



**Agenda for Board Meeting to be held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday 26 January 2011 in
Village Hall, Russells Water, nr Henley-on-Thames, RG9 6ER**

Agenda Item	Timing	Page No
1. Apologies for Absence / Changes in Membership	10.00	
2. Declarations of Interest To declare any personal and prejudicial interests	10.02	
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010 to be agreed as a correct record	10.03	1 - 8
4. Matters Arising	10.06	
5. Public Question Time	10.10	
6. Report of the Executive Committee	10.13	9 - 10
7. Report of the Planning Committee	10.23	11 - 14
8. Medium Term Financial Forecast 2011-2015	10.33	15 - 20
9. Grant Application to Natural England/DEFRA	11.03	21 - 22
10. Report on HS2	11.30	23 - 26
11. Report on 'The Big Society' and Localism Bill	11.50	27 - 32
12. Report on the Special Trees and Woods Project	12.20	33 - 34
13. Date of Next and Future Meetings The next meeting of the Conservation Board, will be held on Wednesday 23 March 2011 at 10.00am		

Dates of future meetings:

15 June (please note change of date)
19 October including the AGM

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TO: MEMBERS OF THE CHILTERNES CONSERVATION BOARD



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2010 IN LARGE DINING ROOM, JUDGES LODGINGS, COUNTY HALL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, AYLESBURY HP20 1UA, COMMENCING AT 10.20 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 1.27 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Member

Appointing Body

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr Geoff Andrews	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr David Barnard	North Herts District Council
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Brian Norman	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Richard Pushman	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Chris Richards	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Sheila Roden	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Chiltern District Council
Cllr David Nimmo Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Bill Storey	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Alan Walters	South Bucks District Council

Appointed by Secretary of State

Mike Fox (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Dr Heather Barrett-Mold	Secretary of State
Sir John Johnson	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Kevin Mayne	Secretary of State
Dr Simon Mortimer	Secretary of State
Helen Tuffs	Secretary of State
John Willson	Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr Mary Goldsmith	Bedfordshire
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
Cllr Shirley Judges	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Barbara Wallis	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

Officers

Maureen Keyworth	BCC and Clerk to the Board
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Cllr Roger Emmett.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Cllr Sheila Roden the new appointee from Luton Borough Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Item 8 Statement of Accounts

Members were informed that the Annual Audit Return had been approved by the auditors without qualification.

Item 7 report from the Planning Committee

Barbara Wallis informed members that the Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan 3 would be out for consultation shortly and the Board would be making an input. The consultation period runs between 6 December 2010 and 25 February 2011.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present.

6. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the report of the Chief Officer the purpose of which was to report discussions and resolutions of the Executive Committee at its meeting on 19 May.

The following was noted:

- The six monthly review of the risk register had been undertaken and the risk of falling staff morale had been added.
- A review of HR policies had been undertaken. It was noted that the Board was not in default of any legislation, but this was a confirmation that the policies in place are up to date.

The Board NOTED the decisions made under delegated authority.

7. REPORT FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members received the report of the Planning Officer the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee and decisions taken under delegated powers.

The following was noted:

- The Planning Conference was well attended by 50 delegates and positive feedback was received.

- The Committee was reviewing the Building Design Award to give more emphasis to local distinctiveness as many awards in recent years had been given to modern buildings.
- Feedback from two Parish and Town Council training sessions had been positive, but it was noted numbers were lower than in previous years.
- The Planning Committee visited several sites to look at brick and flint on recent housing developments. The Committee was considering ways in which to promote best practice as the use of flint on some of those sites visited was disappointing.

The Board NOTED the report from the Planning Committee

8. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST 2011-2015

Members received the report of the Chief Officer and Finance Officer, the purpose of which was to seek the feedback on the options considered by the Executive Committee on how the Board should manage the likely cuts in local and central government funding.

The Board noted that the options had been prepared based on current advice. However, as yet no information had been received from Natural England in relation to possible cuts in grant allocation.

Key Points:

- The budget for future years assumes no inflation or cost of living increase for staff. Earned income is highly dependent upon interest rates.
- Based on the net result of cuts over the next four years, and an assumed reduction in grant and income received from external organisations, the budget for 2013/14 would be £178,000 lower than now if no action is taken.
- The options to find further funding were set out in paragraph 7 of the report.

The three key questions members were asked to consider were:

- How realistic would it be to generate significant amounts of additional income?
- Which items of expenditure should be delegated for reduction, for instance, Sustainable Development Fund, Chalk streams?
- To what extent should reserves be used to cover the deficit?

The Chief Officer stated that in addition to cutting costs, earning more money is vital. For example, he said that up to now most events put on by the Board are free or have a low cost attached to them. This may have to change.

The suggestion of a bonus scheme was discussed, in order to give staff an incentive to attract more money. The Chief Officer stated that income generation would be part of the appraisals. Concern was expressed that this kind of incentive could cause stress and competition amongst the staff if it were not based on collective targets and rewards.

Other issues discussed:

- Whether the Board is able to tap into S106 monies as a source of income;
- Concern was expressed about phasing out the Sustainable Development Fund completely. It was considered as part of the public face of the Board and appreciated by its recipients. A member suggested using some of the reserves to sustain the Fund.
- Sponsorship for the SDF was also raised. Helen Tuffs suggested that officers

from the National Trust could support the Board through sharing of ideas. Kevin Mayne also agreed that seeking the advice of a fund raising expert would be a good use of reserves, and also offered support.

- With regard to the SDF it was suggested that the criteria should be revisited, particularly in relation to providing funding to precepting authorities. It was noted that the number of local authority bids has reduced. The Chief Officer stated he hoped that the SDF would remain in place for as long as possible. The Fund had proven its worth and did make a difference. The value of the awards would be limited and larger projects would be referred to the LEADER programme. As part of the SDF process advice could be provided to applicants on where to look for other sources of funding.
- Freezing staff pay for more than two years will be a challenge. Staff are highly valued and efforts should be made to reward them in some way.
- The work of Members is also highly valued and the Members' Allowances should be retained. However, a member suggested that a 10% reduction at some point may be reasonable.
- Sponsorship of events and charging for events was supported. It was suggested that a pricing strategy be drawn up.
- New ways of fundraising needed to be developed but not at a cost to other organisations, such as the Chiltern Society. It was noted that the NAAONB will shortly be holding a fundraising seminar.
- The Chief Officer stated that the current reserves would provide a cushion until the Board has developed new ways of working.
- Several members reported on the likely impact on their budgets and consequent effects on their financial contribution to the Board. It is likely that Oxon CC will make a cut of approximately 25%, not least as they have to contribute to three AONBs. Richard Pushman stated the work of the AONB is widely respected and local authorities could not carry on the work done by the Board if the funding was cut. The Finance Officer stated it would be helpful if all Local Authorities notified the Board as soon as the AONB settlement had been agreed.

The Board

- 1. NOTED and advised on the implication of the financial modelling**
- 2. NOTED that a detailed financial plan will be presented to the next meeting in light of the Comprehensive Spending Review and guidance from the local authorities and Natural England on likely cuts to their grant aid.**

9. REPORT ON MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Members received the report of the Chief Officer and Planning Officer, the purpose of which was to inform the Board of several major development proposals and to seek feedback on how to respond to them.

HS2

The Chief Officer informed members that Phil Hammond had visited the area and insisted that the preferred route was the right one. No further work is being done on alternative routes. He stated that the government was committed to HS2 as it would be 'transformational' and would help heal the north-south divide. The Chief Officer reported that several economic analysts believed that it was likely to lead to more economic activity in London at the expense of northern cities.

It was noted that several papers had been submitted by local groups for consideration by the Transport Select Committee, which was considering value for money of major

transport infrastructure projects.

The government timetable for HS2 was set out in the report. The Chief Officer stated that the issue was not just about what would happen when HS2 was completed, but what will happen during construction.

Shirley Judges stated that the visit by the Secretary of State was useful in that it brought home the fact that routes avoiding the Chilterns were not being considered.

Proposed High Voltage Underground Electricity Cable (Saunderton to Amersham)

The cable would run from Mop End, south of Amersham, to Saunderton. It was considered that Scottish and Southern Electricity had not complied with S85 of the CROW Act, to show that they have given regard to the special qualities of the AONB and this needed to be addressed.

The Chief Officer stated that pressure would be put on the Utilities for a S106 agreement for contributions in relation to damage caused during the construction period.

Proposed Wind Farm at Wingrave

A scoping exercise is currently being undertaken.

It was suggested that the colour of the wind turbines be looked at, which could mitigate the effect on the landscape. Also the development of helical turbines which are more compact and omni-directional.

Proposed re-development of Carmel College, Wallingford

Currently there are a lot of buildings on the site and re-development maybe positive. However, the new buildings could be more obvious on the landscape and this will need to be monitored.

Proposed Community Sports Stadium near High Wycombe

Wycombe District Council is consulting on four options on the provision of a new sports stadium. The favoured site was Booker Airpark, which is surrounded by the AONB.

The main issue for any site will be the scale of the building, which will be bigger than the current stadium.

The Chief Officer emphasised the need for the Board to be involved throughout the process.

Barbara Wallis stated the need to make clear doubts about all the proposed sites. Traffic issues at Booker Park may be worse than at Abbey Barn. Comments needed to be made about any encroachment on the AONB through either light pollution or traffic.

The Board

- 1. NOTED the potential impact of each of these possible major development proposals and provided initial feedback**
- 2. AGREED that sub-groups be formed to consider each proposal and submits its views to the Planning Committee.**

10. STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Members received a presentation from the Countryside Officer, the purpose of which was to inform the Board of progress in producing the 2010 report and to highlight key findings.

The main issues relating to maintenance of the Annual Statement are:

- Future availability of data
- In-house capacity
- Rate of change of indicators
- Interpretation of data and production of a report for the public
- Constant refining and supplementing indicators
- Increasing value over time of trend data

The Board NOTED the progress made on the production of the 2010 report and the key points arising from this year's report.

11. AONB AND NATIONAL PARK DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Members received the report of the Chief Officer the purpose of which was to seek Board member views on the proposed guidance and how it should be used. The guidance will be published in the spring and there is pressure to move boundaries. The Chief Officer asked that members forward to him any comments on the document.

The following points were made:

- Piecemeal changes of the boundaries should not be made. An overall review would be better.
- The need to look at the differences between the AONBs and national parks was raised. The Chief Officer asked members whether they felt that the differences between AONBs and national parks were becoming blurred or less relevant.
- A review of the Management Plan will take place next year and should include whether the current AONB boundaries are right.

The Board

- 1. provided feedback on the draft guidance**
- 2. AGREED to raise with the National Association for AONBs, Natural England and DEFRA the need for a national debate of the future of the AONB and National Park designations**
- 3. AGREED to incorporate in the next review of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan, special consideration of the need or desirability to review the boundary.**

12. SHAPING THE NATURE OF ENGLAND - DEFRA CONSULTATION

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to draw members' attention to the discussion document and to seek feedback on proposed comments.

Heather Barrett-Mold informed members that the deadline for feedback was 30 October and that this consultation was a forerunner to a White Paper. The

consultation followed the themes of the Coalition in shifting the balance of power from Big Government to Big Society - making an effort to hear the views of local communities over those of civil servants. The work of the AONB ticks all the boxes and will strengthen the influence of AONBs. It was important that this was supported.

Recreation and health benefits have been omitted from the paper and these will be commented upon in the consultation. Another member suggested that reduced consumption and waste should be commented on, particularly with regard to water resources and management of waste.

The Board provided feedback on the content of the discussion paper.

13. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Conservation Board, will be held on Wednesday 19 January 2011 at 10.00am in the Village Hall, Russells Water, nr Henley on Thames RG9 6ER. (*Addendum: subsequent to the meeting, the date for the next meeting was **changed from 19 January 2011 to 26 January 2011.***)

Dates of future meetings:

23 March

22 June

19 October including the AGM

CHAIRMAN

Report from the Executive Committee

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: At its meeting on 8th December the Executive Committee:

1. Mike Fox was elected as chairman.
2. Noted the satisfactory financial position for the year to date.
3. Discussed in depth the medium term financial outlook
4. Agreed a programme of cost reduction and income generation for 2011-2012
5. Received the Chief Officer's latest report

Purpose of Report: To report discussions and resolutions of the Executive Committee at its meeting on 8th December

Finance Report (April – October)

1. There were no significant items to report. Both income and expenditure were close to forecast with no exceptional items. A number of potential cost savings had been identified for this year which would give a small end of year surplus of up to £18,000, which could be carried forward to offset the expected deficit in 2011-2012.

Medium Term Financial Forecast

3. There was considerable discussion on the possible scenarios for cuts in government and local government aid in the period to 2014/15. Following discussion with DEFRA the likely reduction in grant aid would be 23% in cash terms. The profile of the cuts was not known. A request had been made to Richard Benyon MP, the Environment Minister, for the cuts to be introduced evenly over the 4 years.
4. It was also thought likely that in future the Board (and all other AONBs) would receive their funding directly from DEFRA from 2011 onwards.

Cost Cutting and Income Generation

5. The Committee considered an outline programme of cuts which would save £28,000 in 2011-2012. It was agreed the budget for next year would include this programme which was largely based on many small cuts rather than

major cuts to a small number of items. The two most notable reductions would be not to print the biannual “What’s On” programme, which will be an electronic only version in future, and not to undertake an annual land use survey.

6. A number of potential fund raising initiatives were considered including the creation of a “Caring for The Chilterns” fund to secure donations and sponsorship for specific projects.

Chief Officer’s Report

7. The Chief Officer presented his report which has been since circulated by e mail to all members.

Recommendation

1. **To note the decisions made under delegated authority**

Report from the Planning Committee

Author: Colin White - Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 8th September. The following items were discussed:

1. Election of Chairman
2. High Speed 2 update.
3. Financial matters.
4. Government White Paper – Local Growth: realising every place’s potential.
5. Chilterns AONB Planning Conference feedback.
6. Chilterns AONB Planning Forum feedback.
7. Responses to Development Plans.
8. Responses to planning applications.

Purpose of Report: To bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee and decisions taken under delegated powers.

Election of Chairman

1. Barbara Wallis was proposed, seconded and unanimously elected as Chairman of the Planning Committee until the Board’s next Annual General Meeting.

High Speed 2 update

2. The Committee noted the activity that had lately been taking place including the summit in Aylesbury on 15th October and work on the likely impacts (the Board’s viewshed and other work). The discussions in Parliament and recent press coverage were also noted.

Financial matters

3. The need to raise income was highlighted and various methods by which this could be achieved were discussed. These included the possible drawing down of Section 106 obligations or Community Infrastructure Levy funds, raising income from the provision of advice to various bodies at the pre-application stage (developers principally) and the sale of branded products (USB sticks with the Design Guide and other publications on). It was resolved that the local authorities would be contacted about Section 106 and other funds and charging for pre-application advice, and that other AONBs would be contacted about examples of best practice.

Government White Paper – Local Growth: realising every place’s potential

4. The key issues arising from the recent Government White Paper were highlighted. These principally included the need to be involved in many more

consultation exercises (nationally in connection with definitions of sustainable development and the new planning framework, regionally with major infrastructure developments and locally as decisions may be devolved to that level with community plans and the right to build) and the need to monitor the creation of local economic partnerships as these may have some planning functions. More detail will emerge in the Localism Bill.

Chilterns AONB Planning Conference feedback

5. The annual AONB Planning Conference took place on 6th October in Watlington and discussed the issues of the Big Society, Localism and the Community Right to Build and what it would mean for the Chilterns. Four speakers addressed the conference in the morning and site visits were arranged in the afternoon to Watlington, Cray's Pond and Woodcote to look at local issues (village plans and affordable housing for example). 50 delegates had booked places from 34 different organisations. The feedback received showed that overall delegates were satisfied. Delegates had been asked about format and frequency of the event and the present arrangements were supported. Based on the responses it was resolved that the next conference should take place on 5th October 2011.

Chilterns AONB Planning Forum feedback

6. The Planning Forum took place on the 16th November at the Chiltern District Council offices. The Government's Big Society and Localism agenda, Comprehensive Spending Review, the local growth White Paper and the recent Natural England guidance on AONB designations were discussed. The Forum also discussed whether it would be appropriate to charge for future meetings and it was resolved that this should not happen and that all future events would be free. The next Forum takes place on 10th May 2011 and Wycombe DC has generously offered to host this free of charge.

Development Plan Responses

7. The development plans responses detailed below were approved by the Committee.

Wycombe DC – Wycombe Community Stadium project consultation (issues and options)

8. The Board's response focussed on: a lack of information being provided, particularly detail about the possible options, the need to address the possible future use of Adams Park, the design, scale and massing of any development would cause great concern as it would be clearly visible from within the AONB, the impact of lights on the AONB, the impact on the AONB of huge increases in traffic, the impact of any enabling development (anything up to 2,000 houses and other uses) and the fact that this would be in unsustainable locations. It was stressed that greater account should have been taken of the proximity of sites to the AONB.

South Oxfordshire DC – Core Strategy housing changes consultation

9. The Board did not object to the Council using the housing figures from the South East Plan but suggested they should be a guide rather than a target. The Board suggested that small developments could take place in villages provided this were for identified local needs and of the highest quality. The Board did not object to the inclusion of a policy that addresses the issue of density and context.

South Bucks DC – Core Strategy proposed changes and further proposed changes

10. The Board's response supported many of the proposed changes as these had arisen as a result of ongoing negotiations and meant that the AONB was being dealt with in a more consistent manner.

Chiltern DC – Core Strategy draft publication document

11. There was much to welcome in this document. However, there were still concerns about the way that the chalk streams were being addressed and various changes were proposed (many previous concerns had been addressed already). Comments were also made about an incorrect reference to the Management Plan (in connection with equestrian uses).

English Heritage – the setting of heritage assets guidance consultation document

12. The document was generally welcomed. However, it was felt that much greater recognition should be given to the importance of protected landscapes and AONB Management Plans. The need to provide greater clarity about the how the setting of heritage assets can relate to the experience of buried archaeological remains and how it relates to the wider landscape was stressed. The Board thought that the guidance should explain its role in influencing policy formulation and should identify how the setting can be taken into account through local development frameworks. The recognition that setting does not have a fixed extent was welcomed. However, some assets and their settings are extensive and this should be clearly explained within the guidance.

Further detail on the development plans responses, and all other papers, can be found in the Committee report which is available on the AONB website. See the following link.

http://www.chilternsaonb.org/downloads/board_meetings/PI_agenda_011210.pdf

Planning applications update

13. In the year from 1st April 2010 details of 118 planning applications or appeals have been brought to the attention of, or requested by, the Planning Officer. All of these have been responded to, with 20 being the subject of formal representations (17 objections and 3 supports). Of the 13 applications thus far determined 10 are in line with the Board's comments (77%).

Recommendation

1. The Board notes the report from the Planning Committee.

Medium Term Financial Forecast

Author: Chris Smith Finance Officer
Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary As a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement on 20 October a revised Medium Term Financial Forecast has been prepared to cover the four year period 2011-15. It is assumed that the Board's government grant will be cut by 21.5% in real terms between 2011-12 and 2014-2015. If no action is taken the annual operating deficit will reach over £175,000 by 2014-2015. This paper identifies ways in which the Board could re-establish a balanced annual budget.

Purpose of Report: To inform the Board of the potential impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review and to suggest ways in which a sustainable and balanced budget can be achieved by 2014-2015.

Background

1. At its last meeting the Executive Committee considered a draft of a financial forecast covering the period 2011-2012 to 2014-15.
2. That forecast took account of the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement on 20 October and assumed a 23% cut in Defra funding over the period, together with 35% reductions in local authority and external chalk streams funding. The Defra cuts were assumed to fall fairly equally in each year.
3. Other assumptions included an increase in employers' pension contributions, an increase in VAT from January 2011 and a reduction in the Ordnance Survey fee. A 2% per annum staff cost of living pay award was incorporated for each year from 2012-13 onwards. No increases were allowed for discretionary increments. Non-pay inflation was allowed for at 2% per year.

Latest Developments

4. Latest information suggests that the total grant cut from Defra will be 21.5% with equal reductions over the four years. Nothing further is known about grant payments from local authorities. The assumptions about Defra grant have now been updated in the financial model annexed.
5. In addition, further consideration has been given to the impact of non-pay inflation and the VAT increase. It is felt that as most of these costs are project expenditure the budgets should be cash limited and the inflation and VAT

absorbed. Those costs that are subject to inflationary increases such as energy are a relatively small part of the total budget.

6. A piece of good news has been received in that employer's pension costs will remain at 14.1% rather than the 20% expected. This will save some £17,000 p.a. compared to the previous model.
7. An update to the financial model is now attached incorporating the following assumptions:
 - a. The Natural England grant reduction is included at 21.5% cash spread over 4 years.
 - b. The 35% reduction in local authority funding is assumed to fall wholly in 2011-12.
 - c. Staff are assumed to receive their contractual, but not discretionary, increments in each year and no cost of living award in 2011-12, but 2% per annum thereafter.
 - d. No allowance is made for non –pay inflation.

Implications

8. The impact of this financial model is to create a potential deficit in 2011-12 of £62,000 but a total shortfall if no action is taken of £175,000 by 2014-15. This can be seen on the first page of the model attached.
9. The action needed to address the final shortfall when it is known will include cost reductions, income generation and use of reserves to assist the process. The aim must be to have a balanced budget of approx. £536,000 (based on this model) by 2015.

Options

10. A number of options are identified at the top of the second page. These include increasing income, reducing non-staff costs and using reserves. Further savings of £31,000 would be needed in 2015-16 to offset the use of reserves in 2014-15.

Impact on Reserves

11. The final section of the second page shows the impact on reserves. At the start of 2011-12 reserves will stand at £462,000 plus the results of the planned underspend in the current financial year.
12. Based upon the assumptions in the model earmarked reserves will fall by £55,000 by 31 March 2015 and the Budget Equalisation Reserve by £73,000.

Next Steps

13. Until a firm announcement is made on grant allocations an accurate calculation of the shortfall cannot be made. The model will be updated as more information is received.
14. However, over the coming weeks it is planned to produce a detailed business plan that will guide decisions over the four year period. Work has already started on that and a first discussion took place at the last meeting of the Executive Committee.
15. In the meantime work is continuing to prepare a detailed budget for 2011-12 that reflects the assumptions in this financial model. That budget will be presented to the Board on 23 March.

Recommendations:

- 1. To note the implications of the financial modelling.**
- 2. To note that a detailed business plan will be drawn up that will guide decision making for the four year period and presented to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.**
- 3. To note that a detailed budget for 2011-12 will be presented to the Board on 23 March for approval.**

Item	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Notes
	£	£	£	£	£	
Expenditure:						
Core - staff employment costs	339,335	344,945	353,120	360,085	367,190	
Core - non staff costs	269,485	269,485	269,485	269,485	269,485	
Less reduction in Ordnance Survey fee		- 12,800	- 12,800	- 12,800	- 12,800	
Contribution to SE Landscapes Officer	2,081	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	
Chalk Streams Project	41,435	41,435	41,435	41,435	41,435	
SDF	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	
Merchandise purchases	80					
Total expenditure	697,416	690,065	698,240	705,205	712,310	If no action is taken
Income:						
NE Core	466,888					
NE Chalk Streams	20,718					
SDF	45,000					
Natural England Total Grant	532,606	503,845	476,638	450,899	418,096	21.5% reduction excl. inflation
Local authorities	115,903	75,335	75,335	75,335	75,335	35% reduction excl. inflation
Chalk Streams external funding	20,717	18,645	16,781	15,103	13,466	35% reduction excl. inflation
Earned income, sales, donations	29,461	29,655	29,655	29,655	29,655	
Total income	698,687	627,481	598,408	570,992	536,552	If no action is taken
Funding shortfall	- 1,271	62,584	99,832	134,213	175,758	If no action is taken

Item	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Notes
	£	£	£	£	£	
Options						
Increase Earned Income		5,000	12,000	20,000	32,000	compared to 10-11
Use of Earmarked Reserves		10,000	12,500	12,500	20,000	
Reduction to SDF		5,000	17,500	25,000	45,000	compared to 10-11
Reduction of core non staff expenditure		20,000	25,000	32,000	40,000	compared to 10-11
Reduction in Chalk Streams Project expenditure		3,000	5,000	10,000	12,000	compared to 10-11
Reduction in members' allowance payments		-	5,000	15,000	15,000	compared to 10-11
Sub total		43,000	77,000	114,500	164,000	
Use of Budget Equalisation Reserve		19,584	22,832	19,713	11,758	£73,887
Total	-	62,584	99,832	134,213	175,758	
Reserves						
Brought forward	494,558	462,329	432,745	397,413	365,200	
Surplus from 2010-2011	1,271					
Less earmarked reserves used	33,500	10,000	12,500	12,500	20,000	
Less equalisation reserve used	0	19,584	22,832	19,713	11,758	
Total	462,329	432,745	397,413	365,200	333,442	
Breakdown of Reserves		End of 11-12	End of 12-13	End of 13-14	End of 14-15	
General	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000	170,000	
Budget Equalisation	208,167	188,583	165,751	146,038	134,280	
Earmarked	59,164	49,164	36,664	24,164	4,164	
Restricted	24,998	24,998	24,998	24,998	24,998	
Total	462,329	432,745	397,413	365,200	333,442	

Grant Application to DEFRA (Natural England)

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary The Board needs to submit its grant application for 2011-21012 by 24th January. The total amount of grant requested is £503,845.

Purpose of Report To seek Board confirmation that it wishes to apply for £503,845 and approves the outline Business Plan submitted in support of the application.

Background

1. As reported in Item 8, the Board will receive its grant directly from Government in future when the responsibility passes on 1st April 2011 from Natural England to DEFRA. DEFRA/NE has advised that the total cut in grant aid over the period 2011- 2015 will be 21.5%.
2. For 2011-2012 the application will be handled by Natural England which requires the application to be submitted by 24th January. It has advised that the total amount of grant aid will be a maximum of £503,845.
3. The Board will need to use the NE application form and in the past has supported the application with an outline Business Plan (appendix 1)
4. The Plan includes a summary of the budget and a detailed work plan. At the time of writing the local authorities have yet to notify the Board of their likely financial contribution. The work programme will need to be amended if the contribution varies significantly from the estimate (35% cut).
5. The Board will request that DEFRA pays its grant quarterly in advance, as Natural England has to date (the usual arrangement with AONBs is to pay quarterly in arrears).

Recommendations

1. **The Board applies for the maximum grant aid of £503,845.**
2. **The Board approves the supporting Business Plan subject to any amendments to the proposed work programme**

Report on HS2

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: The Government has published its preferred route through the Misbourne Valley (Route 3) and the public consultation is planned for February- July. The Stop HS2 campaign is still strong and has successfully secured considerable and largely sympathetic media attention. The government timetable is to publish its final plans by the end of 2011 and then to prepare the necessary legislation to be laid before Parliament in 2013. If approved construction will begin in 2015.

Purpose of the Report To advise members of the progress on opposing HS2 and to re-affirm the Board's opposition to HS2 when public consultation begins in February 2011.

Background

1. On 20th November the Government, as expected, published its preferred route along the Misbourne Valley (Route 3). Relatively minor changes had been made to the route as published in March.
2. The Government now plans to consult the public from February to July. It will be holding a number of events along the line but most information will be made available on the internet. This is a cause of concern as many of the maps and documents are large and it is both difficult and expensive to download and print them. It is not clear how much location specific environmental information will be published. They will be publishing an Appraisal of Sustainability (AoS), which tend to be a high level strategic, documents and lack the detail of a full Environmental Impact Assessment.
3. It is also understood that a revised business case will be published. This has been a weakness of the case for HS2 to date and the Government can be expected to present a more robust case. Similarly the environmental case, especially as measured by cargo emissions, has been weak. The Board's position should remain that of opposition as the Government has not provided a sufficiently convincing case that the national benefits outweigh the irreparable damage to the Chilterns AONB.
4. The Government has also developed its plan since the initial announcement in March by announcing that a "Y" shaped network will reach Manchester and Leeds by the early mid 2030s. The second phase will also have a spur to Heathrow and a link between HS1 and HS2. These additions are expected to add at least £4 billion to the cost and possibly much more depending upon how the link is made to Heathrow.
5. Following the Secretary of State's visits in September HS2 Ltd have proposed some design alterations in the Chilterns. They propose to create a land bridge

over a deep cutting opposite Shardeloes lake north of Amersham. They also propose to create a similar structure where the line crosses the Great Missenden to Chesham Road. HS2 call it a green tunnel- it will be a shallow cut and cover tunnel rather than a bored tunnel. Finally, along some sections it proposes to reduce the land take by having vertical sides to cuttings rather than open embankments. These are all helpful changes but do not make a major difference.

6. The published maps do not provide sufficient detail to identify the fate of the public rights of way. This has been raised directly with HS2 Ltd. This is a level of detail they have not yet attended to.
7. The local action groups are well organised. It has been decided not to create a single campaign organisation but to promote collaboration under a federation banner (AGAHST- Action Groups against High Speed Trains)). The two most prominent groups are the HS2 Action Alliance and the Stop HS2 group. The collective effort has been remarkable and has been able to marshal considerable resources and expertise which have addressed effectively all aspects of the railway. This has helped the campaign to be taken seriously and has impressed the many journalists who have visited.
8. Just about every major newspaper, TV and radio channel has visited and covered the story. Whilst opinions still vary they have given full coverage to anti-HS2 views and, generally, commentators have been critical of the arguments for HS2. This is a considerable shift from the near universally supportive coverage when HS2 was first announced in March 2010.
9. The Board has continued to work with partners, notably the local authorities, Chiltern Society, Wildlife Trust and National Trust, to identify specific local impacts. In due course this must be made available during the public consultation stage. Whilst the campaign is being effective the government ministers, including the Prime Minister, have used robust language to state that the government will press ahead with HS2. They have undermined public confidence in the consultation stage as a result. It would be sensible, therefore, whilst maintaining a stance of opposition, to develop plans, should the railway go ahead, to mitigate the impacts and to seek associated environmental and community benefits. In Kent HS2 Environmental Fund was endowed with £2m by the railway company. A similar arrangement should be considered for HS2 but the sums available must be several times the very modest investment in Kent.
10. The Board initially put aside a fighting fund of £9,000 (£1,000 for 2010-2011 budget and £8,000 from reserves). Approx. £5,000 of this remains. Recently other groups have managed to secure funds and the local authorities have also created a fighting fund. Increasingly funds will be needed to secure the services of legal adviser and parliamentary lobbyists. The Board must be willing to contribute to this effort. If additional funds are required the matter will be raised at the next appropriate meeting of either the Board or Executive Committee.

Recommendations

- 1. To maintain a policy of opposition on the grounds that the national benefits have not been proven.**
- 2. To make a full response to the public consultation on this basis**
- 3. In the event that approval may be given for HS2, to develop a programme of mitigation and associated works.**
- 4. To develop a proposal for an HS2 supported Environmental and Community Fund**

Report on the Big Society, the Localism Bill and the Community Infrastructure Levy

Author: Cathy Rose Activities and Learning Officer
Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: The Government has embraced the 'Big Society' which is about empowering communities, redistributing power and fostering a culture of volunteering. The likely implications for the Board are detailed alongside mention of some key projects that are considered to meet the Government's aspirations. The Government has also recently published the Localism Bill and an overview of the Community Infrastructure Levy. These proposals also aim to engage local communities and give them more influence over how their community develops.

Purpose of Report: To advise the Board that it needs to consider how this political shift could have an impact on the Board itself and how it will affect the Chilterns.

The Big Society

1. The Big Society is the flagship policy idea of the 2010 Conservative Party general election manifesto and forms part of the legislative programme of the Coalition government. The aim is "to create a climate that empowers local people and communities, building a big society that will 'take power away from politicians and give it to people'." The stated priorities are:
 - Give communities more powers
 - Encourage people to take an active role in their communities
 - Transfer power from central to local government
 - Support co-ops, mutuals, charities and social enterprises
2. The Board needs to assess to what extent it is a local organisation and therefore part of Big Society and how this might change its role. It also needs to identify ways in which it can help deliver the aims of "the Big Society" particularly by assisting local people to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns. To a large extent the Board has always adopted these aims and operated in a way which is consistent with the aspirations for "Big Society".

Volunteering

3. A principle of the Big Society is to encourage local people to take responsibility for things that matter to them. The well being of the Chilterns has always attracted volunteers and membership of voluntary bodies. The Board has a key role to play in encouraging volunteering through its own

initiatives, and supporting its partners in their efforts to encourage volunteers. Recent examples of the Boards efforts include:

- The Red kites in the Chilterns project recruited over 40 volunteers between 2000 and 2004, many of whom still work with the Board, leading guided walks, presenting talks, helping at events and assisting in the office.
 - The People and Places project enlisted the help of over 30 volunteers between 2007 and 2009, researching and writing profiles of famous people associated with the Chilterns.
 - The development of the Chilterns Cycleway was only possible with the help of volunteers from The Chiltern Society and CTC.
 - Between 2007 and 2010, the Chiltern Woodlands Project's Special Trees and Woods Project worked with over 60 volunteers, mapping and researching over 900 special trees and woods in the Chilterns. Again, some of these volunteers are still helping the Board in other areas of work.
4. As new projects are developed, more volunteering opportunities will arise and should be deliberately incorporated in the structure of any project. For example, it is anticipated that the new Commons Project (currently in a development phase, funded by HLF) will involve around 300 individuals, 50 groups and over 1,500 volunteer days Chilterns-wide.
 5. There is a growing demand from the public for practical volunteering opportunities across the Chilterns and a number of different community groups and organisations offer such opportunities. A directory of environmental volunteering opportunities across the Chilterns is currently being compiled to enable individuals to make contact with the community group or organisation that best suits their volunteering needs.
 6. With reductions in its own grant the Board may well be seeking more volunteers to help directly with its work programme.

Supporting and Engaging with Local Community Groups

7. The Board has also sought to use its own resources to directly enhance the efforts of community groups. The Sustainable Development Fund has helped numerous community groups to set up projects which bring environmental, social and economic benefits to the Chilterns AONB. Despite the decline in government grant Board members have already expressed their intention to retain the SDF for as long as possible and to favour applications from small local groups.
8. Money provided through this fund has helped lever in funding from other sources so the value to the community groups and other organisations far outweighs the monetary value provided directly from the fund. For example, in

2009 -10, grants to the value of £44,496 have supported 27 local projects to a total value of £273,664.

9. To complement the Board's own grants it should consider enhancing the level of support it can give to community groups through advice, technical guidance, training and help to secure financial assistance from other sources.

Supporting Local Businesses

10. The Big Society aims to promote a closer involvement of all sectors of society in local matters including the business community. As well as supporting local businesses through the Sustainable Development Fund, the Board also helps to promote local food and craft producers through the Chilterns Countryside Festival. Now into its 4th year this event attracted 118 local businesses and environmental organisations and over 3,500 visitors.
11. Another example of working with local businesses was the Wildlife on the Move programme which was a partnership with Hobbs of Henley Thames Cruisers, Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway Association, Country Ways Horse and Cart Rides and Grebe Canal Cruises.
12. The Board helped set up the Chilterns LEADER programme which provides grants to help local businesses to expand and diversify. This programme will run until 2013.

Public Ownership and Management of Countryside Resources

13. Increasingly, community groups are taking on the management of pieces of land that are owned by County, District or Parish councils (e.g. Moorend Common near Lane End) or are purchasing land such as Common Wood, Tyler's Green near High Wycombe.
14. Recently, announcements have been made by both Natural England and the Forestry Commission that areas of their land may be 'put up for sale' and British Waterways has announced that it is soon to become a charity. With more pockets of land potentially becoming available, it is possible that more community groups will become involved in the management or ownership of land.
15. There may be scope for the Board to become involved in this, either through taking on the management of sites, or in helping community groups with whatever support they need.

Charitable Giving and Philanthropy

16. The Government is keen to encourage a culture of charitable giving and philanthropy. The public is willing to give to causes that affect them directly or that they feel a sense of ownership for. This has been demonstrated by the Board's 'Friends of Red Kites in the Chilterns' donation scheme which generated over £11,000.

17. As the Conservation Board's budget becomes increasingly stretched, alternative means of raising funds must be found. One suggestion is to develop a 'Caring for the Chilterns' fund into which donations and sponsorship can be channelled.

The Localism Bill

18. The Government intends to reform the planning system to give local communities more influence and is currently introducing new legislation, "The Localism Bill", to enable this change.
19. The Bill seeks to bring about a shift in power from central government to local communities by: reducing bureaucracy, empowering communities to do things their way; increasing local control of public finance; diversifying the supply of public service and increasing scrutiny and local accountability.
20. One important change will enable councillors to comment on applications in their ward.
21. The legislation will enable the identification by communities of land that is of community value. The inference is that such land will receive greater protection.
22. Regional strategies will be abolished. One of the main consequences of this is that it is likely that the Board will be consulted on a large number of revised development plans (taking account of revised housing growth/development figures).
23. A key element of the legislation is the encouragement of planning at a neighbourhood level – smaller than a district or parish. Various schedules make provisions about neighbourhood development orders, neighbourhood development plans and community right to build orders. Neighbourhood development orders grant planning permission in relation to an area for specific development or for any class of development. There are certain exclusions including nationally significant infrastructure projects e.g. HS2.
24. A neighbourhood development plan must be prepared by a local planning authority as soon as reasonably practicable if more than half of those voting in a referendum have voted in favour of it.
25. A community right to build order is a particular type of neighbourhood development order. The order should be made by a community organisation and would grant planning permission for specified development which does not exceed prescribed limits and is in relation to a specified site in the specified neighbourhood area. A community organisation is one which is established to further the social, economic and environmental well-being of individuals living, or wanting to live, in a particular area.

26. This may bring about increased activity at the local level with more calls for limited amounts of development and more guidance through neighbourhood development plans. However, it is equally likely that this may result in no change in activity with local people deferring to local planning authorities. If there were greater activity this would require the Board to assess, and then be involved in responding to, both neighbourhood development orders and neighbourhood development plans.
27. The Bill seeks the abolition of the Infrastructure Planning Commission and it is understood that the role will principally be taken on by the Planning Inspectorate. The Board is recognised as a statutory consultee on such matters and should continue to be involved where appropriate.
28. There are several important issues for the Board:
 1. Involvement in preparing new development plans
 2. Involvement in preparing neighbourhood plans
 3. Need to ensure AONB Management Plan and CCB design guidance is used
 4. Need to ensure consistency across all level of plans where AONB objectives are affected
 5. Need for Chilterns AONB and Conservation Board planning guidance.

The Community Infrastructure Levy

29. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into force in April 2010 and allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their area. The money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure that is needed as a result of the development. This can include transport schemes, schools, hospitals, parks and green spaces amongst other things. CIL will be collected by district councils and unitary authorities.
30. CIL is a tariff-based approach and is considered by Government to be fairer, faster and more certain than planning obligations. Levy rates will be set in consultation with local communities and developers. The levy is intended to fill the funding gaps that remain once existing sources have been taken into account. Local authorities will be able to decide how best to deliver infrastructure priorities.
31. The levy will focus on the provision of new infrastructure and should not be used to address pre-existing deficiencies, unless those deficiencies would be made more severe by new development. The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing infrastructure if that is necessary to support development. It is considered that a case could be made to bring in funds through CIL for the maintenance or enhancement of elements of the AONB, particularly as the Government will require charging authorities to allocate a meaningful proportion of levy revenues raised back to neighbourhoods.

32. Local authorities will retain the ability to use income to address the cumulative impact on infrastructure that may occur further away from the development. For example, a large housing development within a town which brings about pressure on the countryside around its periphery may warrant levy revenues being spent on improvement or maintenance of that countryside.
33. Local authorities will need to work closely with neighbourhoods to decide what infrastructure they require. The Board will need to be involved in such discussions.
34. Charging authorities may pass money to bodies outside their area to deliver infrastructure which will benefit the development of their area. It may be possible for monies to be passed to the Board to deliver certain objectives. Charging authorities will be able to pool revenues to support the delivery of sub-regional infrastructure.
35. Charging authorities will implement the levy based on an up to date development plan detailing the levy's rates. Some of the Chilterns' local planning authorities are progressing work on CIL alongside their development plan documents. There will be opportunities for the Board to contribute to their production when consultation takes place. The levy will be examined in a similar way to development plans.
36. Most buildings that people normally use will be liable to pay the levy, which will be charged in pounds per square metre on the increase in floorspace.
37. The key implication arising from both the Localism Bill and the Community Infrastructure Levy is the need for the Board to be involved in influencing the content of emerging plans and strategies at all levels and ultimately any development that may take place.

Conclusions

38. The effect of the government plans and legislation will be to increase the power available to local communities and encourage the involvement of civic society in more areas which provide public benefit. There will be a greater role for the Board, both as a part of civic society with its local roots, and to support those community groups which can contribute to the purposes of the AONB designation and AONB Management Plan. This is already a field in which there is considerable "Big Society" involvement, so rapid change is unlikely to happen, but as the legislation takes effect and the intended changes work their way through from government to local communities, activity and expectations will rise. This will provide many opportunities for the Board, but there will also be issues which the Board will need to monitor to ensure the effects on the Chilterns are positive.

Recommendation

1. **That the Board considers the potential effects on the AONB and Board of the Government's proposals for "The Big Society" and advises on specific issues and areas of activity which will require the Board's involvement.**

Report on Chilterns Special Trees and Woods Project

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer
John Morris Director, Chiltern Woodlands Project
Rachel Sanderson Former Project Officer for Special Trees and Woods Project

Summary: The Special Trees and Woods Project ran from 2006-2010 with a grant of £248,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Over 700 special trees and nearly 200 special woods were identified, researched and recorded by 100 volunteers. The archive is held by the Board and its achievements included 4 special conferences and a book published in November 2010.

Purpose of the Report: To inform members that the project has now ended and to record its achievements.

Background

1. The Chilterns Special Trees and Woods Project officially ended in June 2010 having begun life in January 2006 with a grant of £248,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. During its five years it achieved a great deal and has created a valuable archive for which the Board is responsible.
2. The Board was directly and closely involved throughout this project, including providing funding and office accommodation, which was managed by the Chiltern Woodlands Project. The legacy of an archive of over 700 special trees and 200 special woods is in the care of the Board, which needs to decide how to maintain, even add to the archive and to make it accessible.
3. The project was initially managed by Liz Manley (Jan 2006 – Nov 2008) and latterly by Rachel Sanderson (Nov 2008 – June 2010). It was supported throughout by many dedicated, enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers. During its lifetime over 100 volunteers contributed well over 5,000 man hours. Their work was now recorded in the archive and a proportion has been accessible via the Board's web site
4. The project also held many events most notable of which were the art competition and its annual conferences, always well attended and addressed by renowned speakers including Ted Green of the Ancient Tree Forum; Tony Kirkham, Head of Arboriculture at Kew Gardens; Prof. Oliver Rackham the Cambridge University landscape historian; and Stuart King, local historian of the Chilterns bodgers.
5. In 2010 the Chiltern Woodland Project, with an SDF grant from the Board, published a book with profiles of 50 special trees and woods which was launched on 20th November by Thomas Pakenham, the travel writer, author

and historian (Meetings with Remarkable Trees). It provides a fitting public legacy of the project and the work of so many capable local volunteers.

6. This entire project was an exemplar of a successful partnership between the Board, Woodlands Project and local people. It provided an opportunity for new volunteers to become involved, reinforced our awareness of the Chilterns special tree and woodland heritage and brought alive many links between the natural and cultural heritage of the Chilterns. The Board helped play a critical role throughout in developing the idea, securing the resources, supporting the project with funds and office space, and lastly keeping alive and accessible the archive of special trees and woods.
7. A final report, which summarises the project's achievements, was published in March 2010.
8. A presentation of its achievements will be given to Board members by John Morris and Rachel Sanderson.

Recommendations

- 1. To note the achievements of the Chilterns Special Trees and Woods Project**
- 2. To note that the Board is responsible for maintaining the project's archives and web pages**
- 3. To congratulate the Woodlands Project, its staff and all the volunteers on their success.**