



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY 2014 at Chiltern District Council  
Offices, Amersham HP6 5AW**

**COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.55 PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Appointing Body</b>
<b>Appointed by Local Authorities</b>	
Cllr David Barnard	North Herts District Council
Cllr David Collins	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Bill Bendyshe -Brown	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Lynn Lloyd	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Roger Metcalfe	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr David Nimmo Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Brian Norman	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Chris Richards	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Chiltern District Council
Cllr David Taylor	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Alan Walters	South Buckinghamshire District Council

<b>Appointed by the Secretary of State</b>	
Dr Heather Barrett-Mold	Secretary of State
Alison Doggett	Secretary of State
Mike Fox (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Dr Simon Mortimer	Secretary of State
Ray Payne	Secretary of State
Helen Tuffs	Secretary of State
John Willson	Secretary of State

<b>Elected by Parish Councils</b>	
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
Cllr Shirley Judges	Buckinghamshire

Cllr Barbara Wallis	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

<b>Officers</b>	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Annette Venters	CCB Access Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

Chiltern District Councillor Jeremy Ryman welcomed the Board to the Chiltern Council chambers.

The Chairman welcomed Wycombe District Councillor Roger Metcalfe and Buckinghamshire County Councillor Bill Bendyshe-Brown to their first Board meeting.

### **13/14.35. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mary Goldsmith..

### **13/14.36. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **13/14.37. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments:

- 13/14.20- 13/14.14 Cyclist was amended to Cyclists'
- 13/14.21.a. thank changed to thanked
- 13/14.23 'e' removed from Dacorum
- 13/14.28 last paragraph: 3<sup>rd</sup> but last sentence 'side' added to Misbourne Valley

### **13/14.38. Matters Arising**

- a. Item 13/14.30 HS2: it was noted that the volume of spoil mentioned in the Environmental Statement is much greater than previously stated.

### **13/14.39. Public Question time**

No public questions.

### **13/14.40. Report from the Executive Committee**

The Chief Officer reported the matters discussed and decisions taken, by the Executive Committee under delegated powers.

At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2013 the Executive Committee:

1. Received and approved the finance report for the period April-November 2013
2. Discussed a report on the medium financial forecast for 2014-16 and approved provisional budgets.
3. Approved a proposal to create four bursaries of £250 for projects that would be relevant to the Boards aims and would benefit the AONB.

The proposal was warmly supported and it was agreed to keep the programme under review and to consider expanding it next year subject to affordability. It was also agreed to write to universities offering help with student research, but not financially.

4. Received a report on the satisfactory progress in reviewing the AONB Management Plan.
5. Received and approved a report on a proposed new constitution for the Chiltern Tourism Network.

- 1. The Board NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.**
- 2. The Board APPROVED the creation of a Bursary Fund of £1,000 and the award of four bursaries of up to £250, to be awarded annually.**

#### **13/14.41. 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 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following were noted:

1. High Speed 2 update
2. AONB Management Plan Review
3. Events
4. Conservation Board Position Statements
5. Solar Farms
6. Development Plan Responses
7. Planning Applications update.

The Planning Officer gave some guidance on the matters discussed and members commented.

10.20 Shirley Judges arrived.

Dave Taylor answered a number of questions regarding the plans for Luton airport and impact of overflying aircrafts, which is the responsibility of NATS.

It was noted that Aylesbury Vale DC had been invited to withdraw their Local Plan and that Wycombe DC was taking AVDC comments into consideration in drawing up their own Local Plan.

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

#### **13/14.42. Medium Term Financial Plan 2014-2016**

The Chief Officer reported that the specially formed sub-committee of the Executive Committee had prepared a provisional Medium term forecast for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16, which shows anticipated operating deficits based on reduced costs, increased income and the use of reserves. Approval for and adoption of the Medium Term financial forecast was sought. The report had been circulated to members. The recommendations considered had already been considered by the Executive Committee in detail.

Since the last Executive Committee meeting, DEFRA has announced its funding settlement, which is better than anticipated for 2015-16 and the Board's unchanged employer contribution to the pension fund has also been announced. Both outcomes help reduce the budget deficit over the next two years.

As well as cost savings, increased income, restructuring of the budget has eradicated the operating deficit for 2014/15. The Board's current operating structure can be supported in the medium term.

Staff salary increases and members allowances were discussed. The Executive Committee recommended that the staff should be offered a cost of living rise of 2% or the Consumer Price Index, whichever is lower.

The overall expenditure on allowances should be adjusted annually by the percentage change in Government Grant and then in line with existing policy, the allowances should be increased by the cost of living award offered to staff, -7.5% in 2014-15 and 0% in 2015-16.

Small Grants Scheme: the budget currently does not include provision for a small grant scheme. In 2013-14 £20,000 had been allocated from Reserves. Demand has been weak. It was proposed that in 2014-15 the Board allocate up to £20,000 from Reserves for Special Projects. This fund would be offered on flexible terms to partners who propose work which the Board wishes to support. The PR value of the Sustainable Development Fund has been considerable and ways of maintaining this need to be found.

The members discussed the report.

- 1. The Board APPROVED a cost of living award of CPI or 2% whichever is lower as at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014 for officers and members. The maximum to be based on affordability.**
- 2. The Board APPROVED adjusting members' allowances in line with the annual change to the DEFRA grant aid: - 7.5% in 2014-15 and 0% in 2015-16.**
- 3. The Board AGREED to adopt the Medium Term Financial Forecast for 2014-15 including the annual budgets for 2014-15 and 2015-16.**
- 4. The Board AGREED to allocate £20,000 for a Special Projects Fund to replace the Small Grants Scheme.**

#### **13/14.43. Report on the AONB Management Plan Review.**

The Chief Officer reported that the consultation had ended December 2013. Over 530 comments were submitted by 48 respondents on the Management Plan and over 40 comments by 15 respondents on the Environmental Report.

The full schedule of consultation responses had been circulated to the Board. Members were asked to consider responses meriting detailed consideration at a special meeting. Following that stage the revised plan will be presented to the Board for adoption, subject to any final changes, on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

The following schedule for publication was considered:

- a. Print a small number of full colour copies of final plan(100) and a summary(2000)
- b. Plan to be loaded on the website as pdf.
- c. A copy of the summary to be sent to every councillor, MP, town and parish council, parish meeting and all key partners.
- d. A special e-bulletin to promote the publication of the plan.
- e. Total cost approx. £4,000. To date £2,000 has been spent. 2013-14 budget has £10,000 set aside. There is no provision in the 2014-15 budget.

- f. It was proposed to hold a small stock of the full printed plan which will be sold for £25 plus p&p.

- 1. The Board provided initial feedback of key issues raised during the consultation.**
- 2. The Board DECIDED to hold a special workshop to consider in detail any changes to the plan.**
- 3. The Board APPROVED the proposed publication as outlined above.**

### **13/14.44. Report on HS2**

The Chief Officer advised members that the Hybrid Bill was lodged and the accompanying Environmental Statement was published on 25 November 2013. The major difference compared to the draft ES is the disappointing proposal to release 12 million tonnes of spoil in the AONB.

It was noted that the Supreme Court had dismissed the appeal on whether an SEA should have been carried out.

The Bill had its first reading 25<sup>th</sup> November and the deadline for comments on the ES, after a number of changes, has now been set as 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The Chief Officer outlined the legislative time table to the Board.

The increase in spoil that will be dumped may show that the Government have failed to comply with the duty in section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The size of the Environmental statement, it runs to 55,000 pages and is available on-line only to due to excessive costs, makes it impossible to adequately read and digest the document in the time available. It was proposed to concentrate on those issues on which the Board decided to petition a Select Committee on:

1. The case for a longer bored tunnel.
2. The dumping of spoil in the AONB
3. The impact on the Public Right of Way network.
4. The impact on the landscape, wildlife and the historic environment.
5. The impact on the aquifer and hydrology.
6. S47; the right to exploit economic opportunity.

The Chief Officer proposed that the Board appoint a Parliamentary Agent to advise on how to maximise its effectiveness on petitioning the HS2 Select Committee for changes to route alignment and design following the Second Reading. There would be advantages to appoint the same agent as all the local authorities- Sharpe Pritchard, as much of the work would be the same as already done for the local authorities and therefore costs would not be excessive. A £2,000 budget was suggested.

Chiltern District Council is commissioning a report, with cost estimates on a full length tunnel along an idealised alignment. This work the Board would support and a contribution of £5,000 plus staff and member time as appropriate was proposed. This option would be the basis for petitioning the Select Committee.

The sums required for the work proposed would be met from Reserves.

The Board discussed the next steps forward.

1. **The Board AGREED that its response to the Environmental Statement should concentrate on those issues identified in 1-6 above.**
2. **The Board AGREED that the responses should include the assertion that the Government is failing to comply with the duty in section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.**
3. **The Board AGREED that those same issues should be those for which a petition should be prepared.**
4. **The Board AGREED to appoint a Parliamentary Agent to assist the Board to develop its petitioning strategy, with an initial budget of up to £2,000.**
5. **The Board AGREED to contribute up to £5,000 to the tunnel report being commissioned by Chiltern District Council.**

#### **13/14.45. Renewable Energy Position Statement.**

The Planning Officer reported on the responses received to the consultation on the draft Renewable Energy Position statement. The responses had been analysed and consequent changes were proposed.

Key issues arising from the Public Consultation were:

1. Definitions of scale of developments caused worry
2. Greater references were sought to address the need to ensure impacts on biodiversity are minimised and opportunities taken to provide net gain where possible.
3. The need to ensure local sourcing of material for wood fuel schemes was sought.
4. The additional benefits for woodland through appropriate management to be highlighted.
5. The need for reinstatement of sites to their former condition was highlighted.

Members discussed the report.

The Planning Officer also gave a brief presentation on three proposals brought to the Boards attention for Solar Panel developments outside the AONB, but with impact on the AONB.

1. **The Board NOTED the feedback from the consultation and APPROVED the proposed responses.**
2. **The Board APPROVED the Renewable Energy Position Statement.**

12.30 David Nimmo Smith left the meeting.

Ray Payne left the meeting

Bill Bendyshe Brown left the meeting

12.31 Chris Richards left the meeting.

**13/14.46. Report on Cycle Chilterns and The Ridgeway and Thames National Trail.**

The Access Officer gave a presentation and a report on the Chiltern Cycle Project following the delivery of the first year programme. She also gave a report and short presentation on the current situation regarding the Ridgeway and the Thames Path National Trails Unit. Members' views were sought on the proposed development programme for the Chiltern Ridgeway.

The Chiltern Cycle project is progressing well and capitalising on the Tour of Britain 2014, coming through the Chilterns in September, is a key objective.

A development plan for the Ridgeway Projects is being compiled and a costed action plan will be presented at the next Board meeting.

12.35 Heather Barrett-Mold left the meeting.

The Members provided feedback and were encouraged to contact the Access Officer for further information.

12.45 Brian Norman left the meeting

12.47 Simon Mortimer left the meeting.

- 1. The Board PROVIDED feedback on the Chilterns Ridgeway development plan and identified projects to be taken forward.**

**13/14.47. Works Programme Progress Report.**

The Chief Officer provided a report on the Works Programme Progress.

- 1. The Board NOTED the work programme 2013-14.**

**13/14.48. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014 location TBC.**

Dates of future meetings:

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014(the AGM will precede the Board meeting)

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014

The meeting closed 12.55

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