



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 2011 at THE LODGE, 90 STATION ROAD, CHINNOR OXON. OX39 4HA COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 13.20PM

Present:

Mike Fox	Chairman, Board member
Cllr Bill Storey	Board member
Cllr Richard Pushman	Board member
Cllr Alan Walters	Board member
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Board member
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer

In attendance	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board

13.09.11. Item 1- Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from: Cllr Shirley Judges, Cllr John Griffin, Kevin Mayne and Mike Woods.

13.09.11. Item 2- Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

13.09.11. Item 3- Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman once Cllr Walters had been added to apologies for absence.

13.09.11. Item 4- Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting 18th May 2011:

Item 9: proposed financial memorandum of agreement with local authorities for 2012-15. The CEO has not pursued this yet. It is his intention to start with an informal approach.

Item 12: Report on HS2- public consultation response. He had been called to give evidence at the public enquiry and gave a brief report on this.

Item 13: Cycleway. Wokingham Borough Council had submitted a bid to the Sustainable Transport Fund for funding for a link with the Chiltern cycleway and other linked routes.

Item 13: Wycombe Community Sports Stadium: the proposed plans have been withdrawn by WDC.

13.09.11. Item 5- Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

13.09.11. Item 6- Treasury Management:

The Finance Officer gave the members a report on the review of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2010-11. The review showed income slightly less than forecast £8,555 rather than £8,575 a 0.2% shortfall.

Funds that are temporarily surplus are invested. The average rate of return achieved during the year was 1.28%.

The Committee NOTED the Treasury Management performance for the year 2010-11.

13.09.11. Item 7- Finance Report to August 2011:

The Finance Officer advised members of the Board's financial position as at the end of August 2011 and the likely position at the end of the financial year. The current financial position is satisfactory.

A detailed quarterly review of financial activity is undertaken. These reviews have resulted in some changes to the anticipated final outturn as was shown in the accompanying papers.

They included a higher than anticipated local authority grant income.

The Committee NOTED the financial position for the year to August 2011.

13.09.11. Item 8- Medium Term Financial Plan 2011-2015:

The Chief Officer and the Finance Officer presented an update to the Forecast presented to the Executive Committee in May 2011.

The latest update to the Forecast showed a slight improvement in the projected financial position.

Since the last Executive meeting in May a number of changes in the financial position have occurred:

- i. Core expenditure in 2011-12 is now projected to be £33,500 lower than the original budget
- ii. Funding of £46,575 has been secured from the Environment agency for Chalk stream work. The allocation includes a £2,000 contribution towards overhead costs.
- iii. £4,500 has been allocated to the EU Timber Project to be met from Earmarked Reserves.

The net result of the changes is a reduction in the forecast funding shortfall 2014-15 to £125,000 unless appropriate measures are taken. The intervening years show less challenging figures. The Chief Officer highlighted the need to be in balance by 2014-15.

The Committee NOTED the updated position and NOTED that half-yearly updates to the medium plan (2011-2015) will be presented to the Board.

13.09.11. Item 9- Budget Re-alignment Plan:

The Finance Officer and the Chief Officer reported updates on the progress of the previously adopted budget re-alignment plan to ensure all actions needed to reduce costs and increase income are undertaken.

A cost reduction programme is already underway, but will need to be increased over the next 3 years. The drive to increase earnings has also begun, but will take longer to achieve.

The Boards ability to raise additional income will be dependent upon the aptitude of staff. A number of steps have been taken to ensure staff understanding of the context and to provide greater skills for the successful generation of income.

- i. A financial briefing session is held at each monthly staff meeting.
- ii. A workshop on fundraising has been held, led by Kevin Mayne.
- iii. A review of the web site had been undertaken with the view of carrying more advertising, sponsorship and on-line sales.
- iv. An internal review is being undertaken of all events to reduce costs and increase potential revenue.
- v. An internal review of all costs has been undertaken identifying potential cost reductions of £30,000 p.a.
- vi. An internal review has been undertaken of all literature assessing scope to review print runs and attract income

The Committee NOTED the progress to date against the Budget Re-alignment Plan.

13.09.11. Item 10- Review of Risk Register:

The Finance Officer and the Chief Officer presented the recent risk register review they had undertaken. They had concluded that in the majority of cases the control measures in place are adequate to control the risks facing the Board. A reduction in the risk likelihood has been applied to risks 2e and 3a. Risk 3a now also includes the possibility of a further reduction in local authority grant aid.

- 1. The Committee CONFIRMED this version of the Risk Register as controlling risks currently faced by the Board.**
- 2. The Committee NOTED that the Register will be reviewed again in six months.**

13.09.11. Item 11- Financial Reserves Policy:

The Chief Officer and the Finance Officer outlined the proposed changes to the structure of the Board's financial reserve holdings.

1. The Chiltern Conservation Board reserves policy provides for the following categories of reserve:
 - a. General Reserve equal to approx. 4 months core management activity. This reserve stands currently at @ £170,000
 - b. Restricted Reserves created by donations and grants provided for specific purposes. These reserves total £23,781.
 - c. Earmarked Reserves created by the Board for particular future use. These reserves total £328,612 which include a budget equalisation reserve of £228,466 to fund the transition to a reduced funding regime over the next four years.

2. It is proposed to amend the policy for the following reasons:
 - a. As core Board expenditure will reduce in future the reserve could be reduced by a similar percentage.
 - b. The equalisation Reserve balance is greater than the funding deficit forecast over the four year period; hence this reserve could be reduced.
 - c. There will be a probable lack of funding for one-off projects.
 - d. If the proposal is adopted it will be necessary to agree a strategy and process for identifying suitable activity and allocation of funds.

- 1. The Committee AGREED to reduce the General reserve to £135,000**
- 2. The Committee AGREED to reduce the Budget Equalisation Reserve to a maximum of £150,000**
- 3. The Committee agreed the transfer the residual fund of £113,466 to a new earmarked reserve, The Development Reserve.**
- 4. The Committee AGREED to advise the full Board to delegate authority to the Executive Committee to approve allocations from the Development Reserve**

13.09.11. Item 12- Re-instatement of allowances for members of the Sustainable Development Fund panel.

Mike Fox and Alan Walters declared a personal interest as members of the SDF panel.

The Chief Officer and the Finance Officer outlined the proposal to re-instate the annual allowances to members of the SDF panel allowing for the full annual payment to be made. Payments to be made from the existing fund.

- 1. It was AGREED to re-instate an annual allowance of £550 to members of the SDF panel.**
- 2. It was AGREED to re-instate an allowance of £824 to the Chairman of the panel.**
- 3. It was AGREED that the allowances would apply to the year 01/04/2011-31/03/2012.**

13.09.11. Item 13- Review of Member's Allowances.

The Chief Officer outlined the proposed review mechanism, sought approval for the terms of reference and advised the committee to appoint a member to the review panel. The committee recommended to the board that the review panel should be entirely independent and 2 members should have a financial background.

- 1. The Committee APPROVED the terms of reference.**

- 2. **The Committee APPROVED the proposed independent membership of the panel.**
- 3. **The Committee NOTED the likely cost of the review.**

13.09.11. Item 14- Financial support from Parish Councils.

The Chief Officer reported to the committee that the Board’s resolution to seek financial contributions from town and parish councils had been implemented.

The Committee NOTED that all town and parish councils had been requested to provide a financial contribution of between £25-£500 from 2012 onwards.

13.09.11. Item 15- Report on HS2

The chief Officer reported on the formal public consultation on HS2. He outlined the main areas of activity, as provided in the report, and sought guidance from the Committee on the Board’s next steps in its campaign to stop HS2 crossing the Chilterns.

The Committee AGREED the Board’s strategy upon HS2 for the period until the government makes an announcement on whether it intends to proceed.

13.09.11. Item 16- Chief Officer’s report.

The Chief Officer has submitted written reports on the following:

High Speed 2, The Timber project, Ancient Woodland inventory, Commons, Planning and Development, Wycombe Stadium; see item 19, Arla Development near Aylesbury, Draft National Policy framework, Chalk Streams, Chalk Grassland Day, Natural Environment White Paper, Historic Environment, Green Tourism Business Scheme, Cycleway, Events attended.

The Committee NOTED the Chief Officer’s reports.

13.09.11. Item 17- Presentation on the new Chilterns AONB web-site.

Claire Forest gave the members a comprehensive presentation of the new web-site, which met with general approval. Work has not yet been completed, but it will be launched at the Forum. The control of the site will be in-house, but an external webmaster will be required.

13.09.11. There was no other business.

13.09.11. Future meeting dates: Wednesday 7th December at 10.30am at the offices in Chinnor.

The meeting closed at 1.20pm.

The Chairman..... Dates.....

