Board Meeting

10.00 a.m. 21st June
Barton Le Clay Village Hall, nr. Luton

Agenda

1. Apologies 10.00 - 10.01
2. Declarations of Interest 10.01 - 10.02
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting 10.03 - 10.06
4. Matters Arising 10.06 - 10.11
5. Public Question Time 10.11 - 10.13
6. Report from the Executive Committee 10.13 - 10.20
7. Report from the Planning Committee 10.20 - 10.35
8. Approval of Accounts 2011-2012 10.35 - 10.50
9. Report on High Speed 2 10.50 - 11.10
12. Report on Undergrounding of Electricity Wires 11.50 – 12.05
13. Draft consultation response on management of National trails 12.05 – 12.25
15. Presentation on Building Design Awards 12.40 – 1.00
16. Date of Future Meetings
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERNs CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 29th MARCH 2012 at the Village Hall, Benson OX10 6LZ AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.50PM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Appointing Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Anna Badcock</td>
<td>South Oxfordshire District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr David Barnard</td>
<td>North Herts District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Roger Emmett</td>
<td>Wycombe District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Marion Mustoe</td>
<td>Central Bedfordshire Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr David Nimmo Smith</td>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Brian Norman</td>
<td>Three Rivers District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Richard Pushman</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Ian Reay</td>
<td>Dacorum Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Chris Richards</td>
<td>Aylesbury Vale District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Jeremy Ryman</td>
<td>Chiltern District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Bill Storey</td>
<td>Hertfordshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Alan Walters</td>
<td>South Buckinghamshire District Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointed by the Secretary of Sate</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mike Fox (Chairman)</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettina Kirkham</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Simon Mortimer</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Payne</td>
<td>Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Willson</td>
<td>Secretary of Sate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elected by Parish Councils</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Mary Goldsmith</td>
<td>Bedfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr John Griffin</td>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Margaret Jarrett</td>
<td>Hertfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cllr Julia Wells</td>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deirdre Hansen</td>
<td>Clerk to the Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Rodrick</td>
<td>CCB Chief Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Smith</td>
<td>CCB Finance Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin White</td>
<td>CCB Planning Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Dr Helen Barrett-Mold, Shirley Judges, Marion Mustoe, Dave Taylor, Helen Tuffs and Barbara Wallis

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of interest were declared

68. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendment was made:
Mary Goldsmith is a Bedfordshire parish council member not Oxfordshire.

69. Matters Arising

1. Re item 62: no progress has been made appropriate ways to mark the Olympics.
2. Re item 62: to mark the Diamond Jubilee “60 Royal Connections for the Chilterns” are being sought.

70. Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

71. Report from the Executive Committee

The members received the report of the Chief Officer.

10:10 David Barnard attended

At its meeting on 2nd March 2012 the Executive Committee:

1. Received and approved a report on the financial position to the end of January 2012. There were no significant issues to report.
2. Approved a draft budget for 2012-2013.
3. Received a report on the Medium Term Financial plan 2012-2015.
4. Approved an allocation of £17,000 from the Development Reserve.
5. Renewed and amended the Risk Register (see item 72)
6. Approved a report on the performance of the internal audit.
8. Received a report on High Speed 2
9. Received the Chief Officer’s report.

1. The Board NOTED the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decisions made under delegated authority.

72. Effectiveness of System of Internal Control

The Finance Officer presented a review of the system of internal (financial) control for consideration of the Board. The 2011 amendment to the Accounts and Audit Regulations require this review to be approved by the full Board annually. The review should include the identification and management of risk, financial control systems and the provision of an effective internal audit system.

The Executive Committee had reviewed, on 2nd March, the risks faced by the Board and had concluded that the risks faced by the Board are controlled effectively. A review of the Board’s insurance arrangements is being conducted to ensure that risks are covered appropriately and value for money is secured.

1. The Board REVIEWED and APPROVED the arrangements in place to ensure an effective system of internal control, including the management of risk.
73. Budget 2012-2013

The Finance Officer presented the budget prepared and reviewed by the Executive Committee pending confirmation of grant income from local authorities.

10.25 John Willson attended.

1. The Board APPROVED the budget for the financial year 2012-2013.

74. Draft Business Plan 2012-2013

The Chief Officer had circulated the draft business plan for 2012-13 to the members prior to the meeting. The draft business plan had been considered by the Executive committee on 2nd March. The main elements are: the budget, other resources and the work plan. The format has been kept the same as recent years. Resources from Government and local authorities are reducing year on year, but with the use of reserves and by generating “earned income” the level of activity and its breath is largely unchanged. The on-going challenge is to attract funding from other sources. Some projects have secured funding; other bids are in the process of being prepared. Due to this relative uncertainty an update of the works programme will be provided to the Board on an on a regular basis.

The impact of HS2 is unpredictable as a result the attention to certain areas of work has been reduced.

10.35 Roger Emmett attended.

1. The Board APPROVED the business plan 2012-2013.

75. 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 8th February 2012 and the decisions taken under delegated powers. The following were noted:

1. The High Speed 2 update.
3. Chilterns Building Design Awards
4. Student research project
5. Responses to development plans
6. Responses to planning applications.

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

76. Report on National Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Officer brought the key issues arising from the NPPF published on 27th March 2012 to the attention of the Board.

- Despite many changes between draft and final version of the NPPF the protection for the natural environment and protected landscapes is not as robust as the policy that has been replaced.
- Some of the text lacks clarity, which is only likely to be provided by legal rulings and the Planning Inspectorate considering appeals..
- Biodiversity has a more prominent position than previously and the SSSI’s are specifically dealt with now.
- The primacy of the local plan is now properly recognised and references to the plan led system fully included.
- The use of Brownfield land is now included more specifically and Councils will be allowed to include figures for windfall developments in their forward projections.
The Planning Officer will issue notes on the published NPPF. The policies in the NPPF apply now. The final version of the NPPF includes many of the recommendations made by various bodies. Many details are still to emerge.

1. The Board NOTED the key issues arising from the published National Planning Policy Framework.


The Chief Officer presented the report of the working group who had looked at the four strategic issues affecting the AONB around Luton and the Outlier including: the proposed expansion of Luton Airport; proposed Luton Northern by-pass; review of the AONB boundary; and Central Bedfordshire Council’s Development Strategy. The purpose was to raise awareness of the issues and propose the creation of a working group to develop the Board’s responses. All the issues are interlinked.

The Board:
1. DECIDED to respond to the public consultations and the anticipated planning application on the proposed expansion of Luton Airport highlighting the concerns about noise pollution in particular.
2. DECIDED to comment on the proposed Luton Northern by-pass objecting to the route through the AONB.
3. DECIDED to form a sub group to consider the major planning and development issues raised by the plans for expansion of Luton Airport and strategic issues arising from the Central Bedfordshire Council development strategy.
4. DECIDED to instruct a sub group to prepare a report for the Board on the case for reviewing the AONB boundary in North Hertfordshire and Totternhoe.


The Planning Officer reported on a proposed Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project to survey Chiltern Historic Farmstead. The report seeks approval from the Board to submit an application to the HLF for funding for this project. A lack of knowledge of historic farm buildings of the Chilterns has been identified and a concern raised that many were either not in good condition or were being inappropriately developed. The project is likely to last 3 years and a bid would be made for £75,000. The main cost to the Board would be officer time. The Executive Committee will consider a costed proposal in May.

The Board:
1. PROVIDED feedback on the proposal to Survey Chiltern Historic Farmsteads.
2. AUTHORISED a bid to be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

79. Report on High Speed 2

The Chief Officer reported that following the Government’s announcement on 10th January 2012 it intended to proceed to the next stage. The Board has concentrated on analysing the impact of the proposed route alignment and indirectly supporting the case for a judicial review.

Since the Board meeting 19th January 2012 the following has been undertaken:
1. A detailed analysis of the effects of the proposed changes to design and alignment.
2. Legal challenges have been made by other groups.
3. HS2Ltd has commissioned an Environmental Impact Assessment.
4. HS2Ltd has instigated a number of Community and Environmental Fora. The Board has not been invited to all.
5. The Board has continued to press for the Business plan for HS2 to be revised.
6. Meetings have been held with local MP’s. The Board is continuing to conven meetings with local authorities and local action groups in the Chilterns.

The Board:

1. MAINTAINS an active campaigning role to stop HS2.
2. DECIDED that in the event that Parliament gives the go ahead for HS2 to have made sure that the design minimises the impact on the communities, economy and environment of the Chilterns.
3. DECIDED that if approached by HS2 Ltd for information, to only release it if all costs are covered in full by HS2 Ltd.
4. DECIDED to actively participate in the HS2 Ltd Fora providing they are felt to be constructive and worthwhile.

80. Chiltern Tourism Promotion Programme.

The item was moved down the agenda with agreement of the meeting.


Dr Simon Mortimer outlined a research strategy framework. It is proposed to create a fund up to £5,000 per annum to support research projects. Initially it will be targeted at M.Sc. students. It is also proposed to create the Chilterns Research prize with a small cash award or equivalent of up to £200. Eligibility for a grant would depend on the relevance to the AONB and the Management Plan objectives. There are a large number of potential academic institutions to work with. For practical reasons it would make sense to develop closer links with a smaller number of partners.

The research grant fund and prize would be administered by the Board’s staff and overseen by a Grants Panel. There is no allowance, but travel expenses are payable.

The Board:

1. DECIDED to create a research fund of £5,000 and to invite applications from M.Sc. level students
2. DECIDED to set up a Chilterns Research prize with a cash prize (or equivalent) of £200.
3. DECIDED to set up a sub group of the Board to serve as a Grant Panel, which will also assess the entries for the Research Prize.

The meeting went back to item 80.

Chiltern Tourism Promotion Programme

The Chief Officer reported that the Board is a member of the newly created Chilterns Tourism Network, which wishes to develop a web site specifically to attract tourists from outside the area. It is proposed
to develop this site alongside that of the AONB web site which primarily appeals to residents and day visitors. It is the intention for the two sites to share several technical arrangements for economies of scale. The new web site is part of a wider tourism promotional campaign for which a bid is being submitted to the Chilterns LEADER programme. Board approval was sought on the proposal to develop a Chilterns tourism web site and approval of a £3,000 contribution in 2012-13 from the Development Reserve towards the project.

The Board:

1. SUPPORTED the proposed Chilterns Tourism Promotion Programme.
2. APPROVED the specific proposed arrangements for developing the new Chilterns tourism web site as part of the AONB web site.
3. DECIDED to allocate £3,000 from the Development Reserve in 2012-13.

82. Review of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan.

The Chief Officer informed the Board that the Board has a statutory duty to publish and review the management plan for the AONB on a five-year cycle. The current plan runs from 2008-2013. The process of reviewing the current plan must begin in 2013 for publication early 2014, the cost implications are not yet known. It is likely much of the previous work can be used. New guidelines from DEFRA are expected within the next 12 months, which may result in a less time consuming and costly process.

The programme for undertaking the review is in preparation. It is likely that from June 2012 each meeting of the Board will give regular opportunity for all Board members to make an input.

Review of the AONB Boundary:
- The legal power to revise the boundary rest with the Secretary of State, who would only act on the formal recommendation of Natural England. Any recommendation for a review would also be based on public consultations. The views of the Board would be integral to the process.
- In view of the decision by Natural England to lift the moratorium on reviewing the boundaries of AONB’s, the issue of whether or not to seek a review of any part of the Chilterns AONB boundary would need to be addressed in the 2014-2019 Management Plan.

The Board:

1. NOTED that the process of reviewing the 2008-2013 Management Plan for the AONB will begin April 2012 with an anticipated publication date in spring 2014.
2. NOTED that a detailed and costed programme will be presented to the Executive Committee in May and the full Board in June.

12.35 David Barnard left.

83. AOB:
- Board Tour 20/04/12
- Natural England has a £1m pot for the improvement of important local paths.

84. Date of next meeting: Thursday 21st June 2012, Location TBC.

85. Dates of Future meetings: Wednesday 17th October 2012. Location TBC.

The meeting closed 12.50

The Chairman…………………………………… Date………………
Item 6  Report from the Executive Committee

Author: Steve Rodrick  Chief Officer

Summary: At its meeting on 23rd May the Executive Committee:

1. Received and approved a finance report on the provisional outturn to the end of March 2012.
2. Noted the report of the Internal Auditor.
3. Approved an allocation of £5,000 from the Development Reserve to publish a booklet on “The People and Places of the Chilterns.”
4. Received an update on HR policies and personnel issues.
5. Approved a proposal to develop a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Traditional Farmstead Survey and allocation of up to £5,000 pa. for three years from the Development Reserve.
6. Received a report on the review of the AONB Management Plan.
7. Received a report on High Speed 2.

Purpose of Report To advise Board members of the matters considered, and decision taken, by the Executive Committee under delegated powers.

Finance Report

1. The Finance Officer advised members of the Board’s likely financial position at the end of the financial year 2011-12. The members received detailed explanations of the presented financial figures for the year. Aside from exceptional items related to specific projects the accounts will show a small surplus on the core budget. The original estimate was for a small deficit to be funded by a transfer from the budget equalisation reserve. The better than expected performance was due to higher than estimated income from local authorities and what is called “earned” income e.g. sales and delegate fees.

Internal Auditor’s Report

2. The Finance Officer presented the findings from the internal auditors, the Hertfordshire Shared Internal Audit Service. The Auditor had conducted a high level review of important and current risks and
concluded that an overall Full Assurance on effective management can be provided. No recommendations were found to be necessary.

People and Places Booklet

3. The Committee approved an allocation of up to £5,000 from the Development Reserve for the publication of booklet based on the profiles gathered for the People and places of the Chilterns site. It was estimated that this would generate an anticipated net income over the next five years of at least £15,000.

HR Report

4. The Boards’ HR Advisor, Sally Chapman, had prepared a report on the need for any changes to the Boards HR polices, which were minor and in hand. The paper also reported the Board’s staff absence rate for 2011-12, which was 0.33%.

Traditional Farmsteads Survey

5. The Board had already authorised a bid to the HLF to seek £75,000 funding for the recruitment and employment of a part-time project officer. The Executive Committee approved an allocation of up to £5,000 p.a. for three years from the Development Reserve.

Review of the AONB Management Plan

6. The Chief Officer reported that the Board has a statutory duty to publish and review the management plan for the AONB on a five year cycle. The current plan runs until 2013 and a new plan should be in place early 2014. It is estimated that the total cost will be up to £12,000 which should be met from the Development Reserve rather than from the operating, core budget. The Chief Officer outlined the programme for reviewing the AONB Management Plan.

Recommendations

1. To note the matters discussed by the Executive Committee and the decision made under delegated authority.
Item 7  Report from the Planning Committee

Author: Colin White - Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 16th May. The following items were discussed:
1. High Speed 2 update
2. AONB Planning Forum
3. Planning training for Parish and Town Councils
4. Chilterns Buildings Design Awards
5. Student research project
6. Responses to development plans
7. 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.

High Speed 2 update

1. The Committee was informed about recent activity in connection with HS2 and particularly: the five ongoing judicial reviews and the complaint by the Wildlife Trusts to the EC (the Board is an interested party); feedback from the first round of Community Forum meetings; the publication of the EIA scope and methodology report and the Board’s response, and the recent Bucks CC summit on mitigation and compensation.

AONB Planning Forum

2. The Committee was updated on the visits that have been made to the local planning authorities (11 have now been visited with 1 other confirmed date). The visits have been very useful and appear to have resulted in a greater number of officers attending. Notes of the meetings will be circulated when the visits have been completed. A forum was held at Dunstable on 22nd May and was attended by 17 people representing 9 of the 13 local authorities in the Chilterns as well as The Chiltern Society, the Wildlife Trusts and Natural England. The local authority experience of the IPC process and emerging issues from the NPPF were the focus of the discussion.

Planning training for Parish and Town Councils

3. The three sessions for the planning training for Parish and Town Councils have been organised and are being promoted. The events take place on Tuesday 26th (Ballinger) and Thursday 28th June (Markyate) and Monday 2nd July (Woodcote). The training will be led by the Planning Officer and Mike Stubbs (Co-opted Planning Committee
Member) and will focus on neighbourhood planning and recent planning reforms. Bookings are being encouraged.

**Chilterns Buildings Design Awards**

4. This year’s Design Awards Ceremony is taking place on 14th June. The format of the ceremony has been refreshed and will take place in the evening with a short reception, at which the winners will be announced. Feedback from the event will be given at the Board meeting.

**Student research project – implications of internet land sales**

5. A student from Oxford Brookes University Planning School has undertaken a research project for the Board on the outcome of land sales, whereby fields are sub divided into house sized plots. The report will be available shortly and will be circulated once received. The Committee agreed to put forward ideas for future research projects.

**Development Plan Responses**

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

**Bucks Rural Affairs Group Rural Strategy Issues Paper**

7. The Board considered that the different themes of the paper should be linked and guidance should be provided on the Natural Environment White Paper and the National Ecosystem Assessment. Current and emerging planning policy should also be reflected and the implications for the AONB should be detailed. The Board's purposes should also be mentioned.

**DCMS Relaxing the restrictions on the deployment of overhead telecommunications lines**

8. The Government's intention to improve the country's high speed broadband network was welcomed but any cables should be placed underground. This is particularly relevant in AONBs where Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 applies. The Board considered that full consultation should take place for any changes and the installation of new poles, though this should include a thorough assessment of all alternatives (including undergrounding). The Board should be included in any consultation affecting the AONB.

**Three Rivers DC Development Management Policies pre-submission consultation**

9. Support was offered for various policies and comments made about the AONB specific policy to address the likely implications of some types of development. References to the Buildings Design Guide and
supplementary technical notes were welcomed. It was suggested that reference should also be made to the use of water meters in connection with efficient use of water resources.

South Oxfordshire DC Core Strategy Main Modifications

10. The Board considered that the original allocation for Henley of 400 dwellings should remain (it had been increased to 450 with caveats). The Board expressed concern about the potential early release of sites in Henley after a modification could allow for sites to come forward as windfall prior to the adoption of the Site Allocations DPD. The Board suggested a change that would ensure that housing in villages would meet identified local needs.

Central Beds Council Development Strategy Issues and options

11. Whatever level of growth is proposed the Council should exercise its Section 85 duty and full account should be taken of the setting of the AONB. The Board suggested that a low/medium level of growth for housing would be most suitable as this would reflect historic (achievable) rates of development. For employment purposes this was at a medium level to provide choice and flexibility. No particular level of growth was supported. A mix of options for delivery should be considered.

North Herts DC Core Strategy New Housing Growth Targets

12. The Board did not support a particular level of growth (7,000 was favoured by the Council), although any development proposed should ensure conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB.

South Oxfordshire DC Core Strategy Comments following publication of NPPF

13. The Board considered that the Council should take the opportunity to revisit the issue of a windfall allowance which had been given to it via paragraph 48 of the NPPF. This allows local authorities to make an allowance for windfall sites where the evidence exists to show that such sites are available and have come forward. With an allowance being made for windfall there might be a reduction in the allocations that have been proposed for the rural areas in particular.

London Luton Airport Limited (owner) Luton Airport expansion proposals

14. The Board expressed concerns about: the likely increase in number of aircraft and noise emitted from larger aircraft; the failure of the owner to comply with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; the prematurity of the plans as there is no national aviation strategy; the short timescales between consultation and submission of a
planning application; poorly produced consultation material; the lack of an EIA; the impacts of overflying aircraft; night noise; the impacts of taxiing aircraft; the impacts of new buildings on the surrounding landscape; the impacts of traffic flows; the pressure for new housing; the need to introduce night-time flying restrictions; the need to take account of existing operational constraints (Heathrow and Bovingdon stack and possible route changes) and reviews to airspace. The Board also expressed the wish to be involved in the implementation of the recently adopted Noise Action Plan for the airport.

London Luton Airport Operations Limited (operator) Luton Airport expansion proposals

15. The Board re-iterated the comments that had been made in connection with the proposal put forward by the owners (see above) and added to these by suggesting various issues that the EIA should address, including the need to: consider the AONB Management Plan and Position Statement on Development Affecting the Setting of the AONB; address landscape and visual impacts arising from development and use of buildings and taxiways, and consider impacts on the AONB and its enjoyment.

Great Missenden Parish Village Design Statement

16. The Board suggested a number of minor amendments to the draft to ensure consistency with: the AONB Management Plan; the Buildings Design Guide and supplementary technical notes, and the Highways Guidelines. All of the suggestions appear to have been incorporated in the final version.

Further details of the development plans responses and all other papers can be viewed at: http://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/ConservationBoard/Board_Meetings/Pl_agenda_160512.pdf

Planning applications update

17. The Committee heard that last year the Board was consulted on 171 applications and had made 36 representations (33 objections and 3 supports). 25 of these have been decided with 72% in line with the Board’s comments. So far this the Board has been consulted on 27 planning applications. Four of these have been the subject of formal representations (all objections) and none have been decided.

Recommendation

1. The Board notes the report from the Planning Committee.
Item 8  Statement of Accounts 2011-12

Author:  Chris Smith  Finance Officer

Summary:  The year end position shows an overall net surplus from all activity of £75,370, partly as a result of some project expenditure (Chalk Streams and Commons) being deferred until 2012-13.

£6,733 has been applied to the shortfall on Sustainable Development Fund from the Budget Equalisation Reserve, leaving £143,267 in that Reserve.

£35,910 has been added to the Development Reserve, representing the surplus on core activity. This surplus was due to higher than anticipated income.

Other earmarked reserves are increased by a net £46,997 and restricted reserves reduced by a net £804.

The General Reserve remains unchanged at £135,000.

Purpose of Report:  To present the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2011-12.

Final results

1.  The formal Statement of Accounts and associated Annual Audit Return are attached.

2.  The figures show that an overall net surplus of income over expenditure of £75,370 was recorded.

3.  The General Reserve is unchanged at £135,000.

4.  Restricted reserves are reduced by a net £804 to £22,977, comprising:

   Friends of Red Kites  £ 7,079
   Red Kites / Getting Close to Nature  £15,898

5.  Earmarked reserves are increased by a net £76,174 to £439,785, comprising:

   Budget Equalisation  £143,267
6. The Pensions Liability has increased by £362,000 to £636,000. This represents the liability to the Board if every employee had retired on 31 March 2012 and collected their pension entitlements.

7. The increase is due to the volatility in financial markets over the last couple of years, together with the impact of the valuation methodology and the derivation of the main financial assumptions required by Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 17.

Recommendation

1. The Board approves the Statement of Accounts and Annual Audit Return, including the Annual Governance Statement, for 2011-12.
Statement of Accounts 2011-12

CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Foreword</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Consolidated Revenue Account</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Balance Sheet</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Statement of Movement in Reserves</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOREWORD

This Statement of Accounts details the Board’s activities for the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012, and has been prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as modified by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 and 2011.


The Board operates to a budget based on the agreed grant aid from the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and local authorities, including parish and town councils. Additionally, the Board either takes the lead role or actively participates in a range of partnership schemes to secure external funding for additional project work. Income is also raised through sales of merchandise, donations and consultancy fees.

The Statements included in these accounts are:

Income and Expenditure Account (pages 3-4)

This shows the costs of providing services across the various activities and projects that the Board has supported during the year and how these projects were supported from grants and income. Gross revenue expenditure for the year was £738,072, whilst income was £813,442. Taken together, these items show a net surplus for the year of £75,370. Net additions of £75,370 were made to restricted and earmarked reserves, a large proportion of which will be expended on the Chilterns Chalk Stream Project and the Commons Project in 2012-13.

Statement of Balances (page 5)

This details the Board’s financial position as at 31st March 2012 listing the value of assets and liabilities.

Statement of Movements in Reserves (page 6)

This sets out the movements during the year for the reserves held by the Board, including a re-structure of earmarked reserves approved during the year.
## CHILTERNS CONSERVATION BOARD

### CONSOLIDATED REVENUE ACCOUNT 2011-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural England: Core</td>
<td>452,783</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural England: SDF</td>
<td>31,842</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural England: Chalk Streams</td>
<td>19,220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authorities</td>
<td>105,085</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise sales</td>
<td>4,314</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other earned income</td>
<td>39,542</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Kite donations</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk Streams external income</td>
<td>63,357</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Woodland Survey external income</td>
<td>20,188</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commons Project external income</td>
<td>77,051</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td><strong>813,442</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion and Awareness</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>112,646</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td>15,819</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside Festival</td>
<td>4,696</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
<td>1,179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Forum</td>
<td>935</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk and Trees</td>
<td>11,381</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Education</td>
<td>1,018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Close to Nature</td>
<td>1,411</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying Woodlands</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Tourism</td>
<td>657</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Environment</td>
<td>1,816</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Kites</td>
<td>453</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>155,511</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countryside Management</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>74,039</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td>10,546</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commons</td>
<td>6,977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk Grassland Group</td>
<td>2,989</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Management Survey</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Environment Report</td>
<td>1,546</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Trees and Woods Management</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conserving the Chiltern Chalk Streams</td>
<td>36,790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU Timber Project</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development Fund</td>
<td>38,575</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchards Project</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Woodland Survey</td>
<td>42,353</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commons Project</td>
<td>46,965</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>268,780</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>60,424</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td>15,819</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Committee</td>
<td>430</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Conference</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Guidance</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Design Awards</td>
<td>1,228</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
<td>1,497</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Fuel Group</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Speed 2</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>83,953</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation and Access</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>26,324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management support</td>
<td>10,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiltern Country Leaflets</td>
<td>2,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access Conference</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside Close to Home</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling in the Chilterns</td>
<td>4,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilterns Cycleway</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44,973</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Services</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office costs</td>
<td>142,222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Allowances and costs</td>
<td>35,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Support Costs</td>
<td>5,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Landscapes Coordinator</td>
<td>2,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise purchases</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total Expenditure**    | **738,072** |
| **Surplus for Year**     | **75,370** |
| **From Restricted Reserves** | **- 804** |
| **To Earmarked Reserves** | **76,174** |
| **To General Reserve**   | **-** |
| CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD |
| STATEMENT OF BALANCES |
| As at 31st March 2011 | As at 31 March 2012 |
| £ | £ |
| **FIXED ASSETS** | - |
| **CURRENT ASSETS** |  |
| 3,378 | 3,024 |
| 11,016 | 37,779 |
| 686,150 | 657,852 |
| 700,544 | 698,655 |
| **LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES** |  |
| (178,151) | (100,893) |
| **NET CURRENT ASSETS** |  |
| 522,393 | 579,762 |
| **LONG TERM LIABILITIES** |  |
| (274,000) | (636,000) |
| **TOTAL ASSETS LESS TOTAL LIABILITIES** | (38,238) |
| 248,393 |  |

**REPRESENTED BY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(274,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>328,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>248,393</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CHILTERNS CONSERVATION BOARD

## STATEMENT OF MOVEMENT IN RESERVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Restricted Reserves</th>
<th>Earmarked Reserves</th>
<th>General Reserve</th>
<th>Pensions Reserve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends of Red Kites</td>
<td>Getting Close to Nature</td>
<td>Countryside Festival</td>
<td>Chalk Streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As at 1st April 2011</td>
<td>£7,883</td>
<td>£15,898</td>
<td>£1,758</td>
<td>£56,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve re-structure</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movements in the year</td>
<td>(£804)</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£45,787</td>
<td>(£26,664)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As at 31st March 2012</td>
<td>£7,079</td>
<td>£15,898</td>
<td>£1,758</td>
<td>£65,283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21
Small Bodies in England
Electronic annual return
Year ended 31 March 2012

Small relevant bodies in England with an annual turnover of £6.5 million or less must complete an annual return summarising their activities at the end of each financial year.

The annual return on pages 2 to 5 is made up of four sections:
- Sections 1 and 2 are completed by the person nominated by the body.
- Section 3 is completed by the external auditor.
- Section 4 is completed by the body's internal audit provider.

The body must approve this annual return no later than 30 June 2012.

Completing your electronic annual return (eAR)

Guidance notes, including a completion checklist, are provided on page 6 and at relevant points in the annual return. For further information on eAR go to http://wwwaudit-commission.gov.uk/audit-regime/support-guidance/Pages/Annualreturn.aspx

Once downloaded you are able to complete certain sections of this e-annual return. You must then print the e-annual return to complete the remainder of the information required before approval by the body. The sections available for completion electronically are:
- the name of your body in sections 1, 2 and 4 on pages 2, 3 and 5
- boxes 1 to 10 in Section 1 on page 2; and
- the responses in boxes 1 to 8 in Section 2 on page 3.

You cannot save the e-annual return or send it electronically. You may only print it.

Complete all sections highlighted in red. Do not leave any red box blank. Incomplete or incorrect returns require additional external audit work and may incur additional costs.

Send the annual return, together with your bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2012, an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements and any additional information requested, to your appointed external auditor by the due date.

Your auditor will identify and ask for any documents needed for audit. Therefore, unless requested do not send any original financial records to the external auditor.

Audited and certified annual returns will be returned to the body for publication or public display of sections 1, 2 and 3. You must publish or display the audited annual return by 30 September 2012.

It should not be necessary for you to contact the external auditor or the Audit Commission directly for guidance.

More guidance on completing this annual return may be found in the Practitioners’ Guides for either local councils or internal drainage boards. These publications may be downloaded from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) or Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) websites (www.nalc.gov.uk or www.slcc.co.uk) or from the members area of the Association of Drainage Authorities website (www.adia.org.uk).
Section 1 – Accounting statements for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILTERNs CONSERVATION BOARD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 March 2011 £</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Balances brought forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the body's financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (+) Income from local taxation and/or levy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of local tax and/or levy received or receivable in the year including funding from a sponsoring body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (+) Total other receipts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less income from taxation and/or levy (box 2). Include any grants received here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (-) Staff costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all body employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and employment expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (-) Loan interest/capital repayments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the body's borrowings (if any).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (-) All other payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (box 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (box 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (=) Balances carried forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Total cash and short term investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March - to agree with bank reconciliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Total fixed assets and long term assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recorded book value at 31 March of all fixed assets owned by the body and any other long term assets e.g. loans to third parties and any long-term investments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Total borrowings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2012 the accounting statements in this annual return present fairly the financial position of the body and its income and expenditure, or properly present receipts and payments, as the case may be.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer:

Date 21/06/2012

I confirm that these accounting statements were approved by the body on:

21/06/2012

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by Chair of meeting approving these accounting statements:

Date 21/06/2012
Section 2 – Annual governance statement

We acknowledge as the members of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td>prepared its accounting statements in the way prescribed by law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.</td>
<td></td>
<td>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the body to conduct its business or on its finances.</td>
<td></td>
<td>has only done things it has the legal power to do and conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it has done so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</td>
<td></td>
<td>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the body's accounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We assessed the risks facing the body and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and external insurance cover where required.</td>
<td></td>
<td>considered the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the body's accounting records and control systems.</td>
<td></td>
<td>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.</td>
<td></td>
<td>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the body and where appropriate included them in the accounting statements.</td>
<td></td>
<td>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This annual governance statement is approved by the body and recorded as minute reference dated 21/06/2012

Signed by: Chair dated 21/06/2012
Signed by: Clerk dated 21/06/2012

*Note: Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each ‘No’ response. Describe how the body will address the weaknesses identified.
Section 3 – External auditor’s certificate and opinion

Certificate
We certify that we have completed the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2012 of

CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD

Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor
The body is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The body prepares an annual return in accordance with proper practices which:
• summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2012; and
• confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are important to our audit responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to conduct an audit in accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission and, on the basis of our review of the annual return and supporting information, to report whether any matters that come to our attention give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

External auditor’s report
(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the body:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

External auditor’s signature

External auditor’s name ___________________________ Date __________

Note: The auditor signing this page has been appointed by the Audit Commission and is reporting to you that they carried out and completed all the work required of them by law. For further information please refer to the Audit Commission’s publication Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and of Audited Small Bodies.
Section 4 – Annual internal audit report to

The body's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2012.

Internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the body's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal control objective</th>
<th>Agreed? Please choose from one of the following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A  Appropriate accounting records have been kept properly throughout the year.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B  The body’s financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, expenditure approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C  The body assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D  The annual taxation or levy or funding requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E  Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F  Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G  Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with body approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H  Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I  Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J  Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and, where appropriate, debtors and creditors were properly recorded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For any other risk areas identified by the body (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: 

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: 

Date: 

*Note: If the response is ‘no’ please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is ‘not covered’ please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).
Guidance notes on completing the 2012 annual return

1. Proper practices for preparing this annual return are found in the Practitioners’ Guides*. These publications are updated from time to time and contain everything you should need to prepare successfully for your financial year-end and the subsequent audit. Both NALC and SLCC have helplines if you want to talk through any problem you may encounter. If you are using the electronic annual return (e-AR) read carefully the guidance on page 1.

2. Make sure that your annual return is complete (i.e. no empty red boxes), and is properly signed and dated. Avoid making any amendments to the completed return. But, if this is unavoidable, make sure the amendments are drawn to the attention of and approved by the body, properly initialled and an explanation is provided to the auditor. Annual returns containing unapproved or unexplained amendments will be returned unaudited and may incur additional costs.

3. Use the checklist provided below. Use a second pair of eyes, perhaps a member or the Chair, to review your annual return for completeness before sending it to the auditor.

4. Do not send the auditor any information not specifically asked for. Doing so is not helpful. However, you must advise the auditor of any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair.

5. Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation which you send to your auditor with the annual return covers all your bank accounts. If your body holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The auditor should be able to agree your bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements. You must provide an explanation for any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the Practitioners’ Guides*.

6. Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 2. Do not just send in a copy of your detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include a complete analysis to support your explanation. There are a number of examples provided in the Practitioners’ Guides* to assist you.

7. If the auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or you do not fully explain variances, this may incur additional costs for which the auditor will make a charge.

8. Make sure that your accounting statements add up and the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2011) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2012).

9. Do not complete section 3. The external auditor will complete it at the conclusion of their audit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion checklist – ‘No’ answers mean you may not have met requirements</th>
<th>Done?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All sections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All red boxes have been completed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All information requested by the external auditor has been sent with this annual return? Please refer to your notice of audit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval by the body confirmed by signature of Chair of meeting approving the accounting statements?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An explanation of significant variations from last year to this year is provided?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2012 agreed to Box 8?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 is provided?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For any statement to which the response is ‘no’, an explanation is provided?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All red boxes completed by internal audit and explanations provided?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in England – A Practitioners’ Guides, is available from NALC and SLCC representatives or Governance and Accountability for Internal Drainage Boards in England – A Practitioners’ Guides, is available from the ADA at The Association of Drainage Authorities, 12 Cranes Drive, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 8AL or from the NALC, SLCC or ADA websites - see page 1 for addresses.
Item 9  

**Report on High Speed 2**

**Author:** Steve Rodrick  
Chief Officer

**Summary:** This report is based on a paper presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd May (appendix 1). More recent events include an invitation to meet the Secretary of State for Transport; discovery of a DfT report which significantly undermines the business case for HS2; the re-configuring of the areas covered by the Community Fora; submission of comments on the draft Scoping Report for the Environmental Impact Assessment.

**Purpose of Report**  
To bring members up to date with current HS2 related activities.

**Background**

1. The last few weeks has been a period of intense activity, in particular submitting comments on the scoping report for how HS2 Ltd proposes to prepare the Environmental Impact Assessment. In common with many others the Board’s submission drew attention to significant and fundamental shortcomings of the proposed approach which would result in an incomplete assessment which, almost certainly, would understate the scale and severity of the impacts.

2. Disappointingly HS2 Lt chose not to convene any of its Community Forum meetings during the period of consultation on the EIA scoping report. Initially the Chilterns was covered by two forums, but in response to local representations, especially from Wendover, it is likely there will be three (Amersham and Chalfont; Gt.Missenden, South Heath and The Lee; Dunsmore, Wendover and Halton). The next round of meetings is likely to take place in late June and early July.

3. A report commissioned by the Department for Transport in 2009 on the use of saved journey time has come to light. It is a key component of the business case that nobody can work on a train and that any time saved is directly and fully converted to productive work time. The value of the time is then incorporated in the business plan as a benefit worth several billion pounds.

4. The previously suppressed report confirms the opposite view. In concludes that over 60% of time of trains is used productively by any body with a seat. Further, it concludes that of every 10 minutes of journey time saved only 45 seconds is converted to productive work time. The remainder is used for personal benefits, i.e. leaving home later.
5. This report further advises, strongly, that the methodologies that the Dept for Transport have used for valuing journey time savings are unsound and should be reviewed urgently. However, the business case for HS2 Ltd is built on the discredited methodology. If the revised approach had been used the Benefit Cost Ratio for HS2 would drop from 1.2 to 0.9. (normally any project recording a BCR of less than 1.5 would be rejected). This issue was extensively covered by the Sunday Telegraph on 10\textsuperscript{th} June.

**Mitigation**

6. The Board’s opposition based on the scale of negative impacts on the environment and its enjoyment is clearly understood. This position is reinforced by the view that the business case is unconvincing, emphasis by the declining Benefit Cost Ratio.

7. Whilst this position is sustained the Board also needs to consider its position if Parliament was to approve the Hybrid Bill thus providing the legislative basis to build the line. To develop an alternative strategy based on maximum mitigation at that time would be too late, as much of the design work would have been completed. The alternative, (Plan B) needs to be developed in parallel with the campaign to have the project cancelled.

8. It is strongly suggested that Plan B should be for a fully bored tunnel for the full length of the route as it passes through the Chilterns AONB. Simply seeking minor changes to the current proposed route and design would not be acceptable.

9. In order to clarify that position it is proposed to publish the attached statement (Appendix 2). To avoid confusion it has already been circulated as a provisional statement to a number of organisations that needed to know. This is, in part, necessitated because of the intense activity to develop a tunnelled option (Ray Payne is member of that work group).

10. One of the main purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment is to identify significant impacts of the current proposal and, in the light of the assessment, to make changes to the design and proposed working methods. It is clear from the published timetable that HS2 Ltd does not propose to spend much time assessing the EIA or making changes as result of it. Even at this stage it should be assumed that the Government is not intending to significantly alter the published route and design.
Consultation

11. The Board is engaged in discussions with HS2 Ltd to ensure it is treated as a full statutory consultee. Currently HS2 Ltd is not including the Board on its consultation lists arguing that it is only listing those covered by the Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and the Infrastructure Planning Commission.

12. However, the Conservation Board is a statutory consultee and recognised as such by Infrastructure Planning (National Policy Statement Consultation) Regulations (2009), the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations (2009) and the Infrastructure Planning (Interested Parties) Regulations (2010).

13. The Rt.Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Transport, has invited the Board and The Chiltern Society to discuss the impacts on the Chilterns. At the time of writing no date has been fixed but will hopefully take place in early July.

14. In Buckinghamshire the local authorities have created a Bucks Mitigation and Compensation Panel. Despite the name it is taking a strategic view of all relevant HS2 matters and one of its roles will be to provide advice to, and help co-ordinate, the activities of the various Community Forums. The Board has been invited to take part.

Recommendation

1. To approve the statement (appendix 2) on mitigation based on a fully bored tunnel.
Appendix 1

Copy of Report presented to the Executive Committee on 23rd May 2012

Item 10  Report on High Speed 2

Author: Steve Rodrick  Chief Officer

Summary: This report brings the Committee up to date on current and anticipated activities related to High Speed 2. The main issues are the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment; the HS2 community forum meetings; the development of a mitigation programme and position statement; and the legal challenges. Currently no unplanned expenditure is envisaged.

Purpose of Report: To advise members of HS2 activities and to seek approval of the draft position statement on mitigation.

Summary of Current Activity

Legal Challenges

1. It is known that at least five applications for a Judicial Review have been submitted. It is believed they will be heard in November, probably as a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Grounds for Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bucks CC on behalf the 51M group of local authorities</td>
<td>1. Flawed consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS2 Action Alliance</td>
<td>1. Non compliance with EU environmental legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Flawed consultation on compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathrow Hub Ltd</td>
<td>1. Failed to give weight to aviation strategy. (they believe the wrong route has been chosen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aylesbury Golf Club</td>
<td>It is not known what the grounds for the challenge are. The course will be cut in half as it lies across the route between Aylesbury and Hartwell House.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) has submitted a formal complaint to the EU on the grounds of non compliance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations and the Habitats and Species Directives.
Scoping Report on the draft Environmental Impact Assessment

3. As previously reported the Government believes that HS2 need not be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment, but only a more limited Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of its current proposal. The purpose of this assessment is to identify likely significant environmental impacts and show how it intends to respond, if at all, to those impacts. Following the EIA, these findings and proposed responses are incorporated in an Environmental Statement which is subject to public consultation.

4. The first stage in this process is to publish, for consultation, a draft report on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment which must include identification of the measures by which impact will be assessed and the methodologies for identifying and assessing impacts. That report was published on 27th March and the closing date for comments is 30th May. It is essential the Board submits comments and staff are currently preparing a response. Many local groups, which do not have sufficient technical capacity, have requested an early sight of the Board’s submission in order to prepare their own comments.

5. At the time of writing a number of critical deficiencies have been identified. It may be coincidence, but HS2 Ltd has not convened any community forum meetings during the period of public consultation on the EIA scoping report.

6. The Board was not listed by HS2 Ltd as a formal consultee. A formal letter correcting their misunderstanding on the Board’s status is being sent to the Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd.

7. HS2 Ltd have begin field survey work for the EIA but it is known that several land owners in the Chilterns have denied access to their surveyors.

8. It is believed that HS2 Ltd intend to publish the draft Environmental Statement, based on the EIA, in spring next year, but have allowed very little time to adjust the project design in light of feedback from the public. There is a widespread belief that an EIA for a project of this size cannot be undertaken satisfactorily in such a short space of time.

9. It has reinforced the view that environmental considerations are not being given full weight. For example, the impact on the biodiversity was not given any value in the formal HS2 Value for Money study - contrary to Government policy. In a recent letter to Cheryl Gillan MP, the Secretary of State for Transport claimed that one form of mitigation on ancient woodland in the Chilterns was to move it. For the avoidance of doubt, this is not possible.
Community Forum Meetings

10. As reported to the Board in March, HS2 Ltd had convened meetings of the Community Forums to cover Chalfont to Amersham and South Heath to Wendover. The county council had boycotted the meetings until their summit had been held on 19\textsuperscript{th} April. Neither meeting was considered particularly constructive ad some might call them ill tempered. A number of improvements have been suggested such as broadening the range of groups involved, allowing in the press, appointing an independent chairman and formally minuting the meeting.

11. Following an approach by some members of the Wendover forum HS2 Ltd has since changed the area to be covered by each of the two Chilterns forums. One will now cover Chalfont to South Heath and the other Wendover, Dunsmore and Halton. This has caused some local friction.

12. HS2 Ltd is being asked to treat the boundaries as blurred and to allow members of adjacent forums to attend their neighbours’ meetings. It has also been agreed that it would be useful to agree a list of generic technical issues for all forums to cover, which should be generally be discussed without HS2 present in order to ensure more orderly meetings with a greater degree of agreement on the main points.

13. The Board should continue to attend both forums and to convene the wider Chilterns group which provides a means of discussing pan Chilterns issues.

14. It is the intention of Bucks CC to convene a Bucks wide group to which the Board will be invited.

15. The Board has been informed by HS2 Ltd that it will be invited to the Planning Forum for Bucks and Herts, but no information been provided subsequently nor any date when it is proposed to meet. It has undermined confidence that this group will be engaged fully HS2 Ltd.

16. The Environment Forum will only comprise government departments and agencies. This been met by widespread condemnation.

17. The Board is working with partners to ensure that the external challenge group to set up by HS2 Ltd in early 2010 to monitor the effectiveness of its community engagement does its job properly. To date it has only met three times and only once since January 2011.

18. On 19\textsuperscript{th} April the Board took part in the HS2 summit organised by Bucks CC. The principal objective was to organise more effectively participation in the community forum meetings and to begin the preparation of a mitigation plan - Plan B - in case Parliament actually gives the go ahead.
The Business Case for HS2

19. Last month HS2 Ltd admitted it had made a mistake which meant that the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) had to be downgraded from 1.4 to 1.2. It is notable than in 2010 it was claiming a BCR of 2.4.

20. Normally such a poor BCR would lead to the project being cancelled. The Government subsequently started to claim that the business case was only one element of the argument for HS2.

21. It emerged, under questioning, of a Cabinet Office official at a hearing of the Public Accounts Committee, that the Major Projects Authority (set up by by the Cabinet office to assess major projects) had assessed High Speed recently and rated it as Amber/Red. In their words:

   'The successful delivery of the project is in doubt, with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas. Urgent action is needed to ensure these are addressed, and whether resolution is feasible.'

22. Their assessment of the Major Projects Authority will not be released for 2 years. Local MPs are helping to secure its release as soon as possible.

23. In light of the poor performance of High Speed 1 against not only the initial forecasts (less than 35% of demand forecast) and the recent forecasts (18% lower than the forecast of only 2008) the Public Accounts Committee was scathing about the Department for Transport's poor track record on demand forecasting.

Mitigation

24. The Board's staff have been preparing an initial assessment of the possible impacts of the proposed alignment and design, although little information has been released on the latter. It is one of the major concerns about the EIA, that so little information has been released about its design, that it is hard to know what the impact might be and the best mitigation. (n.b all such assessments should begin with avoidance of adverse impacts). Mitigation does not include avoidance, only reduction of impact.

25. An area of considerable effort is the development of a proposal for a fully bored tunnel for the entire length under the Chilterns. A tunnel group has been set up, including Ray Payne, which has made considerable progress in developing a small number of options which would comply with all the necessary legalisation and safety requirements, reduce significantly the environmental impacts and could be constructed within a realistic timeframe and a budget very close to (ideally the same as or less) than that in place.
The issue of mitigation is very sensitive and must be placed in a hierarchical policy context so that there can be no confusion on the Board’s position towards High Speed 2. The following is proposed as the Board’s position statement on mitigation:

Draft Position Statement on Mitigation – Plan B

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, 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.

Recommendations

1. The Board should continue to attend local community forum meetings.

2. The Board should accept the invitation to participate in the Planning Forum.

3. The Board should seek a close working relationship with those bodies represented on the national Environment Forum, if full membership is not offered.

4. The Committee endorses the draft Position Statement on Mitigation.
Appendix 2

Draft Position Statement on Mitigation – Plan B

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.

25.5.2012
Item 10  **Review of Work Programme 2011-2012**

**Author:** Steve Rodrick  Chief Officer

**Summary:** Despite the decline in Government grant more was achieved overall than originally included in the Work Programme. Inevitably some areas suffered due to the diversion of effort to HS2 and a number of Government initiatives required a response at short notice. The Annual Review of 2011-2012 will be published in August.

**Purpose of Report:** To provide members with an overall review of how well the work programme was implemented and to seek feedback on the lessons learned.

**Introduction**

1. The Board’s government grant was cut during 2011-12 by approx. 10% in real terms which required both an adjustment to the work programme and the approach to delivering it, with an increased emphasis on both cost saving and income generation. The annual accounts bear out that this was successfully achieved. This was due in part to 11 local authorities maintaining their contribution with only one reducing its contribution and Luton Borough Council withdrawing its funding entirely. Over 22 parish and town councils helped by providing over £2,500.

2. Despite the challenging financial situation the Board implemented over 95% of its planned activities and several significant unplanned initiatives.

3. Inevitably HS2 was a major distraction and, from time to time, diverted a significant amount of time of several staff. In order to cope with this, often difficult to predict workload, those initiatives not yet started were given a lower priority, e.g. Orchards Project.

4. The Town and Country Planning work was made very difficult as, for most of the year, the Government’s proposed changes to national planning policy and guidance were fiercely debated.

5. As expected following the 2010 election there were a number of changes to the way Government wanted to operate in the environmental field. In 2011-12 this meant developing new proposal for Natural Improvement Areas (NIA) and Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs). The bid for a Chilterns NIA was unsuccessful.
6. Of particular note was the successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund which awarded a grant of over £400,000 for the Commons Project, which has got off to a flying start with a large number of fully subscribed events.

7. The Chalk Streams Project has also had a very busy year and has taken on a new role as project manager for Environment Agency projects. This role will be developed further as new ways of catchment level activity are promoted.

8. An unexpected area of activity was dealing with a sudden and intense level of media interest in the behaviour and feeding of red kites, which resulted in Cathy Rose being interviewed live by John Humphries on Radio 4’s Today programme.

9. Generally the Boards public and media profile has been very high, in large measure due to the coverage of HS2.

10. The Board’s web site was completely rebuilt and modernised. Behind the scenes this involved a considerable amount of work and expense. The outcome is a better site, which can be managed by staff rather than consultants, and the operating costs have been reduced by 80%. It has also meant that the Board now has an online shop and web based advertising.

11. As part of the longer term strategy to increased earned income, such as book sales, the Board needs to have a pipeline of new publications. The older publications such as Red Kites and Cycleway booklets are now selling less well (probably because the market has been saturated) and newer ideas have been a little slow to develop, but will make progress in 2012-13.

12. There has been a notable change in attendance at events. Those aimed at the public have been well attended, especially the Countryside Festival. Even those where a delegate fee is payable have fared well. Those events where the audience has traditionally been public sector bodies have shown a marked decline. This trend can be expected to continue and will require a re-think on what the Board offers.

13. Despite the challenges of a reducing grant, the administration and management of the Board was trouble free with a clean bill of health from the internal auditor.

14. Many of the Board’s major partners have reduced in size considerably including Natural England, the Forestry Commission, Environment Agency and local authorities. The impacts have already been felt and there is little doubt that, in future, close working on significant projects is going to be more challenging in view of the shortage of both staff and financial resources. On the other hand, the Board needs to develop its
own capacity especially to support and work with voluntary and community groups.

15. The Board’s performance in terms of implementing the work plan, the changes to the state of the Chilterns environment and annual accounts will form the basis of the Board’s annual review which will be published in August.

Recommendations

1. To note the review of the Board’s work plan for 2011-12.

2. To provide comment on the performance review and lessons to be learned and applied in 2012-13.
Item 11  Report on Chilterns Cycleway Sustainable Gateways Project

Author:  Annette Venters, Access Officer

Summary:  The Department for Transport has awarded a grant of £868,000 for a project to increase car-free tourist travel from gateway towns in the Chilterns, linking with the Chilterns Cycleway. The project will be hosted by Wokingham BC and a development officer will be employed to deliver the 3 year programme, partly based at the Board’s office.

Purpose of the Report:  To inform the Board of this project and provide the opportunity for comment.

Background

1.  The Department for Transport has awarded a grant of £868,000 from its Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to promote tourism in the Chilterns based on cycling. The bid was submitted by Wokingham BC on behalf of a range of partners including the Conservation Board, Chilterns Society and the CTC (Cycle Touring Club). Other partners include the National Trust, the rail companies, local authorities, Parish Councils, tourism and business partnerships and the Electric Bike Company. See Appendix 1 at the end of this paper for a list of key stakeholders.

2.  The LSTF bid was designed to build on the success of the Chilterns Cycleway and to maximise opportunities for cycle tourism in the Chilterns.

About the Project

3.  The project aims to;

   a)  Encourage more visitors to travel to the Chilterns by rail and
   b)  To increase cycling within the Chilterns as an alternative to the car.

4.  The project will encourage visitors to cycle as part of their holiday through better access to bike hire conveniently located where people arrive, visit or stay, and good cycle routes.

5.  The project is focused on three gateways to the Chilterns. These have been selected as they contain good train and bus links, are on the Chilterns Cycleway route and have a good number of tourism businesses and visitor attractions. The three areas are:

   - Henley on Thames and Tywford
   - Great Missenden, Chesham and Amersham
• Tring and Berkhamsted

6. Within these areas there will be investment in improved cycle links, better signage on cycling routes, more cycle parking and provision of bike hire facilities at railway stations and major attractions a variety of accommodation providers.

Main elements of the programme

7. Integrating rail and bike, providing itineraries, special offers and promotions. Investment at stations in signs, cycle parking, bike hire. Develop missing links (and improve existing links) between cycle routes and stations.

8. Working with the tourism and leisure sector to encourage sustainable travel, provide small grants and promotional support. Encourage businesses to join the main accreditation schemes such as Cyclists Welcome, Walkers Welcome and Green Tourism Award.

9. Developing and promoting wider visitor and commuter information relating to sustainable leisure transport, especially cycling, walking and rail.

10. Encouraging new users: working with businesses, local authorities, community groups, countryside site managers, schools, to run cycling activities aimed at getting people to try sort easy cycling experiences. These are then extended to longer programmes. Adult and family cycle training forms a significant element as do events and challenges.

11. Developing awareness campaigns giving visitors confidence that they can travel to the Chilterns by rail and that there are non-car options available to them for internal trips. Make it attractive for visitors to cycle for part of their holiday and give easy access to bicycles (including electric bikes which broadens the audience substantially).

Roles and responsibilities

12. Wokingham Borough Council is the lead local authority for the project. It will have a contractual agreement with DfT and receive and distribute funds for the project.

13. CTC will receive the funds from WBC and is the overall partner responsible for delivery of the programme. It is experienced in delivering these types of projects.

14. The Conservation Board will provide the development officer with office facilities (although the role will require the officer to be peripatetic and partly based at home) and will assist the CTC in delivering the project. CCB will be responsible for local information dissemination and supporter engagement.
Benefits of the Programme

15. It will attract more leisure cyclists, benefiting the many tourism businesses in and around the gateway hubs.

16. The Chilterns Cycleway will benefit from the more intensive promotion the project will provide and from better facilities where there are currently gaps (e.g. missing links, bike hire).

17. Reduce congestion and pressure on car parking in key towns.

18. Develop safe continuous networks for cycling.

19. Actively promote increased levels of physical activity and associated health benefits.

Recommendation

1. To note the successful application for a grant of £868,000 to promote cycle based tourism in the Chilterns.
# Appendix 1: Chilterns Cycleway Sustainable Gateway Project – Key stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact person</th>
<th>Role/nature of involvement/contribution to the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Wokingham Borough Council           | David Wilby, Senior Transport Planner; Matthew Gould, Team Leader for Traffic, Transport and Road Safety | Submitted the bid  
Lead local authority for the project. It will have a contractual agreement with DfT and receive and distribute funds for the project. |
| CTC                                 | Tejesh Mistry, Regional Cycling Development Manager                | Key partner and bid management team  
CTC is the overall partner responsible for delivery of the outcomes. |
| Chilterns Conservation Board        | Annette Venters, Strategic Access Officer                          | Key partner and bid management team  
Provide office accommodation for Cycling Development Officer  
Provide staff time to assist with the management and delivery of the project  
Providing local contacts, disseminating information locally, promoting the project in the Chilterns |
| The National Trust                  | Doug Stewart, Consultancy Manager (Outdoors) London and South East; Richard Henderson, General Manager; Graeme Cannon, Property Manager Ashridge Estate | Link to works already planned by the region to encourage cycling  
Involvement of NT properties in the project  
NT promotional support from Media Team  
NT collaboration with infrastructure improvements  
Willingness of NT to provide additional facilities and information for cyclists where needed  
NT input of ranger time |
| Bucks CC                            | Rebecca Dengler, Team Leader Sustainable Travel                   | Provide staff time to development of project and its management  
Continue to maintain and support the infrastructure  
Seek additional funding for additional infrastructure and missing links  
Build project into Active Travel programme and tourism programme |
| Herts CC                            | Trevor Mason, Team Leader Safe and Sustainable Journeys           | Provide staff time for development and management of the project  
Continue to support and maintain the Chilterns Cycleway  
Build project into Active Travel programme |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Support Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council</td>
<td>Keith Stenning</td>
<td>Supports the bid in principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chiltern Society</td>
<td>Jenny Gilmore</td>
<td>Provide staff time and resources to the development of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue and extend ranger network that supports the Chilterns Cycleway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to sit on steering group managing the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiltern Railways</td>
<td>Diggory Waite</td>
<td>Staff time and resources to the development of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promote the programme through stations they manage, via web site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate on extend cycle parking and facilities at stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Midland</td>
<td>Gerard Burgess</td>
<td>Support the project and want to collaborate on promoting cycle facilities and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>links from Berkhamsted and Tring Stations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Bicycle Network</td>
<td>Steve Garidis</td>
<td>Will match contribution provided by LSTF for the Electric Bicycle Network up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to £50,000 per annum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Henley Partnership</td>
<td>Anne Jones</td>
<td>Support the project, will assist in developing and promoting cycling in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Henley area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tring Together</td>
<td>Peter Coneron</td>
<td>As above for Tring area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesham Town Council</td>
<td>Bill Richards</td>
<td>A working party has been set up to improve cycling in and out of town, will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>collaborate with the LSTF project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVMK &amp; Chilterns Leader</td>
<td>Nick Phillips</td>
<td>Letter of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 12  Report on undergrounding of electricity wires

Author: Colin White - Planning Officer

Summary: Since 2005 the Board has been involved in a Steering Group that promotes the under-grounding of overhead power lines in the former EDF supply area. One scheme has been completed in the AONB so far and a number of others will be promoted shortly. Scottish and Southern Electricity has recently started the process of forming a Steering Group and schemes in their area will also be promoted and submitted.

Purpose of Report: To inform Board members of electricity supply company schemes to put wires underground.

Background

1. Since 2005 the Board has been represented on a Steering Group that deals with proposals for the undergrounding of overhead powerlines within protected landscapes. This Steering Group covers the former EDF (now UK Power Networks [UKPN]) eastern and southern areas. The northern part of the AONB is within the UKPN eastern area.

2. To date one scheme has been completed in the Chilterns. One kilometre of overhead cables at Little Missenden was put underground at a cost of £163,000.

3. The supply companies are permitted by OFGEM to use £5.6 million, of income from customers, in the period from 2010 to 2015. Most of the fund has been committed but £800,000 remains unallocated.

4. Further schemes will be submitted for consideration in the autumn. These will include wires at Drayton Beauchamp, part of The Golden Valley at Ashridge and at Dunstable Downs (though as these are on small pylons and part of a dual circuit this may prove to be too costly and may need to be carried over to the next review period).

5. One scheme (at Bosmore Park estate near Fawley in south Oxfordshire) was submitted in August 2010 to Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE). It was not approved and the Board was informed at the time that SSE would not be taking an active role in the OFGEM scheme for the foreseeable future. However, in the last month the Board has been contacted by SSE which, it is believed, has set up a fund of £5.6 million, of which it intends to spend up to £2.7 million in the period to 2015. It is unlikely to spend its full allowance due to the fact that we are half way through the period within which schemes can be
implemented. It is likely that SSE will be shortly be inviting the submission of schemes

6. The key commitment from the Board is the officer time in completing the assessment forms and undertaking the necessary local consultation. It is vital to get local support for any submissions and to this end the relevant Parish Councils will be contacted as well as known landowners. In some instances Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage (as well as the local authorities) are also contacted. Further time is also spent attending the steering group meetings which generally take place on a quarterly basis. Any submissions that are made are accompanied by a presentation to the relevant steering group.

7. The schemes are considered to be an excellent way of bringing about a significant amount of spending on very real enhancements to the landscape of the AONB, and it is every effort should be made to submit as many schemes as possible.

8. The Board has also submitted a response to a recent OFGEM consultation exercise which ensured the retention of the undergrounding fund for the period to 2015.

9. Whilst there are a number of possible projects on file, it would be useful to have a wider portfolio of schemes to submit in order to demonstrate to OFGEM that the fund would be overspent if all schemes were approved. It would be helpful if members identify any potential schemes. These should generally only involve 11 or 33kV powerlines on wooden poles, as those on pylons are considered to be too expensive to place underground (and the funds would only complete a small number of spans at most).

Recommendations

1. That the Board notes the report and that SSE will now support the undergrounding of overhead wires within the protected landscapes in its network area.

2. That the Board approves the Planning Officer’s involvement in the two steering groups that cover the AONB.

3. That the Board suggests potential schemes for undergrounding to the Planning Officer.
Item 13  

Consultation on Management of National Trails

Author: Annette Venters, Access Officer

Summary: Natural England is consulting on the future management of national trails and is inviting ideas for new management models. It is proposed that the Board consider taking on the management of the eastern half of the Ridgeway National Trail and North Wessex Downs AONB the western half.

Purpose of the Report:

1. To seek members’ views on the Board’s draft consultation response.

2. To seek members’ views on the proposal to take on management of part of the Ridgeway National Trail.

Background

1. There are two national trails passing through the Chilterns AONB, the Ridgeway and the Thames Path (see maps in appendix 1).

2. Natural England (NE) is carrying out a ‘targeted consultation’ (a consultation of key stakeholders, not a full public consultation) to review the future management and funding of national trails from April 2013. It has issued a discussion paper which sets out a number of proposals. The response form is on-line and based on a series of questions within the discussion paper. In addition to providing feedback on these general issues, the Board needs to provide specific proposals for the future management of the Ridgeway and (to a lesser extent) the Thames Path National Trail. The Board’s draft response is attached in appendix 2. The 8 week consultation period closes on 5th July.

3. NE’s response to the National Trails consultation is expected in autumn 2012 and the new arrangements are expected to commence from April 2013. This timetable is unlikely to be realistic if there are implications for the employment or transfer of existing staff. There are a number of working groups looking at quality standards, funding formulas and promotion in more detail.

Key Points arising from NE’s Consultation Discussion Paper

4. The key points arising from the Discussion Paper are set out below.

1. NE propose that a ‘Trail Partnership’ is established to manage each national trail, with one lead agent receiving a single grant offer. AONBs are ideally suited to lead the partnership though it is recognised that each trail is unique and different management
arrangements will be required for each trail. Trail quality standards will be an integral part of the new model, operating alongside a series of funding outputs and outcomes agreed with Trail Partnerships.

2. One grant offer will be made per trail giving trail partnerships greater freedom and flexibility in how funds are used over longer timescales. This will help provide considerable autonomy for Trail Partnerships.

3. Trails will be integrated more fully into the wider landscape.

4. Users will be more involved in Trail management.

5. Overall funding of national trails by NE will remain the same at £1.7m p.a. which includes trail officer costs. Currently maintenance work undertaken by highway authorities is supported with 75% grant-aid. This stipulation will remain requiring the councils to provide 25% of the funding. All other costs can be entirely covered by the grant. However the mechanism for dividing the budget between the national trails will be complex and has not yet been decided. Currently the Ridgeway is one of the least well funded. A small unit of 1.5 staff with some admin support covers both the Ridgeway and Thames Path outside London.

6. The National Trails website will cease to operate in 2013 and as part of the consultation NE will be looking at how national trails can be better promoted at a national level (web site included). There is recognition that the national trail brand needs to be marketed at a national as well as a local level, but other organisations are likely to get involved (NE refer to themselves as having a ‘facilitative role’ and are exploring new partnerships).

7. National Trails are identified by having higher quality path standards and better signage than ordinary public rights of way. This requirement will remain in place. The setting and monitoring of national trail quality standards and the measuring of outputs for the national trails has yet to be agreed in detail and this requires a national lead, with NE well placed to carry this out.

8. A number of Trail Partnerships have already been established. The Cotswold Conservation Board formed a Trail Partnership in 2009 to manage the Cotswold Way, taking over management of the trail from Gloucestershire County Council. The Cotswold Way Trail Partnership is considered to be a good model and the Cotswold Conservation Board is working with NE on establishing some of the output/outcome criteria that will be integral to the new Trail Partnerships. Similar arrangements are also in place for the South Downs Way (South Downs NP) and North Downs Way (Surrey Hills and Kent Downs AONB’s).
The Ridgeway National Trail and The Thames Path National Trail

Current situation

9. At present there are 1.5 national trails staff based at Oxfordshire County Council’s office in Witney. One full-time officer is responsible for maintenance of the trail and one part-time officer for marketing and promotion. These staff have responsibility for both the Ridgeway and Thames Path national trails. Staffing levels used to be higher and until recently there was a part-time Volunteer Co-ordinator post.

10. Considerable use is made of volunteers to help maintain the route. The Friends of the Ridgeway have been active helping to monitor and promote the route and attract volunteer support.

11. The national trails are public rights of way which means that the highways authorities have a statutory duty to maintain them. The NE grant enables higher specification work over and above the basic maintenance of the route.

12. The Ridgeway and Thames Path have been established for many years. The Ridgeway is no longer used by large numbers of long distance walkers, the balance of use has changed over the years and the majority of users now are interested in day or shorter walks often as part of loop. A new approach is therefore needed to marketing the trails, focusing on day walks and short break itineraries.

13. There used to be a Ridgeway and Thames Path annual forum (attended by the Board and other organisations with an interest in national trails) but these have been curtailed due to resource constraints. The Board and other stakeholder organisations now have little input into the marketing and promotion of either the Ridgeway or Thames Path.

14. The National Trails unit no longer prints events guides, public transport guides or newsletters, and no longer offer guided walks. The National Trails web site is now very dated.

15. NE promote national trails centrally through their web site www.nationaltrail.co.uk – there are no dedicated official sites specifically for the Ridgeway or Thames Path. There is little promotion at the local level. There is a strong argument to promote national trails within a wider context, linking with other rights of way and promoted routes. There needs to be promotion of circular day walks based on the national trails, specific itineraries and short breaks. There also needs to be investment in new technologies to draw in broader (and younger) audiences, for example developing an App for National Trails, use of QR codes on waymark posts and leaflets to provide information about the route, making the web site more interactive and enabling users to
download route maps onto their smart phones and other mobile devices.

16. The Ridgeway and Thames Path national trails converge at Goring-on-
Thames which provides an ideal opportunity to promote network of
routes linking the national trails. A similar approach was taken with the
Chilterns Cycleway which has been very successful, offering users a
choice from short day rides to a long distance leisure route, based on
the Chilterns Cycleway but linking in with other promoted cycle routes.

Proposal for the Ridgeway National Trail

17. The Ridgeway National Trail is 87 miles long running from Avebury to
Ivinghoe Beacon. The Board created an extension to Dunstable Downs
in 2008 but this is not officially designated as part of the National Trail.
It passes through two AONBs (the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs-
the River Thames at Goring is the boundary) and 6 local authorities
(Oxfordshire County Council, Bucks CC, Herts CC, West Berkshire
Council, Wiltshire CC and Swindon Borough Council). The Ridgeway is
evenly split between the two AONBs (44 miles are in the Chilterns).

18. It is proposed that the Board takes on the management of the eastern
half of the Ridgeway overseen by a Trail Partnership including
members of the Chilterns Recreation and Access Group (The Chiltern
Society, the National Trust, Highways Authorities), the Chilterns
Tourism Network, Friends of the Ridgeway and others.

19. To ensure that both halves of the Ridgeway retain the same brand
identity and quality standards there would be an agreement with the
North Wessex Downs, again overseen by a whole trail partnership
similar to the recently defunct Ridgeway Forum.

20. The management model proposed for the Ridgeway is similar to that of
the Cotswold Way National Trail which works well.

21. The AONBs would not be taking on any Highway Authority duties
relating to the management and maintenance of public rights of way;
the Highways Authorities would still be responsible for basic trail (public
right of way) maintenance as at present. The grant available would be
used to secure higher than normal standards.

22. Overall funding for the Ridgeway and the Thames Path will remain the
same, consisting of a grant from NE grant for 75% of the costs and the
remainder funded by the Highways Authorities. However the grant will
come directly to the Trail Partnership(s) rather than to Oxfordshire
County Council as previously.

23. The AONBs will carry out the marketing and promotion of the
Ridgeway and some of the Thames Path directly. The Chilterns and
the North Wessex Downs sections of the Ridgeway have different
characteristics and are quite distinct in terms of landscape. This ‘trail of two halves’ lends itself well to being managed by the two AONBs. However the visitor experience must be seamless. The AONBs have the opportunity to promote the Ridgeway more intensively and within the wider trail corridor, this will be good for tourism and for local businesses.

24. It is proposed that The Chiltern Society be engaged to take on the volunteer path maintenance programme along the Chilterns Ridgeway.

25. Introducing a new model for the management of the Ridgeway is complex and unlikely to be in place for April 2013. For this proposal to be adequately developed to the point that responsibility for any aspect of management and promotion could be transferred to the Board, and other local partners, will take time and money. It is proposed to seek support from potential partners to prepare a development programme to which the Board should be prepared to allocate funds. Initially it is suggested up to £3,000 be provided by the Board. As far as possible this will be met from the core budget but, if necessary, the Executive Committee will be requested to allocated funds from the Development Reserve.

The Thames Path National Trail

26. The Thames Path National Trail is 184 miles long. The AONB boundary follows the Thames for approx 20 miles and is within one mile of the river for a further 17 miles. The trail passes through 3 protected landscapes (the Chilterns, Cotswolds and North Wessex Downs) and numerous local authority areas (in the Chilterns it is Oxfordshire and Bucks).

27. Establishing a single Trails Partnership for the full length of the Thames Path and appointing a lead agent will be complex, as the trail passes through so many different regions, with much of it falling outside an AONB. The urban stretches of the Thames Path (particularly the London stretches) are completely different in nature to the rural sections and attract different users.

28. There are no obvious alternative management arrangements for the Thames Path, so none are presented at this stage. However, the Chilterns section, roughly from Dorchester on Thames to Maidenhead could be marketed separately and more effectively than at present. Similarly by making links with the Ridgeway and other regionally important routes such as the Chiltern Way, the two national trails could be used to support a very attractive Chilterns based network of high quality promoted routes.
Recommendations

1. To approve, subject to any amendments, the draft response to the consultation on the future management of National Trails.

2. That the Board, on behalf of a Chilterns Ridgeway Partnership, develops a proposal to take on the management and promotion of the eastern half of the Ridgeway.

3. To seek better promotion of the Chilterns part of the Thames Path.
Appendix 1

Map of the Ridgeway National Trail

Map of the Thames Path National Trail
National Trails Consultation response from the Chilterns Conservation Board

1. Do you agree that these propositions describe the right direction of travel?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree/disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The CCB agrees with the principal of devolved management of national trails, with a Trail Partnership receiving a single pot grant and being responsible for local delivery. The CCB welcomes having a 3 year funding agreement rather than a yearly award, this is a positive step forward which encourages forward planning.

However each national trail is unique and there is no ‘one size fits all model’. The CCB is proposing a Trail Partnership for the Ridgeway National Trail (see later), but the Thames Path National Trail is a much more complicated trail because it has multiple partners and passes through many urban areas. The management model is not yet clear for the Thames Path.

A strong national lead will still be required in certain areas:

- Raising the profile of national trails and promoting the trails at a national and international level in conjunction with organisations such as the English Tourist Board, Visit Britain etc.
- Setting and monitoring quality standards.
- Assistance in designing visitor surveys so that data from different trails is comparable and disseminating the results and best practice.

2. Do you agree with the proposed approach to quality standards for national trails?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree/disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The overall approach is on the right lines but more detail is required, the discussion paper does not detail what the quality standards are.

There is no mention of other promoted routes and long-distance paths and how these interrelate to national trails. At present there are some stretches of both the Ridgeway and the Thames Path National Trails which do not compare favourably with other promoted routes such as the Chiltern Way with regard to signposting, information provision and in certain locations landscape quality. The quality of National Trails should be as good as or better than other promoted routes.

3. Do you have any comments on the proposed framework or the draft Family and Trail Standards listed in the Annex on page 16?

Under ‘Family Standard’ you want users to ‘Feel inspired by our finest landscapes’. We would add ‘and landscapes of historical or cultural significance’. Some stretches of the Thames Path do not pass through the most scenically inspiring landscapes but make up for it by offering the visitor many points of historic and cultural interest.
4. Do you agree with our proposals for how we provide the central
government contribution for local delivery?

**Strongly Agree** Agree Neither agree/disagree Disagree **Strongly Disagree**

The CCB agrees with the proposals which consist of:
- Having a single pot grant channelled through a Trails Partnership
- A 3 year indicative funding agreement
- Sticking with the same funding formula used up to now, with NE providing
  75% of the grant and the Highways Authorities contributing 25%.

The consultation paper does not provide any information about how the grant
will be divided up between the various trails.

5. What special factors do you think should be taken into account in
determining the level of award to individual Trails?

- Number and type of users (eg cyclists and horse-riders in addition to
  walkers)
- Terrain through which trail passes which might require high levels of
  maintenance
- Accessibility of trail to all users (stile-free, easy access, no stiles or narrow
  kissing gates)

6. Do you agree that we should no longer specify that a proportion of any
grant must be used to fund a National Trail Officer?

**Strongly Agree** **Agree** Neither agree/disagree Disagree **Strongly Disagree**

Yes, it should be up to the Trails Partnerships to decide how to allocate funds.

7. Are there any other issues you’d like to raise about our funding proposal?
Please explain.

Other potential sources of funding should also be investigated from other
public bodies, such as the Environment Agency, the Canals & Waterways
Trust, the Forestry Commission, Tourist Boards.

8. Do you agree that Trail Partnerships should be responsible for local
delivery?

**Strongly Agree** Agree Neither agree/disagree Disagree **Strongly Disagree**

Yes

9. How can Trail Partnerships demonstrate value for money?

Need to monitor the following:
- Numbers using the trail (pedestrian counters, visitor surveys).
- User feedback (quality of trail and of visitor experience)
- Number of guided walks/events along the trail
- Number of visitors to trail web site, numbers of walk leaflets downloaded
- External income generated (sponsorship, advertising)

10. Do you agree that users should be involved in monitoring quality of
provision and have more say in how Trails are provided?
These are two separate issues. Yes, we agree that users should be involved in monitoring quality of provision and providing feedback to assess the quality of the trail and of the visitor experience. National Trail volunteers are ideally placed to help with the monitoring and this should be done regularly to identify trends over time. NE should provide a national steer to assist with monitoring and to ensure that there are some standard measures being used, so that comparisons can be made between the various national trails.

The second point is more ambiguous. Users should be represented on a National Trails Forum or similar, so that they can have some influence over how trails are managed, their future direction and a chance to discuss issues arising. However it would not be appropriate for users to get involved in the day-to-day management of the trails.

11. What could be done to help users get more involved in looking after National Trails?
Better utilisation of local volunteer organisations.

12. Do you think that we can improve the way that the family of National Trails is promoted. If so, how?

- NE should focus on promoting national trails nationally and internationally, with Trail Partnerships promoting their trails at the local level, integrated into their wider marketing activities.
- A National Trails web site is still needed as a central hook to promote and attract visitor traffic at a national/international level. Once on the site, visitors will then select individual trails which will take them to local trail web sites (probably integrated into AONB/National Park web sites).
- Don’t promote national trails in isolation, they should be promoted within a wider context, linking with other rights of way and promoted routes. There needs to be promotion of circular day walks and other activities based on the national trails, promotion of itineraries and short breaks.
- There needs to be investment in new technologies to draw in broader (and younger) audiences, for example developing an App for National Trails, use of QR codes on waymark posts and leaflets to provide information about the route, making the web site more interactive and enabling users to download route maps onto their smart phones and other mobile devices.
- Promote short breaks based on national trails, capitalising on leisure trends (more short breaks rather than week-long holidays, increase in Staycation market). Offer sample itineraries which can be downloaded off the web site.

**CCB’s recommendations for the future management of the Ridgeway National Trail and the Thames Path**
Item 14  Report on Local Nature Partnerships

Author: Kath Daly  Countryside Officer

Summary: The creation of Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) was one of the main commitments in the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper. Defra is committed to supporting the establishment of around 50 LNPs across the country.

The aim of the LNPs is to promote integrated management of local areas to produce benefits for people, the economy and the environment.

The Board is working with 4 potential (county based) partnerships across the AONB, however, it is not yet clear how they will develop; what impact they will have; how they will relate to the CCB; or how they will be resourced.

Purpose of Report: To update the Board members on developments with regard to the LNP proposals within the AONB and proposed Board involvement.

Background

1. The 2011 Natural Environment White Paper and LNPs were the subject of a previous Board paper in October 2011. Further background is provided in a recent Defra paper – ‘An overview of the Local Nature Partnership role’ (April 2012) – see copy in Appendix.

2. DEFRA’s aims for LNPs are to:

   ● drive positive change in the local natural environment
   ● work at a strategic level.
   ● contribute to achieving national environmental objectives locally, including the identification of local ecological networks.
   ● become local champions influencing decision-making, working closely with a broad range of partners including businesses, local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Health and Well-being Boards.
   ● be financially self-sustaining.

3. Defra has invited emerging LNPs to apply for government recognition, to indicate that they are seen as credible partnerships which have a contribution to make to local decision-making and strategic planning matters. Recognised LNPs will have access to Government ‘with the support of a liaison function within Defra and the opportunity to attend an annual Ministerial event.’
4. The whole of the AONB is covered by LNP applications based on counties, each with different leads and emphasis. The following LNP applications have been submitted to Defra recently (deadline of 6th June 2012), the outcome is due by end of July.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LNP</th>
<th>Lead in developing application</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedfordshire and Luton</td>
<td>Greensand Trust</td>
<td>Building on existing GIC work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bedford BC, Central Beds Council, Luton BC)</td>
<td>Green Infrastructure Consortium (GIC)</td>
<td>Initial priorities to include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• review of GI plan,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• climate change, ecosystem services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• expansion of membership to include health, economic and private sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• support for landscape-scale initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• tool-kit for neighbourhood planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• biodiversity offsetting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire</td>
<td>Hertfordshire Biodiversity Partnership</td>
<td>Will operate as sub-group of Hertfordshire Sustainability Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust</td>
<td>Initial priorities to include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• develop broad and effective LNP and vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• awareness raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• identify priorities for landscape scale initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• identify funding opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• improving evidence base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• support habitat mapping and living landscape strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucks and Milton Keynes</td>
<td>Bucks County Council</td>
<td>Initial priorities to include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Bucks and Milton Keynes Local Biodiversity Partnership</td>
<td>• establishment of fully functioning LNP by 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bucks Green Infrastructure Consortium)</td>
<td>• leadership – engaging with business sector to develop strong rationale for support of natural environment and with health sectors to improve health outcomes through access to high quality green space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• evidence base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• co-ordinated delivery – guidance to place-based initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• oversight and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
<td>ONCF (Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership)</td>
<td>Initial priorities to include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• engaging with, educating and enthusing leaders in key sectors (business, health, education, local government) about the importance and relevance of the natural environment, particularly ecosystems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Board involvement

5. It is interesting to note that, in many ways, the remit of LNPs mirrors the Board's purposes and the Board has much by way of expertise and experience of area based approaches to contribute.

6. The influence that LNPs will have, in practice and the extent to which they will help to deliver the AONB Management Plan has, yet to become clear. It also remains unclear what resources, if any, will be channelled through the LNPs.

7. Board involvement, to date, has been through officer input to the steering groups and workshops being held to develop the applications. Depending upon how each LNP is constituted, it may be more appropriate for the Board to be represented by Members than staff.

8. It is recommended that the Board gives full backing to the emerging LNPs. However, at this stage it is not proposed to commit any more than staff time and potentially some limited one-off funding. Providing a full input to 4 LNPs will be challenging. In practice most officer time will be dedicated to the LNPs for Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire with support for the LNPs in Beds and Herts dependent upon the issues and availability of office and member time.

9. Because of the uncertainty over the future of these partnerships and likely resource commitment the Board’s involvement will be need to be kept under review. There is a danger a great deal of time could be spent for relatively little reward. However, as a Government initiative the Board cannot afford not to participate at this stage.

10. In order for the LNPs to be effectively established the Board needs to consider making a limited financial contribution. It is proposed to create a fund of £3,000 in total to be provided from the core budget (there is no specific budget at present for this). If, however, insufficient funds can be found an application will be made to the Executive Committee for an allocation from the Development Reserve.

Recommendations

1. That the Board supports the creation of any Local Nature Partnership which covers the AONB.

2. That the Board provides funding of up to £3,000 in total for their establishment.
An overview of the
Local Nature Partnership role
April 2012
An overview of the Local Nature Partnership role

1. Introduction

Local Nature Partnerships are a key Natural Environment White Paper commitment. One of the particularly clear messages from our consultation for the white paper was that there was a need for local areas to work in a joined up and strategic way to help manage the natural environment to produce multiple benefits for people, the economy and the environment.

This echoed conclusions of the independent UK National Ecosystem Assessment, which emphasised the need for an integrated, landscape-scale approach to managing the natural environment. Government responded by committing to:

“encourage and support Local Nature Partnerships where local areas wish to establish them”

The ambition for LNPs is that they will help their local area to manage the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy. To do this effectively they will need to be self-sustaining strategic partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people with the credibility to work with, and influence, other local strategic decision makers.

We want to help local areas to realise this ambition. You told us that you would like Government to recognise LNPs to help establish their status in their area so we have developed an application process to give successful applicants that credibility. By recognising an LNP, we will be signalling that we see it as a credible partnership that has the potential to work with others effectively and add real value to important decision making in an area, including on local planning matters and strategic plans around local economic growth and the health and wellbeing of local people.

This document sets out some general information about what we envisage from the LNP role, including the attributes an LNP is likely to need to have to be effective, what Government recognition will mean for an LNP and how Government will work with the LNPs that achieve recognition. We have also set out some ideas about some of the opportunities we see for LNPs. In reading this information it is important to remember that, within the framework of the overall LNP role, it is for each LNP to decide what their priorities are and how they will work in a way that best suits the needs and challenges of their local area. We fully expect each LNP to be different.
2. What would an effective LNP look like?

The overall purpose of an LNP is to:

- Drive positive change in the local natural environment, taking a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities involved and identifying ways to manage it as a system for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.
- Contribute to achieving the Government’s national environmental objectives locally, including the identification of local ecological networks, alongside addressing local priorities.
- Become local champions influencing decision-making relating to the natural environment and its value to social and economic outcomes, in particular, through working closely with local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Health and Wellbeing Boards.

We are keen that LNPs form in the most appropriate way for their area and therefore won’t be setting out detailed guidance about how an LNP should work. Instead, we have worked with organisations representing a wide range of interests to identify some key ways of working that are likely to be an important part of being an effective LNP.

To fulfill the above role, an effective LNP is likely to need to:

- Develop a shared strategic vision and set of priorities for the restoration and enhancement of their local natural environment at a landscape scale, focusing on outcomes that integrate economic and social as well as environmental needs.
- Have a broad membership that includes active involvement of economic, health and environmental interests and a range of public, private, NGO and local community organisations, including Local Authorities and those directly involved with land management.
- Have effective and accountable governance and leadership, including the ability to effectively engage and collaborate with people at a senior level in local organisations and involve local communities in the role of the LNP and its vision.
- Be sufficiently influential and knowledgeable to be able to raise awareness of the value of the natural environment and the range of services it provides with local decision makers. To do this effectively LNPs will need to ensure that their work is informed by the best available information and data and that both short and long term pressures and needs of an area are taken into account.
- Have a good overview of the range of activities and partnerships concerned with the sustainable management of the natural environment in their area and work collaboratively to build on what’s working well and co-ordinate action to deliver integrated outcomes for priority issues.
3. Boundaries and scale

We envisage about 50 LNPs forming across the country and want them to be large enough to add value at a strategic scale, but small enough to be manageable. We are not being prescriptive about how boundaries are defined as we want each LNP to establish the most appropriate boundary for their area, whether it is ecological, administrative or a mixture of both.

However, wherever boundaries are drawn, there will be a need to work effectively across them. It may be that some partnerships feel that there is value in having an area of overlap between two partnerships. Ideally, overlaps would be minimised, but where partnerships wish to have an area of overlap, we will need to see details in the applications about:

• why an overlap is appropriate
• what agreement has been reached about how the overlap will be managed and
• how any outstanding issues will be resolved.

4. What will being a Government-recognised LNP mean?

All LNPs that apply for and achieve recognition by Government will:

• have recognition that Government sees them as a balanced, strategic and knowledgeable partnership that can add value to important decision making in an area.

• have an important contribution to make to strategic planning matters within their area. Government’s intention is to add LNPs to the Duty to Co-operate in the Local Planning Regulations as soon as possible after the first LNPs have been announced. This will mean that bodies bound by the duty will need to have regard to the views of LNPs on strategic planning matters. This will include informing and working collaboratively with Local Planning Authorities, and along with Local Enterprise Partnerships, on cross-boundary strategic issues, as envisaged in the new National Planning Policy Framework:

“165. Planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area including drawing, for example, from River Basin Management Plans. Working with Local Nature Partnerships where appropriate, this should include an assessment of existing and potential components of ecological networks”
“180. Local planning authorities should take account of different geographic areas, including travel-to-work areas. In two tier areas, county and district authorities should cooperate with each other on relevant issues. Local planning authorities should work collaboratively on strategic planning priorities to enable delivery of sustainable development in consultation with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships”

- be part of a group of partnerships with the same credentials who can network with each other to share knowledge and experience.
- have access to Government, with the support of a liaison function within Defra and the opportunity to attend an annual Ministerial event.
- have their details published on the Defra website to help promote their profile with other organisations (national and local) and to help LNPs to network with each other.

5. What sort of relationship will LNPs have with Defra’s delivery bodies?

Defra’s delivery bodies will support LNPs in the following ways:

**Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission** will support LNPs in their work by offering some level of support to all LNPs that are recognised by Government. Specifically, these delivery bodies will work in a joined up way to help all LNPs that are recognised by Government to:

- Build an evidence-based picture of the local natural environment by sharing information they hold about natural assets and systems with LNPs in an accessible way.
- Understand and contribute to national policy objectives by sharing their strategic priorities for an area with LNPs
- Implement the LNP’s visions by considering an LNP’s priorities and ideas when undertaking strategic planning and making decisions about the targeting of resources.

Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission will target more intensive involvement on areas where environmental opportunities, needs and risks are greatest.

**The Marine Management Organisation (MMO)** will work in a joined up way with other delivery bodies (Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency) to support coastal LNPs recognised by Government by:
• Helping LNPs build an evidence-based picture of their local natural environment by, where appropriate, sharing information about natural assets and systems with them in an accessible way.

• Supporting LNPs in understanding and contributing to national policy objectives by sharing MMO strategic priorities for an area with them.

• Consider LNPs’ priorities and ideas when undertaking strategic planning and decision making.

The MMO will target involvement on areas where environmental opportunities, needs and risks are greatest.

6. How might LNPs work in an area?

A key function of an LNP is to take a strategic overview of the local natural environment and look for ways to manage, enhance and promote it that will produce outcomes that integrate the needs of nature, people and the economy. There are a wide range of ways in which LNPs might pursue these integrated outcomes.

Government is keen for each LNP to deliver their role in the way that best suits their local needs, taking into account how those needs will change over time in anticipation of things like climate change and local population growth.

Some of the opportunities available to LNPs are set out below along with links to some of the other key initiatives and local partnerships that LNPs may want to work with.

They are included here for information only. It is for each LNP to decide what their priorities are and how they work. Once established, LNPs will want to add value to existing activity and avoid duplication. The list below is not exhaustive and the activities described are potential opportunities, not requirements.

We have grouped this information into three themes, each with a number of ideas about what an LNP could get involved with:

• Sustainable land use and management

• Green economic growth

• Quality of life and local health and wellbeing

These three themes are, of course, interlinked and should not be seen as separate from each other. Integration of these three themes is at the heart of the LNP role.

a. Opportunities for contributing to sustainable land use and management:

• Identifying and embedding local ecological networks: As set out in the Natural Environment White Paper, we want to restore nature at a landscape scale to create
a resilient and coherent ecological network at national and local levels across the country. LNPs will be ideally placed to take the lead on this locally, identifying new ecological networks in their area and across their boundary and embedding these networks in their visions. LNPs may also wish to recommend such networks to their Local Planning Authorities. LNPs could work with and support the 12 Government-funded Nature Improvement Areas and help to establish new NIAs wherever the opportunities or benefits are greatest, driven by the knowledge and vision of local partners. It is, however, for the LPA to decide whether and how to recognise an NIA or other ecological network in their local plans.

- **Informing the delivery of Government’s strategy for wildlife and ecosystem services, *Biodiversity 2020***: LNPs will have a seat on the national England Biodiversity Stakeholder Group (two members representing the views of the network of LNPs). The Natural England-led delivery group for ‘Biodiversity 2020’ will also be considering how it can best link to local action, including the role of LNPs. LNPs will be able to feed in to the national picture of action for biodiversity through access to a new improved tool for online reporting of biodiversity data and projects (the refreshed Biodiversity Action Reporting System). This online tool will also provide LNPs with an information resource on action in their area.

- **Helping to achieve a better range of outcomes through sustainable land management**: LNPs could help to ensure that opportunities to achieve multiple benefits from the good management of land are made the most of, working alongside other local groups, such as those linked to the Campaign for the Farmed Environment. In doing so they could help to ensure that the value of good land management is recognised and captured. This might include exploring opportunities for ‘payments for ecosystem services’ approaches and the use of existing agri-environment schemes. Natural England will work with LNPs as well as other key stakeholders to inform future agri-environment agreements.

- **Maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure**: LNPs could help local authorities to develop, improve and deliver Green Infrastructure plans. LNPs will be able to use tools and resources produced by the national Green Infrastructure Partnership and Natural England’s forthcoming ‘Community and the Natural Environment toolkit’ to engage their local communities and decision makers in how to make the most of, and enhance, local green infrastructure.

- **Helping to maintain the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside**: Taking into account, and building on, National Character Area profiles, LNPs could contribute to sustainable management of the landscape through their visioning and work with others.

- **Working with National Park Authorities and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**: LNPs could use existing management plans to inform their vision. They could build on and learn from existing good practice in integrated land management and cross-sectoral partnership working. They could add value by looking for opportunities to work across the boundary of the National Park or AONB in terms of both ecosystems and the services they provide.
• Working with other local initiatives and plans on flooding and water quality: LNPs could work closely with Catchment Partnerships and take Local Catchment Flood Management Plans into account when developing their visions.

• Contribute to efforts to protect and improve public access to the countryside, nature and green space: LNPs could work with Local Access Forums and other access stakeholders and groups to explore local access priorities and integrate them into the LNP’s vision.

• Helping to promote interest in, and uptake of, biodiversity offsetting: In the six biodiversity offsetting pilot areas, LNPs, working with local authorities, could: help to design and publicise the strategy for using biodiversity offsetting; encourage interested developers to participate and help them to find potential offset providers; and, could play a role in overseeing and monitoring the pilot in their area.

b. Opportunities for contributing to green economic growth:

The NEWP highlighted the important contribution that the natural environment makes to our economy and the need to embed its value into decisions made by business and others to create economic growth. Government also states its ambition in Local Growth: Realising Every Places’ Potential of achieving “economic growth that is environmentally sustainable and inter-generationally fair”.

LNPs could help to do this at a local level by:

• Working collaboratively with their Local Enterprise Partnership, by providing advice and expertise on the value of the natural environment and exploring how LNPs and LEPs can help deliver each other’s aims. LNPs could help LEPs to integrate the value of the services provided by the natural environment in their economic decision making, such as around sustainable tourism, climate change strategies and environmental risk reduction. We are working with BIS on developing some information on LNPs and the value of nature that we plan to put in the LEP Toolkit.

• Engaging local businesses directly on issues such as payments for ecosystem services, biodiversity offsetting and community engagement.

• Engaging with other partnerships such as RDPE LEADER Groups to offer a strategic view of the natural environment challenges and opportunities in their area and seeking to align funding with LNP priorities.

c. Opportunities for contributing to quality of life and local health and wellbeing:

LNPs have the potential to play an important role in contributing to Government’s aim in the Natural Environment White Paper to ‘help more people enjoy the benefits of nature by giving them more freedom to connect with it’ and that ‘Everyone should have fair access to a good-quality natural environment’. In addition to the opportunities LNPs will have to contribute to public access and Green Infrastructure work (as above), there is real potential for LNPs to make a difference to how the natural environment is seen and valued by the health sector.
Government’s public health white paper “Healthy lives; healthy people” set out plans to establish Health and Wellbeing Boards in late 2012. These boards will be a forum for local commissioners across the NHS, public health and social care, elected representatives and patient representatives to discuss how to work together to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of the people in their area.

By working closely with Health and Wellbeing Boards, LNPs could:

- Raise awareness of the value of public access to the natural environment and green spaces in the prevention and treatment of mental health and obesity problems
- Contribute to shaping the priorities in ‘joint health and wellbeing strategies’
- Incorporating the value of the natural environment to people’s health and wellbeing in ‘joint strategic needs assessments’.
- Contribute to local delivery of Public Health Outcomes Frameworks

**d. Working with other environmental initiatives and partnerships**

There is a range of other land-based and environmental initiatives and partnerships already working, or being set up, in local areas. It will be important that LNPs develop a good overview of the range of activity in their area and identify how they can add value in a collaborative way and avoid duplication of effort. Some of the key local initiatives and partnerships LNPs may want to work with are:

- Nature Improvement Area partnerships
- Catchment Partnerships
- Total Environment initiatives
- Rural and Farming Networks
- Local Access Forums
- Biodiversity offsetting pilots
- Coastal Change Pathfinders
- Climate Change Partnerships

**7. Monitoring and evaluation**

It is important that LNPs are able to track, review and evaluate their progress so that they can target their efforts most effectively and communicate the difference they are making in their area to local people in a transparent way. It is up to each LNP to decide how they monitor and evaluate their work in this way. There is a specific application question on monitoring and evaluation to capture your ideas about this.
Nationally, we are exploring how best to evaluate the impact of the network of Government-recognised LNPs. LNPs will be able to feed in to the national picture of action for biodiversity through access to a new improved tool for online reporting of biodiversity data and projects (the refreshed Biodiversity Action Reporting System) as referred to in section 6 above. This is a facility that will be available to LNPs, but will not be mandatory.

Government will hold an annual Ministerial event for Government-recognised LNPs. The event will be an opportunity for LNPs and Government to celebrate achievements, discuss challenges and share learning about what sorts of activities and ways of working are enabling LNPs to be effective.