



Executive Committee
10.30 a.m. 22nd May 2014
The Lodge, Chinnor

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of Interest
3. Minutes
4. Matters Arising
5. Public Question Time
6. Finance Report - Provisional Outturn for 2013-14
7. Internal Auditor's Report 2013-14
8. Contingency Budget for 2014-15
9. Personnel Report
10. Board Member Alumni
11. Report on High Speed 2
12. A.O.B.
13. Dates of meetings

Item 6 Finance Report – Provisional outturn 2012-13

Author: Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary Subject to any final adjustments:

Core expenditure totalled £526,605, £18,290 3.4% below the original forecast.

Ongoing activity expenditure was £30,270, £5,835 above forecast (23.9%); ongoing activity income was £53,653, £19,857 above forecast (60.5%).

Project Expenditure was £184,410, £48,637 below forecast (20.9%) and project income was £188,833, £27,758 below forecast (12.8%).

Small grants expenditure was £5,934 against a budget of £20,000.

Overall reserves increased by £20,872 compared to a forecast of a reduction of £23,110 rose by £4

Purpose of Report: To advise members of the Board's likely financial position at the end of the financial year 2013-14.

Background***Core Activity***

1. The likely financial position shows a reduction in expenditure of £18,290, 3.4% lower than forecast. All core expenditure was, therefore, covered by income from DEFRA and local authorities including parish and town councils.
2. Income was higher than forecast partly due to local authority contributions not being cut as expected.
3. Detailed figures are attached.

Ongoing Activity

- Ongoing activity expenditure was £30,270, £5,835 above forecast (23.9%) but ongoing activity income was £53,653, £19,857 above forecast (60.5%). The major variances were due to the Research Grant Fund not being promoted and increased expenditure on High Speed 2 for the report on a longer tunnel.

Earned Income

- The level of earned income was much higher than forecast, in part due to receipts from the Countryside Festival and income from events and sales. There was also a contribution from the DEFRA grant, not all of which could be allocated to core expenditure.

Small Grants Scheme

- Only £5,934 was paid in grants out of a fund of £20,000.

Reserves

- The net effect of these movements is that overall reserves rise by £20,872 (3.9%) from £540,716 to £561,588

Reserves at 31.3.2014

General	£100,000
Budget Equalisation	£137,772
Development	£292,494
Chalk Streams	£ 24,693
Red Kites	£ 6,629

Next steps

- Formal accounts will be prepared and presented to the Board in June, and will be subject to audit by the Audit Commission.
- The Medium-term forecast for 2014-16 will need to be adjusted in light of the end of year position as at 31.3.2014 and the possible changes to grant announced by DEFRA affecting 2014-15 and possibly 2015-16.

Recommendations:

- To note the likely financial outcome and that the formal accounts will be presented to the Board in June.**
- To note that an updated Medium Term Financial Plan will be presented to a future meeting.**

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
CORE ACTIVITY				
<i>Expenditure</i>				
Core Department 100:				
Promotion and Awareness				
<i>Core expenditure:</i>				
Information Officer & E&A Officer	(93,255)	(93,252)	3	
Travel and subsistence	(1,700)	(1,182)	518	
Subscriptions magazines / newspapers	(525)	(250)	275	
Web site	(800)	(288)	512	
Printing & distribution costs	(1,400)	(1,429)	(29)	
Events and exhibitions	(1,500)	(615)	885	
Miscellaneous	(200)	7	207	
105 Annual Report	(1,050)	(699)	351	
106 Annual Forum	(1,000)	(738)	262	
107 Chalk and Trees 1st edition	(5,925)	(6,388)	(463)	
108 Chalk and Trees 2nd edition	(5,925)	(5,761)	164	
110 Enjoying Woodlands	(3,500)	(3,500)	-	
111 Environmental Tourism	(500)	(434)	66	
113 Historic Environment	(1,100)	(2,466)	(1,366)	
Sub total	(118,380)	(116,995)	1,385	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
Core Department 200:				
Countryside Management				
Core expenditure:				
Countryside & FLU Officer	(76,950)	(76,967)	(17)	
Travel and subsistence	(900)	(1,159)	(259)	
Publications	(75)	(26)	50	
Events / exhibitions	(250)	-	250	
Subscriptions: organisations	(90)	(50)	40	
Miscellaneous	(85)	-	85	
Contribution to Farm Advice Project	-	(2,000)	(2,000)	
203 Commons	(5,000)	(4,935)	65	Including £4,000 applied to Commons Project
204 Chalk grassland group	(1,000)	(969)	31	
206 State of Environment Report	(1,600)	(888)	712	
207 Support for Trees & Woods Mgt	(3,500)	(3,500)	-	
Sub total	(89,450)	(90,493)	(1,043)	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
Core Department 300:				
Planning and development				
300 Core expenditure:				
Planning Officer	(63,075)	(62,882)	193	
Travel & subsistence	(1,180)	(296)	884	
Miscellaneous	(150)	-	150	
301 Planning Committee	(520)	(526)	(6)	
302 Planning conference	(900)	(531)	369	
303 Design Guidance	(25)	(5)	20	
304 Building design awards	(1,500)	(1,167)	333	
305 Technical assistance / training	(1,500)	(1,193)	307	
308 Management Plan	(10,000)	(4,416)	5,584	
Sub total	(78,850)	(71,015)	7,835	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
Core Department 400:				
Recreation and Access				
Core expenditure:				
Access Officer	(27,385)	(27,380)	5	
Travel and subsistence	(500)	(412)	88	
Miscellaneous	(150)	(44)	106	
401 Access public'ns incl. Country Walks	(2,000)	(591)	1,409	
402 Access conference	-	(5)	(5)	Deferred to early 2014-15
404 Access for all Improvements	(1,100)	(500)	600	
Sub total	(31,135)	(28,933)	2,202	
Core Department 500:				
Corporate Services				
Core expenditure:				
Chief Officer / Admin Officer	(107,000)	(103,225)	3,775	
Travel and subsistence	(1,750)	(1,813)	(63)	
Staff training	(3,000)	(2,418)	582	
Premises	(27,095)	(26,674)	421	
Office costs	(13,270)	(10,129)	3,141	
Office furniture & equipment	(935)	(181)	754	
IT (incl OS licences)	(5,275)	(11,477)	(6,202)	
Photography	-	-	-	
Meetings & events	(435)	(523)	(88)	
Finance	(19,265)	(16,566)	2,699	
Personnel	(3,835)	(3,182)	653	
Legal services	(1,560)	(846)	714	
Insurance	(3,600)	(3,662)	(62)	
Miscellaneous	(565)	-	565	
504 IT Replacements & Upgrades	(3,000)	(1,348)	1,652	
Sub total	(190,585)	(182,045)	8,540	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
Core Department 600				
Member Services				
<i>Core expenditure:</i>				
Members' allowances	(33,795)	(32,316)	1,479	
Board member training	(1,500)	(3,009)	(1,509)	
Board meetings	(1,000)	(1,654)	(654)	
Miscellaneous	(50)	-	50	
601 Executive Committee	(150)	(145)	5	
Sub total	(36,495)	(37,123)	(628)	
TOTAL CORE EXPENDITURE	(544,895)	(526,605)	18,290	
National AONB	(2,500)	(2,500)	-	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
Core Income				
Defra: Core	425,976	421,349	(4,627)	To meet 80% of core expenditure
Local Authorities	104,255	105,781	1,526	
Town and Parish Councils	3,000	1,975	(1,025)	
Other earned income	1,739	-	(1,739)	Balancing figure
TOTAL CORE INCOME	534,970	529,105	(5,865)	
NET CORE INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)	(12,425)	0	12,425	
FUNDED BY:-				
Development Reserve:				
- Core surplus / (deficit)	(12,425)	-	12,425	
Budget Equalisation Reserve:				
- Core deficit				
TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES	(12,425)	-	12,425	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
ONGOING ACTIVITY				
<i>Expenditure</i>				
Ongoing Activity Department 100:				
Promotion and Awareness				
103 Countryside Festival	(5,185)	(9,641)	(4,456)	
109 Educational Events	(2,250)	(1,283)	967	
Sub total	(7,435)	(10,924)	(3,489)	
Ongoing Activity Department 200:				
Countryside Management				
210 Small Works	(4,000)	(2,692)	1,308	
211 Local Nature Partnerships	(3,000)	(2,035)	965	From Development Reserve
213 Chilterns Rural Skills	-	(2,195)	(2,195)	Self financing
214 Contribution to Box Project	-	(2,500)	(2,500)	
Sub total	(7,000)	(9,423)	(2,423)	
Ongoing Activity Department 300:				
Planning and development				
310 Planning Policies	(1,500)	-	1,500	
311 High Speed Two	(2,000)	(8,169)	(6,169)	From Earmarked Reserve
Sub total	(3,500)	(8,169)	(4,669)	
Ongoing Activity Department 400:				
Recreation and Access				
405 Cycling in the Chilterns	(1,500)	(1,755)	(255)	
Sub total	(1,500)	(1,755)	(255)	
Ongoing Activity Department 500:				
Corporate Services				
503 Research Grants Fund	(5,000)	-	5,000	
Sub total	(5,000)	-	5,000	
Ongoing Activity Department 600				
Member Services				
Sub total	-	-	-	
TOTAL ONGOING ACTIVITY EXPENDITURE	(24,435)	(30,270)	(5,835)	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
Ongoing Activity Income				
Balance of earned income	32,796	48,026	15,230	
Defra	-	4,627	4,627	
TOTAL ONGOING ACTIVITY INCOME	32,796	52,653	19,857	
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)	8,361	22,383	14,022	
FUNDED BY:-				
Development Reserve:				
Surplus	8,361	22,383	14,022	
	-			
Budget Equalisation Reserve:				
Deficit	-			
TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES	8,361	22,383	14,022	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
PROJECTS				
<i>Expenditure</i>				
Projects Department 200:				
Countryside Management				
250 Chilterns Chalk Streams (Core)	(33,400)	(32,647)	753	
251 Chilterns Chalk Streams (Projects)	(33,210)	(3,093)	30,117	
255 Chilterns Commons Project	(127,177)	(108,320)	18,857	
258 Box Woods Project	(35,260)	(19,361)	15,899	
260 Chilterns Farm Advice Project	(2,000)	(15,146)	(13,146)	
261 Historic Farmsteads Survey	(2,000)	-	2,000	From Development Reserve
Sub total	(233,047)	(178,567)	54,480	
Projects Department 400:				
Recreation and Access				
406 Tourism Network	-	(5,843)	(5,843)	
Sub total	-	(5,843)	(5,843)	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE	(233,047)	(184,410)	48,637	
Project Income				
Farm Advice Project EA	-	15,146	15,146	
Defra: Chalk Streams	20,559	20,559	-	
Chalk Streams external income (core)	17,795	17,084	(711)	
Chalk Streams external income (projects)	33,210	3,093	(30,117)	
Chilterns Commons Project: HLF	99,309	97,595	(1,714)	
Chilterns Commons Project: other	10,458	10,725	267	
Box Woods Project: HLF	31,760	16,861	(14,899)	
Box Woods Project: Other	3,500	2,500	(1,000)	
Tourism Network	-	5,270	5,270	
TOTAL PROJECT INCOME	216,591	188,833	(27,758)	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)	(16,456)	4,423	20,879	
FUNDED BY:-				
Development Reserve:				
- Surplus / (deficit)	(4,000)		4,000	
Budget Equalisation Reserve:				
- Tourism Network deficit	-	(573)	(573)	
Chalk Streams Reserve:				
- Net surplus / (deficit)	4,954	4,996	42	
Income received in advance	(17,410)		17,410	
TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES	(16,456)	4,423	20,879	

BUDGET CONTROL 2013-14				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2014				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
SMALL GRANTS SCHEME				
<i>Small Grants Expenditure</i>				
To be allocated	(20,000)	(5,934)	14,066	
TOTAL SMALL GRANTS EXPENDITURE	(20,000)	(5,934)	14,066	
FUNDED BY:-				
Development Reserve				
- to be allocated	(20,000)	(5,934)		
TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES	(20,000)	(5,934)	-	
RESERVES MOVEMENTS				
General	-			
Budget Equalisation	-	(573)		
Development	(28,064)	16,449		
Chalk Stream earmarked reserve	4,954	4,996		
TOTAL RESERVES MOVEMENTS	(23,110)	20,872		
RESERVES AT YEAR START / END	01-Apr-13			
General	135,000	100,000		
Budget Equalisation	138,345	137,772		
Development	241,045	292,494		
Chalk Streams	19,697	24,693		
Red Kites	6,629	6,629		
TOTAL RESERVES	540,716	561,588		

		Other Income	Budget for year	Actual to date	Variance
			£	£	£
12					
	Core Activity				
100.4900	Promotion & Awareness	Earned income	600	80	(520)
500.4900	Unidentified income	incl. Red Kite donations	500	227	(273)
106.4900	Annual Forum	Income	550	428	(122)
107.4004	Chalk & Trees edition 1	Advertising income	2,200	2,397	197
107.4901	Chalk & Trees edition 1	Electronic subscriptions	140	222	82
203.4900	Commons		800	1,053	253
204.4001	Chalk Grassland		810	458	(352)
206.4900	State of the Environment Report		270	210	(60)
300.4900	Planning	Earned income	670	-	(670)
305.4900	Technical Assistance		950	-	(950)
302.4900	Planning Conference		900	1,560	660
304.4003	Building Design Awards		740	600	(140)
400.4400	Recreation & Access	Advertising income	490	1,150	660
401.4900	Access Publications		300	739	439
402.4900	Access Conference		-	-	-
	Sub Total		9,920	9,123	- 797
	Other Earned Income				
103	Countryside Festival	Income	7,185	13,780	6,595
108.4004	Chalk & Trees edition 2	Advertising income	2,200	2,500	300
108.4901	Chalk & Trees edition 2	Electronic subscriptions	140	-	(140)
109.4900	Educational Events		2,800	4,650	1,850
113.4900	Historic Environment		25	1,951	1,926
213.5900	Chilterns Rural Skills		-	2,494	2,494
405.4400	Chilterns Cycleway	Advertising income	200	500	(200)
500.4008	Corporate	Interest received	8,065	6,591	(1,474)
	Sub Total		20,615	32,466	11,351

	Merchandise sales				
	Promotion & Awareness	incl. People & Places book		2,898	
	Planning			121	
	Cycleway guidebooks			3,418	
			4,000	6,437	2,437
	Total		34,535	48,026	12,991

Item 7 Internal Audit Report 2013-14

Author: Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary: The Board's internal auditor, the Hertfordshire Shared Internal Audit Service, have completed their annual review and submitted their report.

Purpose of Report: To present the findings from the internal audit annual review.

Background :

1. The Board has appointed Hertfordshire County Council Audit Department to provide its internal audit service. This entails a one day visit to The Lodge, resulting in a written report with recommendations.

Conclusions

2. The auditor conducted a high level review of important and current risks and concluded that **Substantial Assurance** on effective management can be provided.
3. No "priority" recommendations have been made, although two "merits attention recommendations" are identified, both of which it is proposed to accept.
4. A copy of the report is attached.

Recommendation

1. **Note and agree the report of the internal auditors.**



Final Internal Audit Report

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 2013/14

April 2014

Issued to: The Chilterns Conservation Board

Copied to: Steve Rodrick – Chief Officer
Chris Smith – Financial Officer

Report Status: Final

Reference: Z8050/13/002

Overall Assurance: **Substantial**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

- 1.1 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has provided the Internal Audit function for the CAONB since 2005. HCC reports on the robustness of the financial control environment annually at the request of the Chiltern Conservation Board.
- 1.2 This audit focused on the internal controls in place through the financial year to achieve both the objectives of the CAONB and the areas set out in the annual return.

Overall Audit Opinion

- 1.3 Based on the work performed during this audit, we can provide overall **Substantial Assurance** that there are effective controls in operation for those elements of the risk management processes covered by this review. These are detailed in the Assurance by Risk Area Table in Section 2 below.
- 1.4 The Asset Register contains names of officers who use specific computers and the associated computer software. The CAONB should consider depersonalising the Asset Register unless it is an operational requirement to identify who uses which machine with what software.
- 1.5 For definitions of our assurance levels, please see Appendix B.

Summary of Recommendations

- 1.6 Two recommendations were made following the audit, the priority of both has been categorised as 'Merits Attention'.
- 1.7 Please see the Management Action Plan at Appendix A for further detail.

Annual Governance Statement

- 1.8 This report provides good levels of assurance to support the Annual Governance Statement.

2. ASSURANCE BY RISK AREA

2.1 Our specific objectives in undertaking this work, as per the Terms of Reference, were to provide the Council with assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls, processes and records in place to mitigate risks in the following areas:

Risk Area	None	Limited	Moderate	Substantial	Full
Financial Regulations & Standing Orders					
Payments					
Risk Management					
Budget Setting & Monitoring					
Income					
Petty Cash					
Salaries to Employees					
Asset Register & Insurance					
Bank Reconciliations					
Year-End Procedures					
Managing the Risk of Fraud					
Review of Previous Recommendations					
Overall					

2.2 See definitions for the above assurance levels at Appendix B.

No.	Finding / Associated Risk	Priority	Recommendation	Management Response	Target Date
1.	<p>Financial Regulations Although the Financial Regulations were revised in December 2012, chapter 14 on payment authorisation procedures was written in 2003 and has not been updated since that date. This Chapter states that any order over £100 requires more than one quote. This threshold seems low, as on low value purchases, the benefit of obtaining more than one quote is unlikely to outweigh the costs of obtaining them.</p> <p><u>Associated Risk</u> Time spent confirming value for money on relatively small purchases is offset by the opportunity cost of staff time spent undertaking this activity.</p>	<p>Merits Attention</p>	<p>Chapter 14 of the Financial Regulations should be reviewed by the Board and consideration given to amending the ‘tendering requirements’.</p>	<p>Responsible Officer: Chief Officer Recommendation accepted</p>	<p>30/06/14</p>

No.	Finding / Associated Risk	Priority	Recommendation	Management Response	Target Date
2.	<p>Petty Cash Petty Cash in hand fluctuates as cash income received is held as cash rather than banked. Part banking of significant cash receipts is undertaken at a later date.</p> <p><u>Associated Risk</u> Failure to bank cash received intact and in a timely fashion presents an opportunity for cash to be mislaid or misappropriated.</p>	<p>Merits Attention</p>	<p>It is good practice to bank all income received within five working days of receipt. The Board is recommended to explore the benefits of adopting this approach especially from events when large sums of cash have been received and to document any agreed changes in the process.</p>	<p>Responsible Officer: Chief Officer Recommendation accepted</p>	<p>30/06/14</p>

Levels of assurance	
Full Assurance	There is a sound system of control designed to achieve the system objectives and manage the risks to achieving those objectives. No weaknesses have been identified.
Substantial Assurance	Whilst there is a largely sound system of control, there are some minor weaknesses, which may put a limited number of the system objectives at risk.
Moderate Assurance	Whilst there is basically a sound system of control, there are some areas of weakness, which may put some of the system objectives at risk.
Limited Assurance	There are significant weaknesses in key control areas, which put the system objectives at risk.
No Assurance	Control is weak, leaving the system open to material error or abuse.

Priority of recommendations	
High	There is a fundamental weakness, which presents material risk to the objectives and requires urgent attention by management.
Medium	There is a significant weakness, whose impact or frequency presents a risk which needs to be addressed by management.
Merits Attention	There is no significant weakness, but the finding merits attention by management.

adjustments would be to reduce the drawdown from the Development Reserve from £30,000 to £22,0000.

6. It is likely the provisional 2015-16 budget will now require adjustment if the additional DEFRA cut is applied to its grant for next year,

Recommendation

1. **The original budget for 2014-15 is adjusted to take into account changes in anticipated income by reducing the amount of earned income allocated to cover core expenditure and reducing the drawdown of reserves.**

Item 9 **Personnel Report**

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer
 Sally Charman HR advisor to the Board

Summary: Following a review of the Board's HR policies a need to make amendments has been identified to reflect the changes to employment legislation, in particular to the whistle blowing and parental leave provisions. The Board's sickness absence rate in 2013-14 was 0.3%. The Board is fully compliant with the Pension Auto enrolment legislation and staff have been notified, as required, of changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme. It is proposed to adjust the qualifying criteria for a discretionary salary increment.

Purpose of the Report: To notify members of the need to make changes to the Board's HR policies and employee's handbook and documentation; to approve the new parental leave provision.

Review of Policies

1. At least once a year the Board's Chief Officer and HR Advisor review the Board's employment policies and recommend amendments, in the light of legislative changes and in order to apply good practice.
2. Most of the Board's policies remain sound and there is no need for change other than occasional clarification and minor additions to whistle blowing and parental leave.
3. The changes to the definitions of whistle blowing last June means that all whistleblowers must now show their disclosure is "in the public interest" (although this is not defined) whilst the requirement to show they acted in "good faith" is removed with the aim being not to discourage people from making disclosures. It should be noted that there may be further changes to this law in the near future as it is believed that much has changed since the laws were introduced in 1998, and that the legal framework may need altering to keep pace. In the meantime, the reference to "good faith" in our policy has been removed see appendix 1.
4. The statutory parental leave increased in March from 13 to 18 weeks, so this needs to be amended in our provisions. Further changes are proposed during 2014 and 2015 which will comply with the Children and Families Act 2014, for example, in 2014 these relate to flexible working (30 June), and ante-natal appointments for prospective fathers and partners (1 October)

5. The application form has been updated to reflect the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013). In summary, the legislation allows that certain old and minor cautions and convictions are no longer subject to disclosure under the Exceptions Order. Cautions and convictions for specified serious violent and sexual offences and other specified offences relevant to posts that involve safeguarding children and vulnerable adults remain subject to disclosure. All convictions resulting in a custodial sentence remain subject to disclosure. As a result of this new legislation employers are not to be allowed to take certain old and minor cautions and convictions into account when making a decision about an individual. The DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) filtering guide provides detailed information.
6. **HR Key Performance Indicators**
 1. Total Number of staff employed as at 31 March 2014
 - 6 full time and 5 part-time staff
 - Of whom 2 are on fixed term contracts (HLF funded projects)
 - During the year there was one starter and one leaver (to cover maternity leave)
 2. The number of days lost through absence was 16 (9 sick leave and 7 compassionate leave). The sickness absence rate was 0.4%.
 3. There were no formal disciplinary or grievance cases.
 4. All staff participated in formal performance reviews and were rated as satisfactory, high or excellent performers.

Discretionary Salary Increments

7. In 2009 the Board introduced new salary scales; previously it had used those of Wycombe DC. The new scales of 7 points all have increments of 2%. It was decided that all new staff would be appointed on the new scales. The Board also decided, as all staff had reached the top of their contractual (old) scale, to provide a performance related incentive that would allow staff to receive a salary increment by moving onto the new scales provided- the nearest scale above their contractual scale.
8. The current policy states:

4 Process and Progression

Posts are allocated to a salary range within the spinal points scale. The salary scale incorporates 7 incremental consolidated points (job band), with a potential for a further 7 incremental consolidated points subject to approval by the Personnel Appeals Panel.

Generally a new starter should be appointed at the starting salary in any band but in exceptional cases, a new post-holder could be appointed above point 3 to reflect

valuable skills, a scarcity situation or a competitive recruitment market, although the starting point for any new jobholder will be the decision of the Chief Officer.

Progression along the salary scales is not an automatic process, but reflects the required high levels of performance and commitment to the Board. Progression links directly with feedback from the appraisal system and normally employees will progress one increment, but for outstanding performance, employees may be awarded additional increments. The Chief Officer will make the final decision on the award of any consolidated salary increments within the job band.

Once individuals have reached the top of the band for the assessed post, awards will be cost of living only except where their performance has been assessed as outstanding over the previous two years; the Chief Officer can submit a recommendation to a Personnel Appeals of the Executive Committee that the employee is advanced to the next increment of the higher band. The Personnel Appeals Panel will make the final decision on the award of any consolidated salary increments within this band. The maximum an employee can be awarded for personal performance is a maximum of 7 consolidated increments.

9. The requirement to reach a performance level of outstanding over the previous two years is very exacting. There are currently six levels of performance :
 1. Excellent;
 2. High;
 3. Performer;
 4. Developing Performer;
 5. Inconsistent;
 6. Under Performer
10. In practice most staff are rated as either a Performer or High Performer and every year a small number are rated as an Excellent Performer.
11. In view of the relatively modest financial reward - a maximum of 2% (but it is consolidated and pensionable) - it is suggested that if someone is rated as an Excellent Performer for that year, it should be recommended to the Personnel Panel that they receive a discretionary increment. This should not be dependent on being rated as an Excellent performer for two consecutive years. If they are rated as a High Performer they can also be recommended for a discretionary increment provided they have also achieved a High or Excellent rating the previous year. This makes a discretionary increment more achievable and in line with the level of reward on offer.
12. Once an employee has reached the top of the discretionary scale they are no longer eligible for any performance related increments. Due to long service most staff have either reached this stage or will do so within 3 years.

Pensions

13. Currently all CCB staff are members of the Board's Pension Scheme. It should be noted that the statutory pension auto enrolment regulations will apply to the Board in 2016, but our existing arrangements already meet these provisions. However, we may need to introduce administrative changes to ensure compliant recording.
14. Changes were introduced to the Local Government Pension Scheme w.e.f 1st April when it became a career average earning rather than final salary scheme. Benefits accrued from the final salary scheme to 31.3.2014 remain unchanged. Employee contribution rates were also changed - by up to 3.2%. As the employer the Board ensured all staff were aware of the changes and, as required, wrote individually to each member of staff telling them of their new contribution rate. A special workshop was held to explain the pension changes.

Alumni

15. Since the Board was established in 2004 there has been limited turnover, usually because members have moved on for their careers or because they have step down from local government. In 2013 and, to a greater extent in 2014, more members stood down largely because their term of office as a Secretary of State member had ended. In 2015 it is likely several members appointed by district and parish councils will stand down. With few exceptions the members have indicated that they wish to stay in touch and some have sought an active role. Most have had a long association with the Board, many since it was established and some for longer – they have a great deal of experience and enthusiasm which they still wish to offer to the Board. To date their continuing involvement has been ad hoc.
16. It is now suggested the Board takes a more constructive and organised approach and develops an Alumni of ex Board members. This proposal is covered in more detail in Item 10.

Recommendations

1. **To note that the Board's HR policies and procedures have been reviewed and the need for amendments identified.**
2. **To approve the increase to the parental leave provision; the Whistleblowing policy is amended and attached (Appendix 1)**
3. **To note the HR KPI's and position relating to auto pension enrolment.**
4. **To adjust the eligibility for a performance related salary increment as proposed in paragraph 11**

Appendix 1

14 “WHISTLE BLOWING” CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING POLICY (The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998)

1 Introduction

Employees might well be the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Board. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Board. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Board is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect employees and others that we deal with who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Board’s work to come forward and voice their concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

This policy document is so that employees can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This Confidential Reporting Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise concerns within the Board rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

Our policy applies to all employees and contractors working for the Board, for example, agency staff, work experience placements etc.

These procedures are in addition to the Board’s complaints procedures and anti-fraud and corruption code of practice.

2 Policy

- encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about malpractice.
- provide clear avenues for employees to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- ensure that employees are aware of how to pursue their concerns and that they receive a response to them.
- reassure employees that they will be protected when they raise concerns in good faith – which they believe to be in the public interest and that they genuinely and reasonably believe to be true.

Existing procedures are in place to enable employees to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment. This Confidential Reporting Policy is intended to cover the following concerns.

- that a criminal offence has been, is being or is likely to be committed
- that a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject;
- that a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or likely to occur;
- that the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.
- that the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- that information tending to show any of the above has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

This policy does **not** replace the Complaints procedure.

3 Responsibility for the “Confidential Reporting Policy”

The Chief Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy by maintaining a record of concerns raised and their outcomes (but in a form which does not endanger individuals confidentiality) and will report as be necessary to the Board.

Board Members will refer any disclosures made to them to the Chief Officer and ensure that the Confidential Reporting Policy is followed.

4 Safeguards

Harassment or Victimisation

- The Board recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what employee says is based on their reasonable belief, they should have nothing to fear because they are doing their duty to the employer and those for whom they are providing a service.
- The Board will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressure) and will take appropriate action to protect employees when they raise a concern in good faith believing the information is given is true.
- Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any grievance, disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect employees.

5 Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal employee’s identity if they so wish. At the appropriate time, however, they may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages employees to put their name to their allegation whenever possible. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Board.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from relevant sources

6 Untrue allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith If an employee who genuinely raises a concern believing the information given is true, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against the employee. Malicious allegations or those made for personal gain will be considered gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.

7 How to raise a concern

As a first step, employees should normally raise concerns with the Chief Officer. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is

suspected of the malpractice. For example, if it is believed that the Chief Officer is involved, the Personnel Advisor or Chairman of the Board should be approached.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:

- the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
- the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation

The earlier concern is expressed the easier it is to take action.

Although it is not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, employees will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for their concern.

Advice and guidance on how matters of concern may be pursued can be obtained from the Chief Officer.

Employees may wish to consider discuss their concern with a colleague first and it may be easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) people who have the same experience or concerns.

A trade union representative or a friend/colleague may be invited to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the employees concerns.

8 How the Board will respond

The person contacted will consult, as an independent person, the Chief Officer about your concern. The Chief Officer will normally investigate the concern, unless it directly involves him/her. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any further investigation is conducted.

The Chief Officer will write to the employee within 10 working days of the concern being raised and give an estimate of how long it will take to investigate and when a final response can be expected.

The amount of contact between the Chief Officer and the employee will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the Chief Officer will seek further information from the employee.

The Board will take steps to minimise any difficulties, which an employee may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if they are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings the Board will arrange for appropriate advice about the procedure to be received.

The Board accepts that employees need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. The Chief Officer will write to the employee about the outcomes of the investigation, subject to any legal constraints.

9 How the matter can be taken further

This policy is intended to provide employees with an avenue within the Board to raise concerns.

If employees are dissatisfied with the outcome having followed every step of this policy and feel that in all the circumstances it is reasonable to take your concern outside the Board, they may wish to contact one of the following organisations.

Public Concern at Work

Professional bodies or regulatory organisations

Your trade union

Board Members

The Citizens Advice Bureau

The Audit Commission

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees making external disclosures where, in all the circumstances, it is reasonable to make the external disclosure and the disclosure is not made *for* personal gain. Compliance with the internal policy, action (or lack of action taken by the Board following the internal disclosure) and the nature of the allegation (including the person the allegation is made against) will be taken into account when deciding “reasonableness.”

[Any disclosures made in bad faith will constitute a disciplinary offence under CCB's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and m](#)Malicious allegations will be considered gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.

ed to use the following format:



APPLICATION FORM

Please complete using black ink or type.

Application for the post of:

Last Name : (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms.etc)	First Name:
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Address for correspondence	Tel No; Home; Work (optional); Mobile; Email
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EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS			
Give details of secondary schools, colleges and universities attended with qualifications obtained			
General Education		School, College or University	Qualifications
From	To		

COURSES ATTENDED AND MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES	
Course/Membership	Date

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (within last 15 years)

Start with the **most recent**. Include in this section any breaks in employment history e.g. carer responsibilities, travelling or returning to study; period of military service, registered unemployment and temporary. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Employer's name, address, type of business, salary and notice required	Date		Job Title	Brief Details of Duties/Responsibilities and Reasons for Leaving
	From	To		

DETAILS IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION

Please say why you are applying for this job. Give details of any work or other experience you have which may be relevant to your application, including voluntary work and interests. Please continue, if necessary, on a further sheet which must be securely attached to this form.

REFEREES

The first referee must be your present or most recent employer, if applicable. It is the normal practice for references to be obtained before any formal interview is held. If you do not wish us to take up references before interview please tick the box

Name: Position: Address: Tel: E mail:	Name: Position: Address: Tel: E Mail:
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<p>How is this referee known to you?</p> <p>Do you wish to be contacted before we approach this referee? Yes/No</p>	<p>How is this referee known to you?</p> <p>Do you wish to be contacted before we approach this referee? Yes/No</p>
<p>Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Exception Order 1975</p> <p>Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying at the Chiltern Conservation Board, you must provide information about any criminal record. This includes convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings. Our power to require this lies in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 which removes the normal operation of the Act in relation to specific occupations. In the event of being employed in connection with this application, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in dismissal or disciplinary action. The amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers, and cannot be taken into account. Guidance on criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found on the Disclosure and Barring Service website.</p> <p>Do you have any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013)? Write YES or NO _____</p> <p>If you do have any previous or outstanding convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, you will only be asked to supply details of the type of offence, date, sentence, fine etc if you are invited for interview.</p>	

OTHER INFORMATION

1. Do you have a current driving licence that allows you to drive in the UK?	Yes / No
2. Do you have regular use of a vehicle?	Yes / No
3. Are you a relative of any member of the Board or Board's staff?	Yes / No
4. If yes, state name of person and relationship	
5. Where did you see the advertisement for this post?	

Immigration status

<p>Are you a British/European Economic Area/Swiss national with right to work in the UK? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, do you already have permission to work in the UK? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please specify your visa type and visa end date:</p>
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Under the Data Protection Act 1998, The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) is required to notify applicants and prospective employees on how their data will be processed and used. All of this application form apart from the equal opportunities monitoring form will be retained by CCB for a maximum of six months, unless you are successful applicant for the post, in which case the application form will become part of your employee record. Some of the data you provide is considered to be Sensitive Personal Data under the Data Protection Act i.e. gender, race. This information will be used to assist us with recruitment monitoring. It will be held separately from application forms. It may also be held in computer format.

By signing this form you are giving consent to the CCB to use this data in the way described above.

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete and that misleading statements may be sufficient for cancelling any agreements made.

Signed

Date

Please ensure that you have read and checked this Application Form thoroughly prior to submission ensuring that you have followed the instructions carefully

Return this form to: **The Chilterns Conservation Board, The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor, Oxfordshire OX39 4HA**

Item 10 Board Member Alumni

Author: Steve Rodrick

Summary: It is proposed to create an alumni style of membership for ex Board members who wish to keep in touch and continue contributing to the Board's work. Members of the alumni would not have any executive authority but would be invited to help promote the aims of the AONB and Board. Those members with requisite skills and enthusiasm would be encouraged to participate actively in the Board's activities. The annual cost, in addition to staff time, would be in the order of £1,000.

Purpose of the paper: For discussion in the first instance; and if there is agreement to develop the idea to present it to the Board in June.

Background

1. In the last 12 months nine members have left the Board.

Name	Appointing Body	Reason for Leaving	Length of Service
Bill Storey	Herts CC	Retired from local government	9
Richard Pushman	Bucks CC	Retired from local government	9
Roger Emmett	Wycombe DC	Deceased	9
Mike Fox	Sec of State	End of Term	9
John Willson	Sec of State	End of Term	9
Bettina Kirkham	Sec of State	End of Term	9
Shirley Judges	Bucks Parish Councils	Resigned from parish council	9
Margaret Jarrett	Herts Parish Councils	Retired from local government	9
Brian Norman	Three Rivers DC	Retired from local government	8
Simon Mortimer	Sec of State	Term ends in Dec 2014	10
3 others	District Councils	Have indicated they will not seek re-election in May 2015	

2. By May 2015 a further 4 (or more) are likely to leave the Board. This means that in two years at least half of the Board will have changed. This is a high rate of turnover after a long period of stability. In most cases members have not left the Board by choice, but because their term of office as a Secretary of Stem member has ended or because they have resigned or retired from local government, which is a pre-requisite for their membership.

3. Usually departing members indicate a desire to keep in touch and several have indicated they wish to continue to have an active role. The Board should positively embrace this enthusiasm and offer opportunities to help. The Board is an unusual organisation in that it has many more Board members than staff. This has often worked to its advantage with most members taking an active part in several areas of activity. The capacity to work in this way could be enhanced if there is a more organised approach to retaining the support of retiring members. It is suggested that the Board create an alumni type of arrangement to facilitate this modus operandi.
4. Only ex-Board members could be considered as one of the alumni. There should be no presumption that everyone will want to stay in touch.
5. The members of the alumni would not have any governance or management role.
6. As a matter of course the Board should introduce a form of exit interview to garner the thoughts and reflections of retiring members.

What would keeping in touch look like?

7. This would be the basic level offered to all members of the alumni:
 1. To be sent a printed copy of Chalk and Trees
 2. To be sent, by e mail, the monthly e bulletin
 3. To be sent, by e mail, a copy of the Annual Review
 4. To be invited to the Annual Forum
 5. To be invited to the annual Board member's walk
 6. To be sent, by e mail, copies of other newsletters
 7. Notification of events, e.g. Chalk Streams Forum or Commons Day

This can all be organised easily at minimal cost - everything would be free to members of the Alumni – approx. £250

More Active Involvement

8. Opportunities for more active involvement:
 1. Co-option to the Planning Committee
 2. Membership of a project steering group
 3. Membership of an advisory or working group
 4. Author of articles for Chalk and Trees and other publications
 5. Researcher/surveyor
 6. Volunteer at events/walks leader
 7. Tutor/mentor to staff and Board members

Should Alumni Members be able to represent the Board?

9. To avoid confusion, or even conflict, it should be quite clear that members of the alumni wouldn't have any part in the governance of the Board or any executive authority. The issue of whether they can be empowered to represent the Board, for example on external bodies or at events, is worthy of consideration. Such a situation might arise when, for example, no member of the Board is available. There may also be occasions when such a role requires specific knowledge or experience which the members of the Board don't possess.
10. A key issue would be the extent to which empowerment should take place, for example making a commitment of any kind. In general this sort of situation should be avoided, but it may occasionally arise. In which case the need for a commitment should be identified in advance and the ex-Board member given authority to make specific commitments on behalf of the Board. In nearly all cases of this kind it is likely a member of staff would also attend the meeting.
11. The Board should be willing to pay travel and subsistence costs including delegate fees but, other than in exceptional circumstances, would not pay a fee.

An Alumni social event?

12. Being a member of the Alumni could also have a social dimension. It would be an opportunity for past and serving members of the Board to meet. Such an event might, for example, be a late afternoon or evening gathering, somewhere of interest with a tour or talk, to which partners/guests would also be invited. It would be an opportunity for the Board to thank the members of the alumni for their support during the year. The cost of such an event would be in the order of £500- £750.

Recommendations

1. **The Committee advise on whether to propose to the Board that an Alumni should be created for retiring Board members.**
2. **To decide on the extent to which Alumni members can be empowered to represent and make commitments on behalf of the Board.**

Item 11 Report on High Speed 2

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: The House of Commons approved the Second Reading of the HS2 Bill by 452 votes to 41. The next stage is to petition the Select Committee for changes to the Proposed Scheme. The deadline for the petition is 16th May. The report on the “idealised” tunnel was launched on 25th April. A meeting was held with Sir David Higgins, chairman of HS2 Ltd, on 1st May.

Purpose of Report For information

Hybrid Bill

- On 28th April the House of Commons passed the Second Reading of the Bill by 452 votes to 41. Local MPs voted as below.

MP	Constituency	Vote
Cheryl Gillan	Amersham and Chesham	Against
Steve Baker	Wycombe	Against
David Lidington	Aylesbury	Abstained
Dominic Grieve	Beaconsfield	Abstained
John Bercow	Buckingham	Did not Vote
David Gauke	South West Hertfordshire	For

- David Lidington issued a statement that he would resign from the Government if the Chilterns did not get a full length tunnel.
- The HS2 Select Committee has been appointed. It has only 6 members rather than the expected 10. This is likely to mean that often only 3 members will attend the Committee hearings.

MP	Constituency	Party
Robert Syms *	Poole	Con
Henry Bellingham	NW Norfolk	Con
Sir Peter Bottomley	Worthing West	Con
Ian Mearns	Gateshead	Lab
Yasmin Quershi	Bolton SE	Lab
Mike Thornton	Eastleigh	Lib Dem

*chairman

- The date for when the Select Committee will begin to sit is still being debated. The possibility of sitting through the Parliamentary summer recess is being considered, but as all six members have to guarantee their availability for his period that is unlikely. It is believed there is a likelihood that the Committee will, in general, take a geographic approach working southwards from

Birmingham. It will also consider issues on thematic/subject basis- for example there could well be a session dedicated entirely to a Chilterns tunnel.

5. It is highly likely the Board will be called to present its cases to the Committee at least once, possibly twice (tunnel and other matters affecting the AONB). Assuming the Committee does not begin sitting until September the Board's appearance is likely to be towards the end of the year, possibly early 2015. The longer bored tunnel option is supported by many organisations and individuals including the local authorities - any presentations are, therefore, likely to co-ordinated.
6. The Board has submitted its petition to make its case to the Select Committee based on the following
 1. A full length bored tunnel (M25 to the NW of Wendover) would avoid or minimise most of the severe permanent effects
 2. If this is not accepted, the track bed should be lowered to ensure most of the track is out of sight. With retained sides the amount of spoil would be minimised. It should be sufficiently deep to avoid the need for noise bunds and noise barriers.
 3. No spoil should be dumped in the AONB, other than that which can be used for engineering works - i.e. embankments. A productive use should be found for it (i.e. manufacture of cement and removed by pipeline) or taken to a suitable void such as a redundant quarry.
 4. Construction transport routes should be confined to the construction trace, specially constructed haulage routes and main public highways, notably the A413. Ancient lanes and roads through villages should be out of bounds.
 5. All road and new roads infrastructure should be restored back to their pre-construction state, or according to the wishes of local people and the local highway authority. (A notable feature of HS1 is that all rural lanes were highly urbanised).
 6. All structures should be designed specifically for their setting.
 7. All bridges should be "green bridges" sufficiently wide to allow vegetation to grow to enable passage of wildlife and provide a more pleasant experience for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
 8. A priority should be to minimise land take and to ensure it is returned to its original owners in a condition that it can be used as productive farmland- the farmed landscape must be conserved - farming enterprises need to be viable.
7. The Board attended a meeting on 1st May with Sir David Higgins, the new chairman of HS2 Ltd, organised by Cheryl Gillian MP. Representatives from

Bucks CC and Chiltern DC also attended. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the new tunnel proposed by the Board and local authorities, the report for which had been launched the previous week. Unfortunately the meeting was hampered by Sir David's claim that "this is the first time I have heard of this proposal". Unlikely as that may seem, it meant the meeting could not make much progress, but he promised he would consider it carefully. What he had to say during the meeting suggested he was not minded to alter the original plans. He was more concerned about time that may be lost due to procedural issues if there had to be a re-consultation, revised Bill etc. Cheryl Gillan felt that MPs would take the tunnel option rather more seriously. She reminded the meeting that David Lidington had said he would resign his Government post if the tunnel through the Chilterns was not extended.

8. When challenged that the proposed scheme was bad for the AONB he counter claimed that HS2 would save the Chilterns from the greater environmental "calamity" of large scale house building, as most economic development in future would be concentrated to the north!
9. As previously discussed, the Board must now change its priorities and increase emphasis on other parts of its work programme. The outstanding HS2 related work is to develop the presentation for when called to the Select Committee; and to investigate additional ways to mitigate the worst adverse impacts if no changes are made.

Recommendation

1. **To note the report**