



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON Thursday 10th September 2015 at the offices of the Board , The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor OX39 4HA commencing at 10.30AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.55 PM

Present:

Cllr. John Griffin	Board Member
Cllr. David Nimmo-Smith	Board Member
Ray Payne	Board Member
Cllr. Ian Reay	Board Member, Chairman of the meeting
Helen Tuffs	Board Member
Cllr Alan Walters	Board Member

Kath Daly	CCB Countryside Officer
Sue Holden	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer

In attendance	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board

15/16-1 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Heather Barrett-Mold, Secretary of State appointment.

15/16- 2 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

15/16- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd June 2015 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

15/16- 4 Matters Arising from the minutes 3rd June 2015.

The Countryside Officer informed the meeting that:

Re 14/15-53 item 10 Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund. The Board's bid had not been accepted, the scale of the proposal had not included sufficient areas. However the Countryside Officer pointed out that adjacent areas could be included. It had been a major achievement to get such a wide group of farmers involved at the same time. The decision had been appealed, but no response received yet.

15/16- 5 Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

15/16- 6- Finance Report

The Finance Officer advised the Committee of the Board's financial position to the end of August and the projected position by the end of the year.

1. There have been no changes to the grant settlement as yet.
2. There have been significant developments in employment costs.
3. Reflecting the decisions of the management review team and Personnel Appeals Panel, the following changes have been made to the employment budget:
 - a) Discretionary increments awards have been included
 - b) Provision has been made for the Countryside Officer to return to her post full time from 1st September
 - c) Provision has been made for the Planning Officer to work an additional 2.5 hours per week until the end of the year.
 - d) Additional awards made by the management review group to the Acting Chief Officer have been reflected
 - e) Provision has been made for the recently appointed Chief Officer to work 2 days per week from 1 September and full time from 1 October.
4. The net effect of the changed outlined above is an increase of £25,000 in the employment budget. The budget is revised from £347,000 to £372,000. The equivalent budget for 2014-15 was £402,000.
5. Several other changes are proposed for this year:
 - a) Web site expenditure increased by £230
 - b) £500 has been added for garden maintenance at the lodge and an additional £500 for office furniture.
 - c) Income from the Environment Agency is doubled to £10,000
 - d) The budget for HS2 activity is increased by £5,000 to £20,000
6. It is proposed that the planning consultancy budget of £12,000 will be fully spent in the current year.
7. It is proposed that the Countryside consultancy budget of £8,600 will also be fully spent in the current year. This budget would not be required in 2016/17.
8. The overall impact will be an increase of call on Reserves this year from a budgeted £16,867 to £43,359.
9. The Committee was presented with the records of performance of each of the four categories of activity: operating activity, the work programme, major project activity and special projects.

10. Operating expenditure representing core activity comprises mainly employment and Board costs. Other than the staffing changes outlined above, expenditure is generally in line with expectation.
11. The Work programme is also generally in line with profile at this point in the year
12. The budget for special projects is yet to be spent, enquiries have been received and offers are in the pipeline.
13. Two of the major projects have been completed. The Chalk Streams project continues with Hillforts planned.
14. Income from Defra, local authorities and external funders is generally in line with expectation. There is no confirmation that Defra will reduce their funding this year.
15. Other income earned by the Board is below profile and the details proved. Advertising income from Chalk and Trees is still to be received.
16. A net income of £10,000 from events is budgeted. To date £3,879 has been received, but the Countryside Festival is still to be held in September.
17. It is anticipated that by the end of the financial year the reserves will have reduced by £43,359 to £514,356.

Members discussed the detailed presented finances and budget updates and a discussion on the reserves took place.

The Countryside Officer was provided information on legacy risks on the recently completed major projects.

The Finance Officer was asked to replace the current budget with the updated budget.

- 1. The Committee APPROVED the update to the budget for 2015-16 and NOTED the current financial position.**

15/16- 7 Review of Treasury Management for 2014-15

The Finance Officer advised members of the review of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2014-15. In line with good practice the Board has re-adopted its Treasury Management Strategy in February 2015. Funds that are temporarily surplus are invested. The average rate achieved during the year was 0.77%, compared to 0.93% in the previous year. The original income forecast for 2014-15 was £5,000. The actual income generated was £5,425. In line with Treasury Management policy no sums are invested for more than 364 days.

The returns are entirely dependent upon interest rates offered by high street clearing banks on short term deposits, which are primarily determined by the Bank of England.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the Treasury Management performance for 2014-15**

15/16- 8. Report on HR

The Chairman reported that following a review of the Board's HR policies and conditions to comply with current employment legislation a number of amendments to the Board's HR policies and conditions were required, in particular to parental leave, adoption, shared maternity and paternity provisions. He also reported on recent recruitment and the outcome of the performance pay review by the Personnel Appeals Panel for 2014/15.

1. **The Committee NOTED that the Board's HR policies and procedures have been reviewed and the need for amendments identified.**
2. **The Committee APPROVED the changes to the HR policies and procedures to comply with statutory employment law changes:**
Section 7- Paternal Leave
Section 8- Maternity
Section 9- Adoption
Section 10- Paternity
3. **The Committee NOTED the recent staff appointments.**
4. **The Committee ENDORSED the decisions of the Personnel Appeals Panel regarding pay awards and regrading.**

15/16-9 Chilterns Hillforts HLF bid, Beacons of the past: Chilterns Iron Age Hillfort project.

The Countryside Officer provided a report and informed the Committee that a first round HLF application has been developed for a project to promote better understanding, management and public enjoyment of Chilterns Hillforts and their surrounding landscape. The application will be submitted in early October for a Development Grant of approx. £47,000 to fund the development of detailed proposals for a 4 year project.

1. A draft first round application has been drawn up with technical advice and support from partners. This draft will be finalised and submitted to HLF by the 8th October deadline. The Board will be the applicant and have the following roles:
 - a. Overall project management
 - b. Grant applicant to HLF
 - c. Employer of the Development Officer
 - d. Provider of office space
 - e. Manager of all the funds
 - f. Responsible for securing match funding
 - g. Co-ordinator of the Steering Group.
2. The cost of the Development phase is approximately £65,000 of which circa £13,200 has been agreed in match funding. It was proposed that the Board would provide up to £5,000 cash match funding to this phase.
3. The balance of £46,800 would be the HLF grant request.
4. The main cost of the development phase is the employment of a full time officer for 12 months and consultancy costs.
5. The final application is expected to be for a four year project costing around £700,000. It is proposed that the Board provides up to £25,000 in cash funding over this period, with £35,000 -£50,000 coming from partners and the balance £620,000-£640,000 requested from HLF.
6. If the development phase bid is successful, it is expected that a Development Officer will be recruited to be in place spring 2016.

7. All the work in the development phase will be managed by the Development Officer with technical support where required. The Development Officer will be line-managed by the Countryside Officer.
8. A Steering Group, drawn from a cross section of local organisations and funding partners will provide advice to the Development Officer.
9. There are legal obligations attached to a HLF grant. As the Board does not own the land on which the work will take place, a Letter Licence, stating the terms and conditions under which work will be undertaken on the project, will need to be signed by each landowner. The Board will fund the agreed work and be responsible during implementation, but the landowner will be responsible for maintaining the work for 10 years following completion. Signed agreements will be in place confirming this and reducing the Boards risk.
10. Risk associated with practical work is low as the capital expenditure on each site is relatively low.

The Committee discussed cost implications, the project, the intended audience and geographical aspects of the project.

- 1. The Committee APPROVED the submission of the phase 1 bid to HLF for the project as outlined.**
- 2. The Committee AGREED that the Board should provide funds of up to £5,000 for the development phase and, if successful up to a further £25,000 over the 4 years of the project.**
- 3. The Committee AGREED that subject to a successful phase 1 bid, the Board recruits and employs the project development officer.**

15/16-10- HS2 update

The Countryside Officer had provided a detailed report on the recent developments regarding HS2 and the Select Committee (SC) hearings and gave further updates

1. The four statutory partners (CCB, BCC, CDC, AVDC) had given evidence to the HS2 SC in support of the Chilterns Long Tunnel through the Chilterns AONB on 14th and 15th July.
2. On 21st July evidence was heard from Residents Environmental Protection Association (REPA) on a 4.1km extension to the existing bored tunnel towards Mantle's wood.
3. Towards the end of the session on 21st July, Tim Mould QC (DfT) made a short presentation on 'Chilterns issues'. He made points referring to evidence presented by the Board and others on the case for a long tunnel. None of those parties were present that day. On other points he made no reference to evidence that had been provided.
4. One hour after the close of the session on 21st July the Chairman made a statement. In summary: informing that in the SC's view the case for a long tunnel was not made out, that the case for a northern extension of the South Heath green tunnel had been made. HS2 was asked to evaluate the effects of a deepened cutting on the local area. Provided that is satisfactory, the promoter will be directed to work up that proposal as

an additional provision. And finally that the SC was minded to recommend a southwards extension of the proposed green tunnel at Wendover, unless HS2 reported back with a convincing scheme of further mitigation.

5. The CCB and the other statutory bodies had written to the Chairman of the SC asking for a more detailed statement setting out the basis for the conclusions reached in the statement..
6. The SC statement has implications for the Board in terms of what HS2 will publish and any supplementary ES consultation.
7. The Board is provisionally scheduled to appear on 29th October on non-tunnel mitigation. Further Additional Provisions and an Environmental Statement are now expected in relation the changes announced (if agreed). This could result in the Board and Local Authorities submitting a further petition. The above letter also made a request for deferral of any further SC appearances until after submission of further petitions. The response from the Chair, Robert Symes, does not appear to agree to this.
8. A meeting was held 5th August with local groups, who have presented to the SC in favour of the Chiltern Long Tunnel and a number of local actions were agreed.
9. Non tunnel mitigation is being worked up. Bettina Kirkham will be assisting the Board. A meeting was held with HS2 on 11th August to discuss this and other matters.
10. To allow the Board to contribute to further legal fees and expert advice on additional non-tunnel mitigation, an increase in the HS2 budget of up to £5,000 was requested.

The Committee discussed and considered the report and the update in detail.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the content of the report.**
- 2. The Committee CONFIRMED its support for an increase in the HS2 budget by up to £5,000 in the current financial year.**

15/16- 11 Other business

1. Helen Tuffs brought the Great Western Mainline Rail electrification project to the Committee's attention. The Chilterns AONB is being affected by the electrification of the track Reading to Didcot. This stretch of track is being used as a test track by Network Rail. Much of the work is being carried out under permitted development rights; some of the work to bridges requires permission. This means that the use of planning conditions to safeguard and mitigate have not been applied in the normal way. It was suggested that the Planning Officer brings a report to the next Board meeting.
 - Sue Holden, the new Chief Officer, explained the arrangements in place allowing her to take up her role full time from 1st October.
 - Helen Tuffs brought the "Memorandum of Understanding with the Chilterns Society" to the Committee's noticed and the Countryside Officer asked the Committee members to review and comment on the memorandum for reporting to the Board meeting in October.
 - The Countryside Officer reported that the Annual Forum on 25th November already has 131 bookings.

15/16-12. Next meeting: Wednesday 9th December at 10.30 am at the offices of the Board in Chinnor.

Future meeting dates: Wednesday 24 February 2016, Wednesday 25 May 2016, Thursday 8 September 2016 and Thursday 8 December 2016

The meeting closed at 12.55

The Chairman.....

Date.....