



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 21st MARCH 2012 at the Village Hall, Benson OX10 6LZ AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.50PM

Member	Appointing Body
Appointed by Local Authorities	
Cllr Anna Badcock	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr David Barnard	North Herts District Council
Cllr Roger Emmett	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr David Nimmo Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Brian Norman	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Richard Pushman	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Chris Richards	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Chiltern District Council
Cllr Bill Storey	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Alan Walters	South Buckinghamshire District Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State	
Mike Fox (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Dr. Simon Mortimer	Secretary of State
Ray Payne	Secretary of State
John Willson	Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils	
Cllr Mary Goldsmith	Bedfordshire
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
Cllr Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

Officers	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Colin White	CCB Planning Officer

66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Dr Helen Barrett-Mold, Shirley Judges, Marion Mustoe, Dave Taylor, Helen Tufts 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.
7. Approved the Treasury Management Report.
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.
2. Planning Training for Town and Parish Councils for early summer 2012.
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.

77. Report on Luton and Outlier Strategic Issues.

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.**

78. Report on Historic Farmstead Survey.

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 coven 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.

81. Research Grants and Prizes.

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.....