



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY
20TH SEPTEMBER 2012 at THE LODGE, 90 STATION ROAD, CHINNOR OXON. OX39 4HA
COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 13.00 PM**

Present:

Mike Fox	Board Member, Chairman of the meeting
Heather Barrett-Mold	Board Member
Cllr John Griffin	Board member
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Board member
Ray Payne	Board member
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Board member
Cllr Bill Storey	Board Member
Cllr Alan Walters	Board Member

Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer

In attendance	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board

12/13 -16 Item 1- Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from: Cllr Shirley Judges and Cllr Richard Pushman,

12/13-17. Item 2- Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

12/13-18. Item 3- Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

12/13-19. Item 4- Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting 23rd May 2012:

- Re item 12/13.14-1. The Chief Officer, Chairman and the Strategic Access Officer had met with a representative from Natural England and have been invited to a meeting with the Management Committee for the Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails.

- Re item 12/13.14-3. An independent report on the future of forestry in England has now been published. It is possible that, in future, more local bodies will be invited to work directly with the Forestry Commission. There may be scope for the CCB to get involved. The possibility of additional Government support for forestry cannot be ruled out.

12/13-20. Item 5- Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

12/13-21. Item 6- Finance Report:

The Finance Officer advised members of the Board's financial position to the end of August and the likely position at the end of the financial year. To the end of August the expenditure against the core budget was 3.7% below profile and income 3.7% above profile. Including projects total expenditure is 8.1% below profile and income 7.3% below profile. The end of year forecast for the core budget was a small surplus (forecast to be £13,385) rather than a small deficit , mainly due to higher than anticipated local authority grants and improved earned income performance. In accordance with Board policy core surpluses are added to the Development Reserve.

The current financial position is satisfactory. The detailed review of financial activity at the end of the quarter has resulted in some changes to the anticipated final outturn as shown in the documents provided to the meeting.

1. The Committee NOTED the current financial position.

12/13-22. Item 7- Medium Term Financial Plan 2012-2015:

The Chief Officer and the Finance Officer outlined the revised medium term plan for the period 2012-2015 as adopted at the last meeting, reflecting the final results for 2011-12. The Finance Officer went through the figures and explained the aim to balance the books by 2014-15.

The revised medium term plan has been revised to reflect the experience of 2011-12, the budget for 2012-12 and the anticipated changes to the operating environment for the next three financial years.

1. The Committee has approved a 1% pay award for 2012-13, the same again for 2013-14 and a 2% award in 2014-15.
2. Further negotiations with external Chalk Streams funders have resulted in an increase in activity.
3. There may be an expenditure increase in some area including employers' pension contributions, when the results of the forthcoming triennial valuation of the pension fund are known.
4. In recent months the Committee and the Board have approved a number of initiatives that had not been included in the original 2012-13 plans. They have now been included in the updated plan
 - Olympics and Diamond Jubilee £0, previously £3,000
 - Research grant fund £5,000
 - IT replacement £3,000
 - Box woodland project £3,000
 - Historic Farmsteads survey £15,000 over 3 years
 - Chilterns Tourism website. £3,000
 - People and places booklet £5,000
 - Management Plan review £0 previously £12,000
 - Ridgeway trail £0, previously £3,00

- Local nature partnerships £3,000
5. The overall forecast position at the end of 2014-15 is now reflected as follows:
- The core budget for 2015-16 would be unfunded to the tune of £55,514 subject to the comments above
 - The general reserve will be unchanged at £135,000
 - The budget equalisation reserve will reduce to £56,105
 - The development reserve will fall to £123,259
 - Earmarked reserves will fall to £65,280
 - Restricted reserves will remain unchanged at £22,977
 - Total reserves will fall to £402,621

The Committee reviewed the figures and were satisfied with the forecasts. They would continue to review and revise the financial plans. It was also agreed to take a closer look at whether the general reserve needs to be maintained at its current level.

1. The Committee APPROVED the updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2012-2015 subject to the discussed changes.

12/13-23. Item 8- Treasury Management

The Finance Officer advised the members on the interim review of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2011-12. In line with good practice the Board re-adopted its Treasury Management Strategy in March 2012. Funds that are temporarily surplus are invested. The average rate achieved during the year was 1.27%. The original income forecast for 2011-12 was £7,000. The actual income generated was £9,448. In line with Treasury Management policy no sums are invested for more than 364 days.

1. The Committee NOTED the Treasury Management performance for 2011-12.

12/13-24. Item 9- Report on Insurance Cover

The Chief Officer reported that insurance renewal is due on 03/12/12. The Board needs to review its policy on the insurance cover required for the organisation in particular capital items and business interruption. The current annual premium is £8,549. It is suggested that at least a £2,000 reduction in premium can be achieved by insuring less. Particularly those items of equipment which are exposed to little risk and can readily and affordably be replaced. One approach would be to insure only those items which are exposed to a certain level of risk as they are:

1. Regularly taken out of the office
2. Attractive to thieves
3. Fragile
4. Especially important for the operation of the Board.

The Committee discussed the capital items to be insured using the above criteria. The current value of insured items and content is £100,000 using the above criteria the value would be reduced to approx. £25,000.

A large element of the premium is the cover for business interruption. With advances in IT management back up and running are considerably easier. Already in place is the provision for a virtual server. With the scope for staff working from home this type of cover is less necessary.

It was not proposed to reduce cover for all forms of liability associated with staff, Board members, volunteers and the public.

An insurance broker, J Bennett based in High Wycombe has been invited to advise the Board on its insurance needs and to get the best value cover.

- 1. The Committee AGREED that insurance cover from December 2012 should be based on a lower level of cover for capital items and business interruption.**
- 2. The Committee NOTED the appointment of an insurance broker, J. Bennett to advise on insurance cover and to help secure the best value and most appropriate policy.**

12/13-25. Item 10- Review of Risk Register:

The Chief Officer and Finance Officer had reviewed the risk register and had concluded that in the majority of cases the control measures in place are adequate to control the risk facing the Board. The risk of a greater than forecast cut in grants has been recorded.

The Committee reviewed the latest version of the Risk Register as it does every six months. Effective risk management required a reporting and review structure to ensure that risks are identified and assessed and that appropriate controls and responses are in place.

- 1. The Committee CONFIRMED this version of the Risk Register as controlling risk currently faced by the Board.**
- 2. The Committee NOTED that the Register will be reviewed again in six months' time.**

12/13-26 item 11- Report of the Secretary of State Appointments to the Board

The Chief Officer reported that the Secretary of State appoints 8 members to the Board. The terms of several Secretary of State Appointments have recently been extended and it has been confirmed that the vacancy created by Kevin Mayne's resignation will be filled by April 2013. The Committee was updated on the terms of appointment. The members were asked to promote the opportunity to join the Board when the current vacancy is advertised.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the request to assist DEFRA's appointments process by actively promoting, in and around the Chilterns, the opportunity to join the Board.**

12/13-27 item 12- Report on HS2

The Chief Officer gave details on recent and planned activities relating to HS2.

Recent activities include:

1. Meeting with the Secretary of State for Transport
2. Exchange of letters with the Secretary of State
3. Attendance at Community forum meetings.
4. Receipt of Scoping report for the Environmental Impact Assessment.
5. Meeting with HS2 Ltd on selection of viewpoints to be used for the visual assessment.
6. Development of tunnelling options.

Planned activities include:

1. Assessment of final version of the scoping report for the EIA
2. Attendance at Community forums

3. Participation in the Bucks Mitigation panel.
4. Liaison with HS2 Ltd on visual assessment.

The Committee discussed the various activities and further requirements.

- 1. The Committee AGREED that the Board should request that the HS2Ltd/DfT undertake a full valuation study of the actual and national costs and benefits of a full length bored tunnel under the Chilterns.**
- 2. The Committee AGREED that the Board should request, once again, that the Government applies the National Ecosystems Assessment Methodology to determine the potential and value of impact of HS2.**

12/13-28. Item 13- Report on Proposed Farm Advice Project:

The Chief Officer informed the Committee that the Board has been invited by the Environment Agency (EA) to lead jointly a Chilterns Farm Advice Project. The aims of the project are to improve the ecological status of Chilterns rivers and promote good farming practices to reduce water use and diffuse pollution.

This is part of an emerging pattern of joint initiatives involving the Board/Chalk Streams Project, the EA and other partners such as the Thames River Restoration Trust. The water companies and Natural England have also been invited to contribute. The purpose of the report is to seek the Committee's approval for the proposed Board input to the Chilterns Farm Advice Project.

1. Diffuse pollution arising from agricultural practices in the wider catchment has a major impact on water quality of a number of the streams and groundwater- chalk river species are particularly sensitive to pollution.
2. Phase 1 of the project, led by the EA, will identify sources of sediments and diffuse pollutants.
3. It is proposed that the Board will lead on phase 2 (April 2013 to March 2015). It is anticipated that that much of the direct advisory work on the ground will be carried out by consultants on a call-down basis.
4. Funding is available from the EA over the project period, subject to match funding from the Board of up to £4,000 (cash) plus in kind contributions (staff time) of up to £16,000 in total. The budget would include an element of recovery of costs incurred by the Board over and above the agreed contribution in managing and delivering the project.
5. The Board's in-kind contribution would largely be the input of the Landscape and Conservation Officer and the Chilterns Chalk Stream Officer spending around a day a month for 30 months on the project. Additionally there would be 0.5 days a month input from other team members.
6. The project would contribute directly to achieving a number of policies and actions in the AONB Management Plan.

The Chief Officer gave brief updates on other projects:

1. Sarratt weir removals project
2. River Chess.

- 1. The Committee APPROVED the agreement for the Board's input to the Chilterns Farm Advice Project.**
- 2. The Committee NOTED the update on the Sarratt meadows weir removal scheme and other projects.**

12/13-29. Item 14- AONB Boundary and Management Plan :

The Chief Officer highlighted the need to consider whether to include in the AONB Management Plan review recommendations for changing the boundary. The programme for reviewing the AONB Management Plan includes public consultation in late summer /autumn 2013. By then the Board needs to have decided whether to include recommendations for a boundary review.

The Committee reviewed the scope of proposed changes and the time table for review.

- 1. The Committee RECOMMENDS to the Board that it includes in the AONB Management Plan review for proposals for changing the boundary.**
- 2. The Committee AGREED that a special workshop be held for Board members in early November to consider the need for changes to the AONB Management Plan.**

12/13-30. Item 15- Changes in the Planning system:

The Chief Officer reported that the Government has recently announced a package of measures to promote growth in the construction sector. Without specific caveats there are likely to be implications for the AONB. At the moment nothing has been published. Because of the likely detrimental impacts the Board, together with AONBs and National Park Authorities, should seek reassurances from Government that none of the proposed changes will apply to article 1(5) land (which includes AONBs). Reassurances should also be sought that all current regulations and prior approval procedures will remain in place. The Planning Officers report was reviewed.

- 1. The Committee AGREED to make representations to Government as outlined in the report paragraphs 8-14 and seeks support from local MPs.**

12/13-31. Item 16- Any other business:

There was no other business

12/13-32. Future meeting dates: Wednesday 12th December 2012 at 10.30am at the offices in Chinnor.

The meeting closed at 13.00pm

The Chairman.....

Dates.....

