



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 2 MARCH 2012 at THE LODGE, 90 STATION ROAD, CHINNOR OXON. OX39 4HA COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.45PM

Present:

Mike Fox	Board member, Chairman of the meeting
Cllr Bill Storey	Board Member
Cllr John Griffin	Board member
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Board member
Cllr Richard Pushman	Board member
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Board member
Mike Woods	Co-opted
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer

In attendance	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board

42. Item 1- Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from: Cllr Alan Walters, Cllr Shirley Judges and Ray Payne

43. Item 2- Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

44. Item 3- Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman after amending the attendance list, Mike Woods is not a councillor nor is he a Board Member.

45. Item 4- Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting 7th December 2011:

There were no matters arising.

46. Item 5- Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

47. Item 6- Finance Report to January 2012:

The Finance Officer advised members of the Board's financial position as at the end of January 2012 and what the likely position would be at the end of the year. Detailed papers were issued to the members for review. To the end of January 2012 the expenditure against the core budget was 3.2% below profile and income was almost on target. By the end of the year core expenditure is forecast to exceed the budget by £6,138 or 1%. Core income will exceed the budget by £29,414 or 5%, largely due to higher than anticipated local authority contributions. After meeting costs, £9,963 will be added to the Development Reserve rather than withdraw £18,865 from the Equalisation Reserve as originally budgeted.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Officer for his hard work and detailed explanations.

1. The Committee NOTED the financial position for the year to January 2012.

48. Item 7- Budget 2012-2013:

The Chief Officer and the Finance Officer presented the draft budget for 2012-2013 based upon the assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Forecast as discussed at the last meeting of the Committee, now updated with the latest information on funding and expenditure pending confirmation of grant income from local authorities.

Following the last meeting other changes now included are:

1. Website expenditure is significantly reduced
2. A Countryside Management small works budget has been created by moving funds from elsewhere.
3. All HS2 expenditure will be met from existing earmarked reserves.
4. An Access for All Improvements budget has been created by moving funds from elsewhere.
5. Defra income reflects the reduction announced at the start of the four year grant settlement.
6. 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.
7. The Sustainable Development Fund will be maintained at £40,000 by applying £22,100 of core income.

The changes will provide a total draft budget of core expenditure of £558,265, a reduction of £13,215 over the current year. With the exception of the SDF, non-core activity will be funded by a combination of income and reserves. The net results will be to apply £2,255 from the Budget Equalisation Reserve, £5,000 from the Development Reserve and £22,120 from Earmarked Reserves. The draft budget provides a broadly balanced core budget.

1. The Committee CONSIDERED the draft budget for 2012-2013 and RECOMMENDED presentation of a final version to the Board at its meeting on 29 March.

49. Item 8- Medium Term Financial Plan 2012-2015:

The Chief Officer and the Finance Officer outlined the revised medium term plan for the period 2012-2015 as adopted at the last meeting, following the latest predicted outturn for 2011-12 and the draft budget for 2012-13. The Finance Officer went through the figures and explained the aim to balance the books by 2014-15.

The revised medium term plan includes the following amendments:

- Interest earned on reserves likely to be low
- A further additional 1% cut in Defra grant.
- Assumed use of the ring fenced and earmarked reserves for the purpose they were intended for. The Development Reserve will be used to meet the costs of unforeseen project expenditure for which there will be no provision in the core budget.

If no further action is taken a funding shortfall of £118,000 is expected. This compares to a figure of £175,000 when the first four year plan was prepared.

1. The Committee APPROVED the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2012-2015.

50. Item 9- Use of Development Reserve.

The Chief Officer gave the Committee some background information on the projects for which he was seeking approval of the use of the reserves (up to £30,000 is available 2012-2013) as there are insufficient funds available in the core budget. The committee was asked to consider the following allocations:

- Land Use Survey £5,000
- IT Replacement Fund £3,000
- Research Programme £5,000
- Box Woodland Project £3,000 *
- Total £17,000**

- £3,000 would also need to be committed for 2013-14. Some of this sum may be met from the core budget.

1. The Committee APPROVED the proposed allocations to projects from the Development Reserve in 2012-2013.

51. Item 10- Review of Internal Audit:

The Finance Officer presented a review of the effectiveness and performance of the internal auditors. The Board's internal audit service is provided by Hertfordshire County Council, who are considered to be very capable of providing a satisfactory level of performance. A review document will be incorporated in a note to the Board.

- 1. The Committee NOTED and AGREED the review of the effectiveness of the internal audit.**

52. Item 11- Review of Risk Register:

The Finance Officer and Chief Officer reported that the Risk Register adopted by the Committee on 27/02/2008 had been reviewed. The Finance Officer explained to the Committee the various control measures in place to identify, assess, evaluate and manage risks that are faced in a continually changing environment. The Risk Register is a live document that will be reviewed and amended on a regular basis. The Executive Committee will review the latest version every six months.

The Committee decided to reduce the risk arising from a major IT failure as it felt that sufficient measures had been taken to reduce the likely impact of such an event.

- 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.**

53. Item 12- Treasury Management

The Finance Officer presented a draft Treasury Management Strategy for the Conservation Board for the approval of members. Whilst there is no legal requirement for the Board to adopt such a Strategy, it is considered to be good practice for the Board to adopt a Treasury Management Strategy. The Board adopted a Treasury Management Strategy for the first time in February 2008. The first report for 2012-13 covering policy and Strategy was presented.

- 1. The Committee ADOPTED the Treasury Management Strategy outlined in the report and the Treasury Management Policy Statement detailed in Appendix 'A' of the agenda.**
- 2. The Committee RECEIVED a report on the performance of the Treasury Management after the end of each financial year and REVIEWED the Treasury Management strategy before the start of each year.**

54. Item 13- Report on HS2:

The Chief officer informed the Committee of the Board's on going involvement with opposing HS2. The Board has to concentrate on analysing the impact of the proposed route alignment and indirectly support the case for as judicial review.

Next steps are:

1. Impact of Design Changes
2. Legal Challenges
3. Environmental Impact Assessment
4. Environmental, Planning and Community Fora
5. Revised Business Plan
6. Liaison with Local groups, Local authorities and MP's

- 1. The Committee AGREED to maintain an active campaigning role to stop HS2**
- 2. The Committee AGREED that 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. The Committee AGREED that if approaches are made by HS2 Ltd for information, to only release it if all costs are met in full by HS2 Ltd.**

55. Item 14- Review of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan:

The Chief Officer reported that the Board has a statutory 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 two years and based on the current plan costs approx. £20,000. The process to review the current plan must begin in 2013. There are cost implications, but at this stage it is not possible to be precise as it may be possible to use much of the previous work and there may be no need to employ external consultants.

Progress will be reported regularly to the full Board from June 2012 onwards giving all Board members the opportunity to make input.

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

56. Item 15- Chief Officer's Report:

The Chief Officer has submitted written reports on the following:

High Speed 2, Ancient Woodland inventory, Commons, Chalk Streams, Web-site, Parish Councils, Sustainable Development Fund, Box Wood, Aston Rowant National Nature reserve, Penn Woods near Hazlemere, Luton Airport, Traditional Farm Buildings survey, Farmer's forum, Access Conference and Woodland Conference.

An Ancient Woodland survey will take place 28/06/12 at Piggotts, North Dean.

Members were invited to ask questions.

1. The Committee NOTED the Chief Officer's reports.

57. Item 16- Any Urgent Business:

- Marion Mustoe had received thanks from the Queensbury School, Dunstable for the SDF money they had received which allowed the pupils to take up bee-keeping as well as raise money for the school by selling the honey.

58. Future meeting dates: Wednesday 23rd May 2012 (note change of date), Wednesday 19th September 2012 and Wednesday 12th December 2012 at 10.30am at the offices in Chinnor.

The meeting closed at 12.40pm.

The Chairman.....

Dates.....