Agenda

1. Apologies 10.00
2. Declarations of Interest 10.00 – 10.02
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 10.02 – 10.06
4. Matters Arising 10.06 – 10.10
6. Report from the Executive Committee 10.12 – 10.20
7. Report from the Planning Committee 10.20 – 10.30
10. Hillforts Project Update 10.53 – 11.03
11. Management Review 11.03 – 11.10
12. AOB 11.10 – 11.14
13. Dates of Future Meetings 11.14 – 11.15

Management Review Workshop 11.30 – 14.00
(including lunch at 12.30)

Close and depart 14.00
Russell’s Water Village Hall

Russell’s Water

Henley-on-Thames

Oxon RG9 6ER

Road to Maidensgrove
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERNs CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 16th October 2014 at Pitstone Memorial Hall, vicarage Road, Pitstone, Bedfordshire LU7 9EY COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 13.00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
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<tr>
<td>Appointed by Local Authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr. David Collins</td>
<td>Dacorum Borough Council</td>
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<td>Cllr. Lynn Lloyd</td>
<td>South Oxfordshire District Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Wendy Jordan</td>
<td>Three Rivers District Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Marion Mustoe</td>
<td>Central Bedfordshire Council</td>
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<td>Cllr David Nimmo Smith</td>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Ian Reay (Chairman)</td>
<td>Hertfordshire County Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Chris Richards</td>
<td>Aylesbury Vale District Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Jeremy Ryman</td>
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<td>Cllr David Taylor</td>
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<td>Gill Gowing</td>
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<td>Simon Mortimer</td>
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<td>Helen Tuffs</td>
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<td>Ian Waller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr Simon Deacon</td>
<td>Hertfordshire</td>
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<td>Cllr Mary Goldsmith</td>
<td>Bedfordshire</td>
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<td>Cllr John Griffin</td>
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<td>Cllr Anthony Penn</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire</td>
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<td>Cllr Barbara Wallis</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire</td>
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<td>Cllr Julia Wells</td>
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<td>Allen Beechy</td>
<td>Chalk Streams Officer</td>
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<td>Kath Daly</td>
<td>Countryside Officer</td>
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<td>Deirdre Hansen</td>
<td>Clerk to the Board</td>
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<td>Steve Rodrick</td>
<td>CCB Chief Officer</td>
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<td>Chris Smith</td>
<td>CCB Finance Officer</td>
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<td>Sarah Wright</td>
<td>CCB Boxwood land Project Officer</td>
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<td>Colin White</td>
<td>CCB Planning Officer</td>
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14/15 18. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr David Barnard, North Herts District Council, Dr Heather Barrett-Mold, Secretary of State Appointment, Alison Doggett, Secretary of State Appointment, Cllr Roger Metcalfe, Wycombe District Council, Ray Payne, Secretary of State Appointment, Cllr Alan Walters, South Buckinghamshire District Council.


The Chairman welcomed the newly appointed Board Members, Cllr Wendy Jordan (Three Rivers DC) Tony Penn (Buckinghamshire Parish Councils) and Simon Deacon (Hertfordshire Parish Councils) and invited them to introduce themselves to the Board.

14/15.20 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

14/15.21. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 26th June 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments were made:

- 14/15.9.1 ‘Reserve’ was added after Budget Equalisation,
- 14/15.10 2nd paragraph reports was amended to report’s,
- 14/15.10.8 the ‘s’ was removed from points
- 14/15.15 1st paragraph’s’ was removed from Chilterns.

14/15.22. Matters Arising

The Chief Officer informed the Board that:

1. The Hillforts Conference had been well attended and the feedback had been very encouraging. This conference may well turn out to be an annual event.
2. The Ridgeway Trail new partnership has been formed. Oxfordshire County Council is the host and a new Ridgeway Trail Partnership Officer will be appointed. A Partnership Management Committee will be formed and they should start meeting in the autumn. A Board representative is to be part of the Management Committee.

14/15.23. Public Question time

No public questions.

14/15.24. Election of Parish Councillor to the Planning Committee

This item was pushed back awaiting the arrival of the Chair of the Planning Committee.

14/15.25. Annual Audit Return

The Finance Officer reported that the Audit Commission had completed their audit of the Board’s accounts for 2013-14. The opinion of the auditors based on the information provided is that the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to their attention that give cause for concern that the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The internal auditor has brought two matters to the attention of the Board as detailed in the “Issues arising report”:
a. Cash banking: this has already been addressed, cash to be banked sooner.
b. When changing the Board’s insurers a significantly reduced premium has led to a reduced cover for fidelity guarantee. During discussion with the insurers they indicated that any increase would be subject to a substantial additional premium. The Executive Committee decided that the increase in premium was disproportionate to the risk, but will review the position annually.

1. The Board APPROVED and ACCEPTED the audited annual return and the issues arising report for 2013-14 and AGREED to the responses and action set out above.

14/15.26. Election of Parish Councillor to the Planning Committee.

The Chief Officer advised the Board that following the AGM in June a vacancy had remained on the Planning Committee which could only be filled by a parish councillor. Since the AGM two new parish council members had been appointed to the Board. The Board was required to make an appointment to the Planning Committee.

Both new members, Simon Deacon and Tony Penn, sought election to the Committee. Following an election Tony Penn was duly elected.

1. The Board APPOINTED Tony Penn to the Planning Committee with immediate effect until the AGM in June 2015.

14/15.27. Report from the Executive Committee

The Chief Officer reported the matters considered and decisions taken, by the Executive Committee under delegated powers at its meeting on 27th September 2014.

The Executive Committee had:

1. Received a Finance Report April to August 2014. There were no exceptional items to report.
2. Reviewed the Risk Register; the impending retirement of the Chief Officer was a major changed risk.
3. Approved the Annual Treasury Management Report- the returns for 2013-14 were close to estimate.
4. Reviewed the Financial Regulations and updated expenditure authority levels as advised by the auditor.
5. Adopted new Discretionary Pension Policies as required by the recent changes to the Local Government Pension scheme.
6. Discussed the programme for recruiting a Chief Officer.
7. Was advised of recent Board member appointments. It was agreed to prepare a clearer specification for the role of a Board member.
8. Discussed and agreed the principles for a High Speed 2 Community and Environment Fund.
9. Agreed that the proposed alumni of former Board members should be referred to as a Fellowship and open to members who have served for at least three years.

The Chairman informed the Board that following an internal selection process Kath Daly had been appointed as acting Chief Officer for a 6 month term commencing 1st January 2015.

The role of Chief Officer had not been reviewed in the last ten years and Kath Daly’s remit would be to review the role to ensure that the Boards statutory requirements were best met and that the Board would remain fit for purpose for the next 5-10 years.

Kath Daly was invited to lay out the background of the review, the context, the timeline and potential aspects of the review. There is a new management plan in place, the staff team is stable, but the Board membership is undergoing significant changes.

A steering committee has been set up (Ian Reay, Ray Payne and Helen Tuffs) to oversee the review. The Chairman invited any other members interested in joining the Review Group to contact him.
The proposed terms of reference of the review will be presented at the Executive Committee in December and a final presentation made to the Board in January 2015, the recommendations that follow are to be presented to the Board in April 2015 and implementation to begin to take place April-June 2015. It is intended to involve external partners.

The Chairman reminded the Board that this is a large task and that there may be budget implications.

The Board discussed the proposals and contributed suggestions.

1. The Board NOTED the issues considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on the 17th September and the decisions made under delegated authority.

2. The Board NOTED the presentation made by Kath Daly and the suggested comments.

14/15.28. Report from the Planning Committee.

Members received the report from the Planning Officer, the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee on 10th September 2014 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following items were discussed:

1. Election of Chairman; Helen Tuffs was nominated and unanimously elected as Chairman of the Committee until the Board’s next AGM.
2. The Presentation of the plans for Highlands Farm Henley
3. High Speed 2 update
4. AONB Management Plan Review
5. Events
7. Planning applications update

The Planning Officer gave some guidance on the matters discussed and the member provided comments.

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

14/15.29. Report on the Box Woodland Project

The Box Woodland Project Officer gave a detailed presentation on the success of the work achieved by the project and future aspirations and possibilities. Many skilled volunteers had become involved and a successful web presence had been created. The project runs from January 2013 till June 2015.

The Board discussed ways of continuing the legacy of this project.

The Chairman thanked Sarah Wright for her excellent work on the project.

1. The Board NOTED and would help promote the success of this project, the projects web pages and volunteer opportunities.

2. The Board PROVIDED feedback on future aspirations as had been set out in the presentation and papers on informing the Board of the plan for the future and the legacy of the project.

The Chalk Streams Project Officer gave a detailed presentation to the Board on the Project’s achievements so far this year and the objectives for the remainder of the year.

The Chalk Streams Project was set up to protect and conserve all major chalk streams in the AONB. It is a partnership, led by the Board, with its own project officer. The projects objectives are to raise awareness, provide advice, encourage practical conservation, provide education and improve physical access on chalk streams, their habitat and wildlife.

Achievements reported so far this year include:

1. The Annual Forum
2. Seven advisory visits on four rivers completed.
3. Five habitat enhancing training workshops were held on Chilterns chalk streams
4. Restoration of the river Wye at Desborough Park recreation ground.
5. An enhancement scheme on the river Ver near Colney Street was completed.
6. Training courses have been held.
7. The project is the co-host of the catchment based approach in the Colne catchment.
8. The project continues to support the Thames and South Chilterns catchment partnership.
9. The project is working on a review of the State of England’s Chalk Rivers report.

The objectives for the remainder of the year include:

1. Work on the river Bulbourne
2. Work on the river Misbourne
3. The Sarratt meadows project
4. Advice to the River Chess Association
5. Complete and launch an Education Website.

Board members had the opportunity at ask questions and provide feedback.

1. The Board PROVIDED feedback on the achievements to date and the planned programme for the remainder of the year.

14/15.31. Report on the New Environment Land Management Scheme (NELMS) and the Farm Advice Project.

The Conservation and Landscape Officer gave a presentation and a detailed report to the Board on the developments with the national agri-environment and advised the Board of the developments on the local Farm Advice initiative.

1. Due to reforms to the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and due to cuts to UK Government funding existing schemes are being rationalised and will be re-launched as the NELMS due to come into effect January 2016. The details of the scheme are still vague and the near closure of existing schemes has created a considerable hiatus.

2. In 2011 the Environment Agency (EA) asked the Board to deliver a 3 year Farm Advice Project to address issues of diffuse pollution and sedimentation of water bodies on farmland. The EA contribute £50,000 to the project, the Board £4,000 plus staff time. Workshops have been held, mail outs have taken place, farm visits have been made and the Board has worked closely with the EA.

It is hoped to continue in this vein with the inclusion of a small grants scheme to encourage more farmers to engage with the programme.

In recent times the focus of the Boards efforts in working with the farming sector has been to promote the agri-environment and forestry grants. To date most of the AONB has been eligible for grant aid and
uptake has been high. The proposed changes, reduction of grant availability and proposed targeting will mean a significant reduction in the area of land covered by these schemes. This in turn will lead to a reduction in the work undertaken. The Board is advising National England of the potential impact and is seeking a broadening of proposed target areas. The reduced significance of the grant schemes is forcing the Board to rethink how it encourages environmentally friendly land management in its efforts to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and its working relationship with the farming and forestry sectors.

Members discussed the issues and Ian Waller, as farmer, provided some additional information. A working group of members and officer will be organised to give the matter consideration.

The Conservation and Landscape Officer was commended for his work on this project.

12.15 David Nimmo-Smith left the meeting.

1. The Board NOTED the CAP reform and the agri-environment scheme developments impacting Chiltern Farmers.

2. The Board AGREED to set up a working group to investigate the promotion of environmentally friendly land management in partnership with the farming and forestry sectors.

14/15.32 HS2- Community and Environment Fund

The Chief Officer informed the Board of the request to Parliament to provide monies for a HS2 Community and Environment Fund in recognition of the burden of hosting national infrastructure to be used and allocated by local communities to projects they deem to be local priority. A report on the principles of the proposed scheme had been approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 17th September.

1. It is commonly accepted that communities affected by the burden of hosting national infrastructure should benefit in some way in addition to the formal compensation scheme; there are a number of recent examples.
2. Such a scheme is a matter for parliament to deal with.
3. The Board and Buckinghamshire local authorities and a number of other affected organisations have formed a group to develop a proposal.
4. The scheme should cover the whole route.
5. The group has come up with a scheme for a fund in the region of £250m
6. Buckinghamshire CC has been nominated as the lead local authority amongst the 51M group of local authorities
7. The Board will contribute staff and a financial contribution in the order of £2,000.

The draft proposal was presented to the Board with the agenda and the Board discussed and refined the proposal for a scheme that meets everybody’s needs.

On 1st October the Government announced that it will be creating a fund of up to £30m to support communities and businesses near to the HS2 route. The Board welcomed the fund, but the modest sum is disappointing. It is considerably lower than comparable settlements and it will cease operating after 2027. The Government has appointed consultants to develop the proposal instead of a fund to be administered locally. The fund applied to the whole line over 10 years means that the sums available for the Chilterns is very limited.
Considerable additional efforts will need to be made to secure compensation, mitigation and design improvements during the design and construction phase.

1. The Board Refined and APPROVED the principles for an HS2 Community and Environment Fund.

2. The Board AGREED to lobby for more funds to be available than £30 million.

3. The Board AGREED that the funds should be administered and distributed by a local body.


The Chief Officer reported that the LEADER programme will restart in January 2015 for 5 years. A paper on the new programme had been distributed.
It should be noted that the geographic definition of the Chilterns has changed since the last programme.

The Conservation Board has been closely involved in the bidding process, preparing strategy and by serving on the Local Action Group (LAG), the Chief Officer and the Chairman have served to date on the LAG.
The current Chief Officer recommended that the Chief Officer continues to serve as well as a Board member. He will prepare a brief of the work involved and circulate.

   1. The Board AGREED that a Board member with relevant expertise and the Chief Officer are put forward as members of the Local Action Group in place of the retiring Chief Officer.

12.30 Jeremy Ryman left the meeting

14/15.34. Works Programme Progress Report.

The Chief Officer provided a report on the Works Programme Progress. Members commented that the presentations on the projects and work of the Board were very helpful and useful.

   1. The Board NOTED the work programme 2014-15.

14/15.35. Presentations.

The Chairman informed the Board that this was the last meeting Simon Mortimer would be attending as his appointment as a Secretary of State appointed member of the Board has come to an end after 10 years. He was presented with a token of the Boards appreciation of his work for the Board during those 10 years.

Simon Mortimer thanked the Board and commented that he had enjoyed his time serving the Board.

The Chairman announced that this would be Steve Rodrick’s last Board meeting before retiring. One of the new research bursaries announced in “Chalk and Trees” is named the “Steve Rodrick Bursary for Enjoyment of the Countryside” details are available on the website. A formal presentation will be made in December.

14/15.36. Date of next meeting: Thursday 29th January 2015 at 10.00am location TBC.
Dates of future meetings: Thursday 26th March 2015, Thursday 25th June 2015 and Thursday 8th October 2015

The meeting closed 13.00
**Item 6  Report from the Executive Committee**

**Author:** Kath Daly  Acting Chief Officer

**Summary:** The Committee met on 10th December and:

1. Received a Finance Report for April – November 2014. There were no exceptional items reported.

2. Agreed to replace Steve Rodrick with Kath Daly as a bank signatory with effect from 1st January 2015.

3. Reviewed the policy on fidelity guarantee insurance and decided to leave the amount of cover unchanged.

4. Reviewed and approved the latest version of the Risk Register and agreed to review the risk process currently in use at its next meeting.

5. Agreed the approach to preparation of the 2015 – 2016 budget and budget restructuring.

6. Approved the proposed scope and terms of reference for the Management Review (subject to further refinements that may be proposed by the working group) and approved an initial budget of up to £4,000.

7. Approved the proposed approach to covering the Landscape and Conservation Officer role over the 6 months to June 2015.

8. Agreed the draft Board Member role specification subject to a number of changes.

9. Noted the proposed programme of events and activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Chilterns AONB and approved a budget of up to £3,000.

**Purpose of Report:** To inform members of the Board of the matters considered and decisions taken by the Executive Committee under delegated powers.

**Finance Report (April – November 2014)**

1. To the end of November 2014 the expenditure against the core budget was just 0.4% below profile (£1,520) and income was 1.9% above profile.

2. Ongoing activity, funded by earned income and the Development Reserve, was progressing satisfactorily as was externally funded project activity. Special events expenditure and income, and Special Projects expenditure was below profile.
Bank Signatories

3. The Committee was advised that the forthcoming retirement of Steve Rodrick necessitated a change to the bank mandate. It was agreed that Kath Daly would replace Steve Rodrick as a bank signatory with effect from 1st January 2015.

Fidelity Guarantee Insurance

4. The Committee carried out its annual review of policy on fidelity guarantee insurance. Fidelity cover protects the Board from loss of non-negotiable money – i.e. reserves invested on the money market. The Committee agreed to leave the amount of fidelity cover unchanged.

Review of Risk Register

5. The Risk Register was first adopted by the Committee on 27th February 2008. At its September meeting the Committee resolved to review the Register quarterly.

6. The Committee confirmed the latest version of the Register as controlling risks currently faced by the Board and agreed to review whether the risk process currently in use is fit for purpose.

Budget 2015 - 2016

7. The Finance Officer sought guidance on the assumptions used for preparing the budget for 2015 – 2016 and made recommendations regarding the re-structuring of the budget.

8. The Committee agreed to the restructuring of the budget as proposed.

9. The Committee agreed that the budget should be prepared on the assumptions as proposed, with a further assumption added to the effect that the budget for Special Projects may be revised upwards from £10,000 subject to further consideration.

Management Review

10. The Committee approved the proposed terms of reference and programme, subject to further refinements that may be proposed by the Review Working Group.

11. The Committee agreed to allocate an initial budget for the Review of £4,000 from the Project Support Budget.

Backfilling the Countryside Project Officer post - update

12. The Committee was advised that Neil Jackson (Conservation and Landscape Officer) had been appointed to the post of Acting Countryside Officer from
January 2015 – June 2015 whilst Kath Daly was Acting Chief Officer. The Committee approved the proposed approach to covering the work of the Conservation and Landscape Officer over the 6 month period which included making provision in the budget to buy in support for specific work.

**Board Member Role and Specification**

13. The Committee considered and approved the draft specification of the Role of Board Members, subject to a number of minor changes.

**50th Anniversary of the AONB**

14. The Committee noted the outline programme of events and activities drawn up by the Information and Interpretation Officer for the 50th Anniversary of designation of the AONB, and agreed to make provision for a budget of up to £3,000 within the 2015 – 2016 budget.

**Recommendation**

1. To note the issues considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 10th December and decisions made under delegated authority.
Item 7  Report from the Planning Committee

Author: Colin White  Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 26th November 2014. The following items were discussed:

1. High Speed 2 update
2. AONB Management Plan Review
3. Events
4. Development Plans responses
5. Planning applications update
6. DCMS Mobile Infrastructure Project

Purpose of Report: To inform the Board about the items considered by the Planning Committee.

High Speed 2 update

1. The Committee was reminded about the Board’s key petitioning point (a fully bored tunnel) and the fact that the petition had sought assurances about extensive mitigation should the tunnel not be provided. Evidence is being prepared in connection with the tunnel and the Board’s proof will follow on from this. Work is also being undertaken on: green bridges; preparation for a Select Committee site visit and a community and environment fund.

AONB Management Plan Review

2. The Committee was told that final documents that accompany the adopted AONB Management Plan would be circulated shortly (this took place on 5th December 2014) with a request that the Plan should be endorsed as a material planning consideration in the exercise of the relevant local authority’s planning powers. This has already taken place at Chiltern District Council.

Events

3. The Annual Planning Conference took place on 8th October 2014. There were 40 attendees who provided generally good feedback. Two key points should be noted: attendees found the event useful and there is a need to try and ensure speakers keep to time.

4. A Planning Forum was held on 11th November 2014. It was attended by 13 people representing 8 of the Chilterns local planning authorities as well as other organisations. The Forum discussed: the endorsement of the adopted AONB Management Plan; feedback from the Planning Conference; developments and pressures arising from neighbourhood
development plans, solar PV farms and speculative housing applications; the latest position with regard to a possible AONB boundary review; an update on the National Grid Visual Impact Provision work and an update on local authority development plan progress. The next forum will take place in the week beginning 22\textsuperscript{nd} June 2015.

5. The arrangements for the annual Chilterns Buildings Design Awards were discussed. The Committee nominated Gill Gowing to represent the Board on the judging panel.

**Development Plans responses**

**DCLG Technical consultation on planning**

6. The Board: welcomed the numerous references to the restriction of permitted development rights within AONBs; did not support the removal of a requirement for a minimum period of six weeks for consultation on neighbourhood plans; supported the simplification of the SEA process in connection with neighbourhood plans but sought changes to the National Planning Practice Guidance to include references to the responsibilities of Parish Councils and others in connection with Section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000; agreed that there should be a limit on the amount of floor space that can change use in AONBs and considered that prior approval should not apply in AONBs; did not object to the proposal to allow change of use from offices to residential but considered that this should not apply in AONBs, and welcomed the commitment to protecting the environment whilst recommending that the text should be amended to ensure that ‘sensitive areas’ specifically refer to AONBs.

**Dacorum BC site allocations pre-submission**

7. The Board: objected to the allocation at Tring for a number of reasons including lack of recognition of the likely impacts on the AONB and the fact that certain elements of the allocation are within the AONB; and suggested a series of amendments in order to make the document more sound.

**Dacorum BC local allocation 3 masterplan Hemel Hempstead**

8. The Board: made comments about the lack of recognition given to the proximity of the site to the AONB.

**Dacorum BC local allocation 5 masterplan Tring**

9. The Board: made comments about the lack of clarity given to the boundary of the AONB; sought changes to the document to ensure that the AONB is identified as a significant constraint; considered that, because there had been an increase in the number of dwellings
proposed on the site leading to certain elements of the proposal being located within the AONB (cemetery extension, play area and gypsy/traveller site), the proposal would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and therefore objected to the masterplan; and suggested various changes to make the masterplan more sound.

DCLG consultation on planning and travellers

10. The Board: agreed with various changes to definitions of gypsies and travellers; agreed with the inclusion of AONBs within the definition of sensitive sites to which special protection applies; supported the change that would ensure local authorities would very strictly limit new traveller sites in the open countryside; supported a proposed change which would mean that the absence of an up to date five year supply of deliverable sites would no longer be a significant material consideration in favour of granting temporary sites for permission in AONBs; and agreed that changes to ensure that intentional unauthorised occupation should be regarded as a material consideration.

Further details of the development plans responses and all other papers can be viewed at the following link: Planning_agenda_261114.pdf

11. The Committee was informed about the publication of the North Luton Strategic Allocation Framework Plan and asked for comments. The Committee was also informed about the likely implications for the AONB that may arise from the publication in 2015 of the Davies Report on Airport Expansion.

Planning applications update

12. The Committee was informed about the various responses that had been made and approval was given for these. The updates to various cases were noted. The Committee noted that for 2013/14 the number of cases decided in line with the Board’s comments was 64%, with three cases still to be decided. So far in 2014/15 the Board has been consulted on 87 applications with all apart from one being responded to.

DCMS Mobile Infrastructure Project

13. The Committee was informed about a Government funded scheme, through DCMS, which is seeking to improve mobile phone coverage in those areas not currently covered by signals. There are three of these so called ‘not spots’ in the AONB at Turville/Ibstone, Stonor and Stoke Row. The Board was recently consulted about the first proposal at Ibstone. A site visit was made and initial comments have been made.

Recommendation

1. The Board notes the report from the Planning Committee.
Item 8  

**Budget 2015-16**

**Author:**  
Chris Smith  Finance Officer  
Kath Daly  Acting Chief Officer

**Summary**  
A draft budget has been prepared based on slightly changed definitions to its component parts; assumptions about employment costs; and funding provided by DEFRA and local authorities. Initial modelling suggests that the DEFRA and local authority grants will cover fully operating costs and make a contribution towards the work programme. However, increasingly the work programme and major projects will rely on securing external funding, earned income and possibly Board reserves. The retirement of the former chief officer and outcome of the management review will have an effect on the final budget for 2015-16.

**Purpose of Report:**  
To seek approval for the assumptions applied in preparing the budget for 2015-16

**Background**

1. Only the full Board can approve the strategy underpinning the annual budget, although much of the detailed work is carried out by the Executive Committee.

2. The current round of Government funding arrangements will end in 2015-16, for which DEFRA proposes to offer the same as in 2014-15 (with no allowance for inflation).

3. Contributions from local authorities have remained remarkably stable in recent years, but it has been assumed the total contribution will fall slightly.

4. At its meeting in December the Executive Committee approved some changes to the design of the budget, separating Operating Costs, the Work Programme and Major Projects. Additional information will be provided about the performance of Events and Special Projects.
Summary Budget

Operating Costs:

5. Employment costs are the major part of this budget, together with office and Board costs. The two main factors affecting employment costs in 2015-16 will be the cost of living award (also paid to Members) and any changes arising from the review of management.

6. Employment costs have reduced as a result of changes to personnel.

7. Provision has not yet been made for an inflationary pay award (based on the expected CPI in February) and for increments.

8. Other operating costs are likely to remain largely unchanged although it is proposed to have a more structured and larger investment programme in IT.

Operating Income:

9. It is now expected that the DEFRA grant will not reduce during the current financial year and will remain unchanged for 2015-16. The Board must be prepared for the possibility of in-year changes following the General Election.

10. It is currently assumed that the overall income from local authorities will fall by 5%. However, it is hoped that Luton BC can be persuaded to provide a contribution of £2,000 (they have not contributed since 2010).

11. Local authorities will be requested to adjust their contribution by inflation (CPI in Feb 2015). They have not been asked for an inflationary increment since 2008.

12. It has been assumed Parish and town councils will contribute £2,000.

Work Programme:

13. Those activities which are not considered a basic operating cost will be included in the Work Programme.

14. Part of the Work Programme relates to events, many of which are income generating. Currently, events are scattered across the work programme but in future will be managed as a single programme. Overall, events will be expected to provide an increasing net income, although some events will not be expected to cover their costs. Others will make a more significant return such as the Countryside Festival.

15. Special Project Support will be included here with a reduced budget of £10,000, together with the cost of bursaries.
16. Board contributions to Major Projects, including both funding application costs and match funding will continue to appear here.

17. The income needed to cover the Work Programme will be derived from a variety of sources most notably: DEFRA and local authority funding not required to cover the Operating Costs; other local authority income; earned income and reserves.

Major Projects:

18. The Major Projects currently are Chalk Streams, Commons, Box Woodland and Farm Advice Programme. In 2015-16 both the Commons and Box Wood projects come to an end. Two new major projects that could begin next year include Hillforts and Historic Farm Buildings. These are largely supported by external funding with a relatively small contribution from the Board.

Implications

19. Based upon this early assessment of the requirements for next year, and on the assumptions described above the overall picture would be as follows.

1. Operating costs would reduce, compared to 2014-15, by some £20,000.

2. After allowing for income from local authorities etc. about 93% of the DEFRA grant would be needed to balance the remaining net expenditure.

3. Assuming other income equal to the 2014-15 budget, £10,000 net income from events, and applying the balance of the DEFRA grant, an overall balanced budget could be achieved.

4. However, the staff pay award and increments will add further costs, the Board review may cost more than estimated, and there is a distinct possibility that DEFRA will introduce an in-year cut.

5. In the event that an overall deficit is recorded Board reserves will be applied to the shortfall.
Budget Forecasts for 2014-15 and 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>525,024</td>
<td>518,560</td>
<td>505,630</td>
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<tr>
<td>National AONB Association</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>527,524</td>
<td>521,190</td>
<td>508,130</td>
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Operating Budget Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEFRA *</th>
<th>405,023</th>
<th>412,868</th>
<th>385,625</th>
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<tr>
<td>Local Authorities</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>106,291</td>
<td>103,905</td>
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<td>Town and parish Councils</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<td>Treasury Income</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment Agency / Water Companies / Other Chalk Streams</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>11,600</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>529,623</strong></td>
<td><strong>539,759</strong></td>
<td><strong>508,130</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surplus to reserves 2,099

* Total DEFRA grant in both years is £412,868 (see Work Programme below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>60,800</td>
<td>47,760</td>
<td>64,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>16,275</td>
<td>19,030</td>
<td>17,085</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net income from events</td>
<td>11,520</td>
<td>10,100</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFRA balance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27,243</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,795</strong></td>
<td><strong>29,130</strong></td>
<td><strong>54,328</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deficit from reserves</td>
<td>33,005</td>
<td>18,630</td>
<td>9,722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major Projects yet to be confirmed.

Next Steps

20. A detailed budget, based upon the principles outlined in this paper, will be presented to the Executive Committee in February for fine tuning.

Recommendations

1. To adopt the principles and outline budget described above.

2. To approve a cost of living award of CPI or 2% whichever is lower as at 1st March 2014 for officers and members.

3. To approve adjusting the members’ allowances in line with the annual change to the DEFRA grant aid: 0 % in 2015/16.
Item 9  

Report from HS2 Working Group

Authors:  
Kath Daly  Acting Chief Officer  
Ray Payne  Board Member

Summary:  
The Board’s working group on HS2 has been reconvened to provide guidance regarding preparation for the Hybrid Bill Select Committee hearings and visits, and other matters.

The following were considered at a meeting of the working group on 16th January 2015:

1. A review of the current position.
2. Work underway and planned in preparation for the Select Committee, including the Chiltern Long Tunnel.
3. Further work required; and
4. Any additional resources required to support this work.

The working group made a number of recommendations which are reflected in this paper.

Purpose of Paper

1. To update members on HS2-related activity.
2. To re-confirm the Board’s position on mitigation.
3. To seek approval for increasing the HS2 budget in the current financial year to support preparation for the Select Committee and to secure a more inclusive relationship with the other statutory partners.

Background

Select Committee schedule

1. The House of Commons Select Committee on HS2 is currently scheduled to start hearing petitions in Northamptonshire during the first week of February. The Committee is expected to adjourn on the 12th March and will then hear no further petitions until after the General Election.

2. Select Committee members will have to be re-appointed following the General Election.

3. It is anticipated that the earliest date for petitions from Bucks to be heard (with the exception of the Colne Valley which has been brought forward) is the end of May.
4. Visits by the Select Committee to affected areas along the route are an important part of the process and have proved to be influential elsewhere. The Board is working closely with the local authorities including Buckinghamshire County Council who are co-ordinating a request and proposal for a 3 day visit to Buckinghamshire. The indications are that a visit by the Committee to the county will not take place until ‘after the spring’ i.e. after the General Election.

**HS2 working group**

5. It was proposed that the group should meet monthly over the period running up to the Select Committee hearings. Board Members present at the meeting were Ian Reay, Ray Payne, Helen Tuffs, Elizabeth Wilson, Jeremy Ryan and Gill Gowing. Other members are invited to advise the Acting Chief Officer should they wish to join the group.

6. The working group was advised of work underway in collaboration with or led by others which related to the Board’s petitioning points. These included provision of Green Bridges, Bucks Landscape Principles study, the Community and Environment Fund (the latter was the subject of a Board paper in October 2014.)

7. The working group was advised by staff that two meetings had been held with HS2 Ltd regarding the Board’s petition over the past 9 months (in May and August 2014). Regrettably, there had been no progress whatsoever on any single point. HS2 have refused to discuss a number of key petitioning points. Minutes of the meetings have not been supplied, despite reminders, until some months following the meeting, and then have failed to accurately reflect the discussion.

8. A further meeting has been requested by HS2 and scheduled for 24th February. Officers have asked HS2 to advise which petition points if any they consider to be worthwhile discussing further, as to date it has proved to be a fruitless exercise.

**Chiltern Long Tunnel**

9. In February 2014 Chiltern District Council (CDC) commissioned Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to produce a report on a full length bored tunnel through the AONB. The report was intended to provide the basis for petitioning the Select Committee. As agreed at the Board Meeting on 22nd January 2014, the Board contributed £5,000 towards the cost of this report.

10. The resulting report *High Speed Rail in the Chilterns: Feasibility Study of Alternative Tunnelling Options* (PBA, April 2014) provided a technical evaluation of several alternative tunnel alignments all within 3km either side of the government’s Proposed Scheme.

11. The report advocated one of these alignments – known as the Green Route – to be the preferred option, on the basis that it satisfied the purposes of the report better than other alternatives considered.
12. A major determining factor in the route alignment considered as part of the April 2014 work was the EU safety requirement regarding an intervention gap open to air on all tunnels over 20km in length.

13. This requirement is now being changed and a Draft EU Commission Regulation has been published which has a number of features of relevance to the proposed tunnel.

14. The new draft Regulation does not require any UK enabling legislation to give it effect.

15. The direct result of the publication of the draft EU Regulation was to compel CDC to commission another study. The report (High Speed Rail in the Chilterns: Feasibility Study of an Alternative Tunnelling Option (PBA January 2015)) has now been completed, and has identified an alternative route – referred to as the Chiltern Long Tunnel (CLT).

16. The study concluded that the CLT would comply with the new draft EU Regulation and have far less impact on the Misbourne Valley than either the Green Route or the government’s Proposed Scheme. The report also concludes that the CLT would be better operationally.

17. The other work streams which the statutory partners have commissioned are:
   - Work Package A: Chilterns Long Tunnel;
   - Work Package B: Analysis of Risk;
   - Work Package C: Environmental Assessment;
   - Work Package D: Proofs of Evidence;
   - Work Package E: Economic Evolution for CDC; and

18. Work Packages A and B are nearly complete and Work Package E is finished. The remaining Work Packages will be complete by the end of February.

19. Ray Payne, representing the Board, has contributed considerable time in kind to prepare the brief and manage and support the development of this work. He has also acted as advisor to CDC on the technical aspects of this work. The working group were of the view that the Board should now consider making a modest financial contribution towards the costs of preparing the report. This would help to ensure far closer collaboration with CDC and the other local authorities regarding use of the report and shared representation at the Select Committee.

20. At its January 2014 meeting the Board also agreed that a provision be made in the budget to appoint a Parliamentary Agent to assist the Board to develop its petitioning strategy. It was considered that, as most of the work was already being carried out for the local authorities, the cost need not be excessive and that the initial budget should be restricted to £2,000 for the 2013 – 2014 financial year. The Board appointed the same Agent being used by the local authorities, Sharpe Pritchard.
21. As a consequence of this appointment, the Board had the benefit last year of being party to joint discussions with Counsel regarding the petition and select committee hearings.

22. It is proposed that the Board makes provision in the current financial year for a further contribution towards a forthcoming Conference with Counsel jointly with the other statutory bodies.

23. The Board is asked to consider a recommendation to make provision in the current financial year to increase the budget for HS2 related work from £5,000 (which has already been fully committed) by a further £6,000, to a total budget of £11,000.

24. The additional budget would be used to contribute to the shared costs of commissioning advice, specialist reports and other preparatory work in relation to the Select Committee. The funds would be identified from Board reserves.

Mitigation Principles

25. At its meeting on 21st June 2012 the Board agreed a Position Statement of Mitigation regarding HS2 (see appendix 1).

26. There being no substantive changes in circumstances which would give grounds for revision, the Board is invited to reconfirm that the Position Statement of 25.05.12 still reflects the Board’s position on HS2 mitigation.

Recommendations

1. The Board notes the update from the working group.

2. That an additional amount of up to £6,000 be allocated from Board reserves for HS2 related work in the current financial year.

3. The Board reconfirms its Position Statement on HS2 Mitigation
Appendix 1

Draft Position Statement on Mitigation

1. The Board does not accept the case for High Speed 2 as currently presented. It does not believe that an adequate economic, social or environmental case has been presented to justify the economic and environmental costs.

2. The Board believes, as it stated in its consultation response in July 2011 and its evidence to the Transport Select Committee in September 2011, any proposal for a high speed rail network must be in the context of a national strategy for transport infrastructure. Further, it must be complemented by a strategy to reduce the need to travel.

3. Consequently the Board opposes the building of High Speed 2.

4. The Board believes that any decision to support the building of a High Speed Railway should only take place following a strategic assessment of the environmental impacts of a range of options, which have been subject to full scrutiny and public consultation.

5. Such an assessment must give full weight to any impacts on nationally protected heritage including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This assessment must give highest weighting to options which avoid AONBs.

6. If, after all the above conditions have been satisfied, high speed rail is still deemed to be in the national interest and the route cannot avoid the Chilterns AONB then the alignment and design which minimises adverse impacts should be chosen.

7. The Board’s preferred mitigation option, so called Plan B, is a fully twin bored tunnel from east of the M25 to north of Wendover.

8. An alignment should be adopted which uses either the shortest possible route or that which minimises environmental impacts.

9. Any tunnel must give full weight to the avoiding unacceptable adverse impacts on the aquifer.

10. There should with no permanent surface access other than via ventilation shafts, and no significant disposal of spoil or change to the natural...
topography. In so doing the visible and audible disturbance during, and after, construction must be minimised.

11. If it is deemed by the relevant authorities that a surface “intervention” facility is necessary, it should be located and designed to minimise all forms of environmental, social and economic impacts.

12. Any visible structure, including associated infrastructure such as access roads, should be designed to the highest possible standard for its specific setting.

13. All reinstatement and restoration must be implemented to the highest possible standard for its specific setting.

14. The specification of all aspects of design must accord with the best international practices further evolved in light of the long life of HS2 - so called “future proofing”.

15. The costs must give full weight to the environmental, economic and social benefits of a tunnel compared to a surface route.

(as at 25.5.2012)
Item 10  Hillforts Project Update

Authors:  Helen Tuffs  Vice Chairman
          Alison Doggett  Board Member
          Colin White  Planning Officer
          Cathy Rose  Activities and Learning officer

Summary:  The Board’s Hillforts’ working group:

1. Is continuing to prepare a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a grant of about £600,000.
2. Has recruited two professionals to provide technical guidance on the bid.
3. Has recently met the HLF development officer.

Purpose of the Report:  To provide a progress report on the proposal to submit a Heritage Grant bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Background

1. The Board will be aware of previous reports about the Chilterns Hillforts Project and the fact that approval has previously been given for the preparation of an outline proposed submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), with budget allocation to bring this about.

2. Budget allocation has also been made to enable the preparation of a further bid to the HLF for a delivery stage, should the development stage bid be successful. The budget is £5,000 per year for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

3. The Board held conferences on hillforts in 2013 and 2014 which were both very well attended. The number of delegates at the conferences has demonstrated that there is clearly a great amount of interest in the subject within the local area.

4. The Board’s Hillforts’ working group has met on a number of occasions recently and has been looking to progress the two stage bid to the HLF.

A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund

5. An outline enquiry was submitted to the HLF in March 2014. An officer from HLF visited the Chilterns in April 2014 and two further meetings have been held at the HLF offices in London (October 2014 and January 2015).

6. The development officer from the HLF previously advised that any grant applied for should be in the region of £500,000. An HLF grant of this size should be bid for via a two stage process. A development stage grant of up to 90% is available to develop the full bid, which would comprise the delivery stage. There would be a 5% minimum contribution from the Board for each phase.
7. At the most recent meeting attended by officers, the development officer at the HLF provided some very good advice, particularly about what any bid should contain. He stressed that it was important for the bid to consider less deprived areas as there was likely to be very strong competition for funding from deprived coastal areas.

8. Any bid of the level that is being sought should clearly address all 14 of the specifically identified outcomes detailed in the HLF’s Heritage Grant guidance notes. The bid should include specific detail about engagement with local people and should be clear why the bid is being submitted now (mention was made of highlighting the threats from heritage crime leading to heritage being put at risk). The two stage bidding process is likely to take up to 18 months.

9. More detail would be required in connection with likely costs so that there was no ‘uplift’ in the value of the bid between the development and delivery phases.

10. With the possibility that a significant number of hillforts would form part of the project it was advised that owners would need to sign up to the principles of the project. Other letters of support would also be required from key partners.

11. Applications for this funding are considered quarterly. The development officer for the HLF advised that the Board would likely have to submit any bid to the South East Committee (most of the project area is within the South East region for HLF purposes) and that a decision at any meeting would have to be verified by the National Board. A number of deadlines for making a bid were given including 2nd March 2015 (for a decision in June 2015), 8th June (for a decision in September) and 1st September (for a decision in December).

12. It is proposed that the Board works to the June deadline as much preparatory work still has to be done and it would not be possible to meet the deadline in early March 2015. The bid document is being drafted and will be checked by two professionals who have been recruited to provide technical guidance on the bid. Stewart Bryant (former County Archaeologist for Hertfordshire County Council) will be the primary drafter of the bid, and will be assisted by the Hillforts Working Group where possible. Emma Rouse (Wyvern Heritage and Landscape consultancy and previously part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB team) has been recruited to provide advice and guidance to ensure that the bid contains the right amount and level of detail in order to be successful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage/Action</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Submission of development phase bid</td>
<td>8th June 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision from HLF</td>
<td>Early September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development phase, if approved</td>
<td>October 2015 to May 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target submission of delivery phase bid</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery phase, if approved</td>
<td>September 2016 – August 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. For the development phase costs are likely to be about £60,000. Some initial work has been done on a likely assessment of costs for the delivery phase. However, prior to submission of the development phase bid these costs will have to be firmed up. The advice from the HLF was that the bid should be closer to £500,000 than £1m. The following costs may be larger depending on the work programme and securing the necessary match funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element (public engagement will take place throughout each)</th>
<th>Cost Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff (one full time officer including office and on costs)</td>
<td>£180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey and research (LiDAR will be a key element and cost) involving volunteers</td>
<td>£250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical conservation and management including access improvements, survey and research</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access and interpretation (events, web site, walks and talks, information boards, education packs)</td>
<td>£70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£600,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Of which HLF would be asked to provide £500,000</strong></td>
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</table>

14. The programme would include management of a small number of sites (up to 4) and enhanced interpretation and public access on up to 12 sites. There would also be a significant survey and research component with LiDAR being the most significant element.

15. If successful the Board would be in a position to recruit a temporary officer or consultant to prepare the detailed delivery phase bid. This would require the Board to provide funding of up to £5,000, which has already been approved. If the delivery phase application is successful a specific annual budget allocation would be necessary of the order of £5 -10,000 a year from 2015-16 onwards for the duration of the project, which would probably be 4-5 years. The first part of this has already been approved (£5,000 for 2015-16).

16. Other partners are being sought to provide funding. Little reliance can be place on funding from local authorities or statutory bodies. The Board will more likely get significant in kind support in the form of volunteer time.

**Recommendations**

1. To note the progress made in connection with the HLF bid thus far and the deadlines for submission.

2. To note the recruitment of two professionals to assist in the submission of the HLF bid.

3. To note the advice provided by the HLF development officer.
**Item 11  Management Review**

**Authors:**
- Ian Reay (Chairman)
- Kath Daly (Acting Chief Officer)

**Summary:**
Terms and conditions for the proposed review of the Board’s management structure and modus operandi were approved by the Executive Committee at its December 2014 meeting, subject to refinement by the Review working group.

The working group has met on two occasions since then and final Terms of Reference have been agreed.

A Board Workshop is to be held following the Board Meeting on 29th January to begin the work of engaging all Board Members in the review process.

Several members of the Review working group together with the Acting Chief Officer plan visit to the Cotswolds Conservation Board on February 10th as part of the review process.

**Purpose:**
To advise members of the agreed Terms of Reference for the Management Review and to update on progress.

**Background**

1. At its meeting on 26th June the Board established a working group to oversee the recruitment of a Chief Officer to take up the position when Steve Rodrick retired at the end of 2014. It was decided that, prior to appointing a permanent replacement, it would be prudent to review the need for any changes to the management structure and modus operandi to help ensure the Board is equipped to face the challenges ahead.

2. Following Kath Daly’s appointment as Acting Chief Officer (January - June 2015) a working group was set up to lead the review.

3. The working group members are: Ian Reay, Gill Gowing, Wendy Jordan, Ray Payne, Jeremy Ryman, Helen Tuffs and Alan Walters.

4. The aim is to complete the significant elements of the review by June 2015. During this period the sub group will initially report to the Executive Committee (February and May 2015) which will make its report with conclusions, proposals and recommendations to the full Board (March and June 2015).

5. Proposed terms of reference for a review of the Board’s management structure and operation were discussed at the meeting of the Executive Committee on 10th December 2014.
6. The Committee approved the proposed scope, terms of reference, programme and timetable of the Management Review, subject to further refinements that may be proposed by the Review working group.

7. The Review working group met on 18th December and proposed a number of amendments which are adopted in the final Terms of Reference set out below.

Terms of Reference

Purpose of review:

8. To review the management structure and modus operandi to help ensure the Board fulfils its statutory purposes effectively over the next 5 years (and longer).

9. To advise on the need for changes in key policies, processes or standards to ensure the CCB is fulfilling its statutory purposes effectively.

Background and rationale

10. Whilst the forthcoming retirement of the current Chief Officer precipitated the decision to carry out a review of the Board’s management, a number of other factors have also informed this decision.

11. The Board’s management structure, operation and staffing have remained stable over the past 10 years and have served the Board well during a period of constant change and significant financial challenges. The circumstances of many partner organisations have also changed considerably. Until recently the stability of the staff team was matched by a low level of turnover amongst Board members. That is now changing due to the electoral cycle, retirements and end of appointment terms.

12. The Board was established by Parliamentary Order in 2004. The management and governance structure has remained the same since. It broadly reflects what had been put in place in 2001 when the shadow Conservation Board was created. The retiring Chief Officer took up post in 1994 and, with his retirement, is seems a sensible moment to take stock to prepare the Board for the challenges of the next ten years.

13. The Board’s high level structure and terms of reference are set by the Parliamentary Establishment Order. The implementation of its statutory purposes are guided by the aims and objectives described in the Management Plan for the AONB (2014-2019).

14. The actions the Board itself will take to deliver the Plan’s objectives are set out in the Board’s annual Business Plan (incorporating the annual work programme). This is itself guided by the medium term business plan which is based on the guidance from DEFRA on its planned annual financial contribution (2011-2015).
15. The financial outlook is uncertain and, whilst relatively stable for 2015-16, further changes, probably reductions in public funding can be anticipated.

**Main Objectives**

To review the effectiveness of the current management and organisational structure in supporting the Board to achieve its statutory purposes over the next 5 years and beyond.

1. To identify the necessary capacity, skills, resources and processes needed to identify and achieve the Board’s priorities over the next 5 years, and consider how these might be addressed if there is a short fall or mismatch.

   This will include both staff and Board members. The current use – and potential for increasing - volunteer support will also be investigated.

2. To map and review the Board’s relationships with key partners in order to enhance the strength and vitality of those partnerships where they exist at present and forge new alliances with those who can help to deliver the aims and objectives of the AONB Management plan.

3. To review the source and application of funds, and consider options for maintaining and broadening the Board’s funding base.

4. To ensure that the Board complies with the principles of good governance and to consider how any shortfalls might be addressed.

   This will include consideration of the role and involvement of Board Members including Board Member recruitment, induction, support and training, and how effectively Board Members and staff work together.

**How will the review be carried out and who will be involved?**

16. The review will be led by the Review group together with the acting Chief Officer and will be developed through a series of meetings and discussion papers.

17. Additional support will be commissioned where necessary to help with specific elements of the review including facilitation of a Board Member workshop. It is also envisaged that Sally Charman, the Board’s HR Advisor and Chris Smith, the Finance Officer, will participate in the review process.

18. Active involvement of all Board members and staff as well as key volunteers and stakeholders will be encouraged.

**Resources**

19. A budget of up to £4,000 has been allocated and will be used primarily to meet the costs of commissioning external support. Other incidental costs are
expected to be modest and, as far as possible, the process will be conducted in house to restrict the cost and ensure rapid progress. The cost will be met from the project support budget.

**Timing**

20. The aim is to complete the significant elements of the review in the period from January – April 2015. Priority will be given over this time period to addressing Objectives 1 and 2, with the focus moving to Objectives 3 and 4 over the period April – June 2015.

21. It is expected that further work packages will be identified to be developed and completed over a longer period of time.

22. Inevitably some of the decisions will take longer to implement. Subject to when decisions are made they will be implemented on a rolling basis from April 2015 onwards.

**Reporting**

23. The reporting process is from the Review Group to the Executive Committee, which will then consider the report from the Review Group and, in turn, make its report with conclusions and recommendations to the full Board.

24. The initial findings and recommendations will be reported to the Board at its meeting in March, with a final report to the meeting in June.

25. Where it is likely that issues need to be presented to, and decisions made at, the AGM (June) these will be agreed at the Board meeting in April.

**Recommendations**

1. That the Board notes the Terms of Reference and update on progress.