



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON Thursday 22nd May 2014 at THE LODGE, 90 STATION ROAD, CHINNOR OXON. OX39 4HA COMMENCING AT 10.30AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.15PM**

Present:

Cllr. John Griffin	Board member
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Board Member
Cllr. David Nimmo-Smith	Board Member
Ray Payne	Board Member
Cllr. Ian Reay	Board Member
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Board Member, Chairman of the meeting
Elisabeth Wilson	Board Member

Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer

In attendance	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board

**13/14-124 Item 1- Apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Heather Barrett-Mold, Helen Tuffs and Cllr Shirley Judges

**13/14-125. Item 2- Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**13/14-126. Item 3- Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**13/14-127. Item 4- Matters Arising from the minutes 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

There were no matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda.

**13/14-128. Item 5- Public Question time**

No members of the public were present.

### **13/14-129. Item 6- Finance Report Provisional outturn 2013-14**

The Finance Officer advised members of the Board's financial position to the end of the financial year 2013-14.

The likely financial position shows a reduction in expenditure of £18,290 (3.4%) lower than forecast. Core expenditure totalled £526,605; all core expenditure was covered by income from DEFRA and local authorities including parish and town councils.

Income was higher than forecast partly due to local authority contribution not being cut as expected. Levels of earned income were also higher than forecast. £480 of income has not yet been recorded.

The small grants scheme gave £5,934 of grants out of a fund of £20,000.

The net effect of movements is an increase in reserves of £21,352 to £562,068.

The next step will be the preparation of the formal accounts for presentation to the Board in June, which will then be subject to audit by the Audit Commission.

The medium term forecast for 2014-16 will need to be adjusted in light of the year-end position as at 31/03/14 and possible changes to the grant to be announced by DEFRA affecting 2014-15 and possibly 2015-16.

It is the intention to pursue the same strategy in the next year.

The Committee thanked the Finance Officer for his work and the clear presentation of the financial results.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the likely financial outcome and that the formal accounts will be presented to the Board in June.**
- 2. The Committee NOTED that an updated Medium Term Financial Plan will be presented to a future meeting.**

### **13/14-130. Item 7- Internal Audit Report 2013-14**

The Finance Officer reported that the Board's internal auditor, Hertfordshire Shared Internal Audit Service had recently carried out their annual review and had submitted their report. All members had received a copy.

The internal auditor had concluded that Substantial Assurance on effective management can be provided. No priority recommendations had been made, but two "merit attention" recommendations were identified;

- a. Chapter 14 of the Financial Regulations should be reviewed by the Board and consideration given to amending the 'tendering requirements'
- b. It is good practice to bank all income within five days of receipt

Both recommendations had been accepted.

The Finance Officer was congratulated on a successful internal audit report.

**1. The Committee NOTED and AGREED the report of the internal auditors.**

**13/14-131. Item 8- Contingency Budget for 2014-15.**

The Chief Officer advised the Committee of the changes in the Board's financial circumstances and the need to adjust the approved budget for 2014-15. The income from Local Authorities has not been cut by as much as expected; that income is now anticipated at £105,000, £300 less than last year. The higher than anticipated contributions means that the approved core budget expenditure can be covered without an allocation of earned income, normally used for activity and project costs. This means the draw down from the Development and Budget Equalisation Reserve would be reduced to up to £11,000 compared to the original forecast.

In April the Board was forewarned by DEFRA of the possibility of DEFRA making additional cuts in its 2014-15 grant of up to 1.9% or £7,800. The possible effect of this cut will be offset by the higher than anticipated local authority grants and the lower than budgeted Consumer Prices Index which is used for employment and members' allowances costs.

It is likely that the provisional 2015-16 budget will require adjustment.

All three adjustments would mean the total drawdown from the Development Reserve would be adjusted from £30,000 to £22,000.

- 1. The Committee NOTED that the original budget for 2014-15 will be 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.**

**13/14-132. Item 9 Personnel Report**

The Chief Officer informed the Committee that following a review of the Board's HR Policies a need has been identified to make amendments 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 had been notified, as required, of changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Committee discussed and approved changes to the qualifying criteria for a discretionary salary increment

1. **The Committee NOTED that the Board's HR policies and procedures have been reviewed and that a need for amendment has been identified.**
2. **The Committee APPROVED the increase in parental leave provision and that the Whistleblowing policy is amended.**
3. **The Committee NOTED the HR KPI's and the position relating to auto pension enrolment.**
4. **The Committee APPROVED the proposed adjustment of the eligibility for a performance related salary increment**

### **13/14-133. Item 10 Board Member Alumni**

The Chief Officer reported that since the establishment of the Board in 2004 there has been a limited turnover of Board Members. The last two years has seen an increase in members standing down largely because their term of office as Secretary of State member has ended. 2015 will likely see more local authority and parish council members standing down from their positions in local government.

The Committee discussed the creation of an alumni style of membership for ex Board members who wish to keep in touch and continue to contribute 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 the Board. The annual cost plus staff time would be in the order of £1,000.

1. **The Committee AGREED to propose to the Board that an 'Alumni' should be created for retiring Board members.**
2. **The Committee AGREED that the Chief Officer would circulate a proposal on the extent to which 'Alumni' members can be empowered to represent and make commitments on behalf of the Board.**
3. **The Committee AGREED to an annual budget of £1,000 to support the 'Alumni'**

### **13/14-134. Item 11 Report on HS2**

The Chief Officer informed the Committee of the latest developments on HS2. This included that the House of Commons approved the second reading of the HS2 Bill. The Board's Parliamentary Agent, Sharpe Pritchard, had submitted the Board's petition on 16<sup>th</sup> May. The Committee discussed the process and procedures that are expected to be followed.

It is highly likely that the Board will be called to present its case to the Committee. The hearings are expected to start in September 2014. A full length bored tunnel is the basis of the Board's petition.

A meeting had been held with Sir David Higgins, Chairman HS2 Ltd on the 1<sup>st</sup> May and a subsequent meeting had been held with HS2 on 21<sup>st</sup> May. It was agreed to meet again at the end of June.

Ray Payne noted that the Board's staff had given exemplary performance beyond what could reasonably be expected.

The Chairman thanked Ray Payne for all his outstanding work in assisting the Board with HS2.

**1. The Committee NOTED the report on HS2.**

**13/14-135. Any other business:**

The Chief Officer reported that DEFRA has reclassified Britain into rural and urban areas based on population density. This has resulted in many parts of the Chilterns no longer being classified as rural. This is causing substantial problems with the LEADER bid. The Committee agreed that the Board should take up the matter with DEFRA.

**13/14-136. Future meeting dates: Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at 10.30am at the offices in Chinnor.**

The meeting closed at 12.15

The Chairman.....

Date.....