is relevant to the AONB designation and more specifically to the objectives in the AONB Management Plan.
 9. An application and award assessment process will have to be drawn up. In order to launch the grant scheme this academic year it may be that awards will be given for research studies that have already begun. The award is principally given to reflect the cost of undertaking the research and its value to the Board. The maximum award would be £500 but more typically awards would be in the range of £250.
 10. In return for a grant the student must provide a copy of the thesis and permission to use the results. They must also prepare a summary of the research in a form, and using language, that the Board can readily use and distribute.

Research Prize

11. As there are a large number of graduates with good quality degrees now in the job's market, a prize helps students to distinguish themselves in the eyes of potential employers. It is proposed that the Board awards a prize for the best thesis entered, irrespective of whether the Board has provided a grant. The prize would be awarded at the Board's Annual Forum. The main incentive to enter will be the recognition it gives to the winner but as a small incentive

and reward it is proposed to offer a cash prize (or equivalent) of £200.

12. The research grant fund and prize would be administered by the Board's staff and overseen by a Grants Panel. Simon Mortimer, John Griffin and Heather Barratt-Mold have offered to sit on the panel. There is no reason to limit numbers so others interested can join. There is no allowance but travel expenses are payable. It is envisaged the panel would meet 3-4 times per year and much of the work can be done by e mail.

Recommendations

1. **To create a research fund of £5,000 and to invite applications from M.Sc level students.**
2. **To set up a Chilterns research prize with a cash prize (or equivalent) of £200.**
3. **To set up a sub group of the Board to serve as a Grants Panel, which will also assess the entries for the Research Prize.**

Item 17 Review of the Chilterns AONB Management plan

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief officer

Summary: The Board has a duty to publish and review the management plan for the AONB on a five year cycle. The current plan runs from 2008- 2013 and a reviewed plan needs to be published by early 2014. The process can take up to 2 years and, based on the current plan, costs approx. £20,000. It is likely that the Board will need to include policies on a possible review of the boundary.

Purpose of Report: To inform the Committee that the process of reviewing the current plan must begin in 2013 but the cost implications are not yet known.

Background

1. In 2004 the statutory duty to prepare a Management Plan for the Chilterns AONB was transferred from the local authorities to the Board. The first plan published by the Board was in 2008 which covers the five year period to 2013. It is a statutory duty to review the plan every five years. The next plan should be published in early 2014.
2. Because the management plan is a statutory plan it is covered by the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations, which are thorough and, can be a, time consuming process. It is understood that the full process has to be complied with for a review as well as the initial plan. For the current plan the full SEA cost £15,000, however, it is believed that much of that assessment is still relevant and up to date so significant time and costs savings could be made.
3. The last plan was undertaken in accordance with guidance issued by the Countryside Agency. The result was a time consuming and relatively expensive process. Representations were made to DEFRA that the process should be made more cost effective and less time consuming. There was sympathy for this approach but no revised guidance has been issued, so the Board needs to comply with the current legislation and guidance. However, revised guidance can be anticipated within the next 12 months.
4. At this stage the Committee is being informed that the process will begin shortly using the same methodology as previously There will be a cost implication but it is not possible at this stage to be precise because, as mentioned, much of the previous work could be used and there may be no need to employ an external consultant as with the 2008-2013 plan.

5. During the process there will be public consultation on both the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the draft plan itself. With electronic media the costs of this process can be significantly reduced and once again it is not possible to be precise on the actual cost. For this reason no specific allocation has yet been made in the budget.
6. The programme for undertaking the review is in preparation. It is likely any costs to be incurred in 2012-2013 can be accommodated within the core budget, but there may be a need for a use of the Development Reserve. The approval of the Executive Committee will be sought if, and when, that stage is reached.
7. As with the current plan, as far as possible, the Board will use existing technical groups to help undertake the review limiting the need to convene special groups just for the purpose of working on the plan. However, it is likely that at each meeting of the full Board from June 2012 onwards there will be an item on the agenda, giving all Board members a regular opportunity to make an input.

Review of the AONB Boundary

8. The legal powers to revise the boundary rest with the Secretary of State who would only act on the formal recommendation of Natural England. Any recommendation for a review would also be based on public consultation. The views of the Board would be integral to the process.
9. In view of the decision by Natural England to lift the moratorium on reviewing the boundaries of AONBs, the issue of whether or not to seek a review of all or part of the Chilterns AONB boundary would need to be addressed in the 2014-2019 Management plan. It would also need to be covered by the public consultation the Board needs to undertake in order to prepare the review of the Management Plan.

Recommendations

1. **To note that the process of reviewing the 2008-2013 Management Plan for the AONB will begin in April 2012 with an anticipated publication date in spring 2014.**
2. **A detailed and costed programme will be presented to the Executive Committee in May and full Board in June.**