



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON Thursday 19th September at THE LODGE, 90 STATION ROAD, CHINNOR OXON. OX39 4HA COMMENCING AT 10.30AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.40PM

Present:

Mike Fox	Board Member, Chairman of the meeting
John Griffin	Board member
Cllr Shirley Judges	Board Member
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Board Member
Cllr David Nimmo-Smith	Board Member
Ray Payne	Board Member
Cllr Ian Reay	Board Member
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Board Member
Helen Tuffs	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

13/14-80 Item 1- Apologies for absence.

No apologies for absence were received.

13/14-81. Item 2- Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

12/13-82. Item 3- Minutes of the previous meeting

Although the meeting of 23rd May 2013 had been quorate no parish council member has been present and, therefore, the meeting ratified the decisions taken at the meeting of the 23rd May 2013.

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman after the following amendments were made;

minute 12/13-78; AONS was amended to AONB's.

minute 12/13-78 decision 3: 's' added to Chiltern

minute 12/13-79-1: 'reduce' amended to 'adjust'

13/14-83. Item 4- Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting 23rd May 2013

Item 12/13-76. item 9: Report on HS2.

Decision 1; a formal complaint had not been made to the Information Commissioner over HS2 Ltd.'s refusal to provide confirmation of the length of visible route in the Chilterns AONB, due to matters having moving on.

Decision 2; there had been no requirement to spend money allocated on the commissioning of consultants to prepare a report on the external benefits of a tunnel. There may be future use for the funds.

Item 12/13-78. item 11: Report on IUCN Qualification.

Continued recognition of the Chilterns AONB as an IUCN Category V protected area has been received with glowing reports.

13/14-84. Item 5- Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

13/14-85. Item 6- Finance Report (April-July 2013)

The Finance Officer advised members of the Board's financial position to the end of July and the likely position at the end of the financial year.

The current financial position is satisfactory with no significant problems to report. The report presented was the first report prepared in the revised format as agreed by the Committee. The members commented that the new reporting format was fit for purpose and clear to follow.

To the end of July expenditure against the core budget was £2,300 below profile, ongoing activity was £1,500 below profile, project expenditure was £ 4,800 below profile and small grants payments still to be allocated.

Income was in line with expectations.

10.50 Shirley Judges joined the meeting.

1. The Committee NOTED the current financial position.

13/14-86. Item 7- Medium Term Financial Forecast

The Finance Officer advised the Committee of the latest forecast of income and expenditure over the medium term to 2016.

The grants available to the Board from Defra and local authorities are unlikely to be sufficient to meet current levels of core expenditure after the end of the current financial year. Further actions will be needed to reduce the operating deficit.

An exercise had been carried out to forecast core finances for 2014-15 and 2015-16, members were provided with the schedule. The operating deficit in 2014-15 is expected to be £50,000 and in 2015-16 £100,000.

The Board's reserves are at a reasonable level and their use has been limited. There are options of transferring reserves making funds available for operating and ongoing costs. The

long term goal has to be a balanced operating budget which does not require the use of reserves, but in the medium term the managed use of reserves will provide stability and will enable the work programme to be delivered as planned. The Board needs to consider the extent and the means of increasing its income, as well as considering sustainable ways of reducing core and ongoing activity costs. The best use of resources needs to be considered.

It was proposed to establish an Executive Committee sub group to prepare options to be presented to the December meeting.

The Committee discussed the medium term finances and the terms of reference for the sub group. The sub group will be made up as follows: Chris Smith, Ray Payne, Alan Walters, Jeremy Ryman, Ian Reay and Mike Fox.

Terms of reference discussed were:

1. Identify the implications of the progressive reduction in income on:
 - I. Delivering the Board's statutory purpose
 - II. Delivering the Board's policies.
2. Conduct a review of detailed options including, but not limited to:
 - I. Reducing core operating and on-going activity costs
 - II. Generating additional income to meet operating costs.
 - III. Increasing earned income from Treasury Management
 - IV. Using reserves to increase capacity to generate additional income.
3. Develop a strategy for using reserves in the medium term
4. Prepare a preliminary report for the Executive Committee meeting 12th December 2013.
5. Seek the advice of the Chief Officer and Finance Officer at every stage.

- 1. The Committee CONSIDERED the implications of the medium term finance paper.**
- 2. The Committee DECIDED to set up a sub group to prepare options for consideration by the Executive Committee in December 2013.**
- 3. The Committee AGREED the terms of reference as above for that sub group.**

13/14-86. Item 8- Treasury Management Report

The Finance Officer advised members on the interim review of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2012-13. In line with good practice the Board re-adopted its Treasury Management Strategy in February 2013. Funds that are temporarily surplus are invested. The average rate achieved during the year was 1.29%. The original income forecast for 2012-13 was £7,225. The actual income generated was £9,616. In line with Treasury Management policy no sums are invested for more than 364 days.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the Treasury Management performance for 2012-13.**

13/14-87. Item 9 Banking Arrangements

The Finance Officer advised members to open a new Business Reward Account with HSBC in order to maximise interest returns. It was proposed to replace the deposit account and some of the money market activity with a new account. This would allow instant access and interest to be earned on the former deposit account money as well as the money market balance. Interest will be no less than currently achieved and with careful cashflow management could be up to an additional £1,000.

- 1. The Committee AGREED to close the HSBC deposit account and open a new HSBC Business Reward Account**

13/14-88. 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 risks facing the Board. It is now clear that there will be a shortfall of grant funding against existing spending levels. The forming of a sub group to prepare a report on the available options of successfully managing this shortfall is considered to reduce this financial risk.

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.**

13/14-89. Item 11 Review of the AONB Management Plan

Chief Officer reported that the draft plan will be issued for public consultation from 27th September – 20th December. All the changes requested by the working group of Board Members 23rd July 2013 have been incorporated.

Consultation and its promotion will rely heavily on the web site.

A simple online survey was set up to elicit feedback on issues people considered to be of importance in the AONB. It was promoted from the end of May until 31st August. One hundred and twenty responses were received.

The costs of the draft plan and the consultation are below budget.

The SEA Scoping report has already been published. Thirty responses were received with approx. 100 comments, none of which required a significant amendment.

1. **The Committee NOTED that the review of the Management Plan is proceeding according to the programme.**

13/14-90. Item 12- Report on HS2

The Chief Officer informed the Committee of recent and expected HS2 related activity; sought guidance on the petitioning strategy and the Committee reviewed the report on the benefits of a tunnel by Peter Brett Associates under guidance from Ray Payne.

1. This report on the benefits of a tunnel had been commissioned by the Chilterns and Countryside Group. It examines the case for a full length bored tunnel based on calculating the cost to society, and not just the construction cost to the Department of Transport. It is describing a valuing of the non-market benefits. The document is a work in progress, continually being updated. Copies have been circulated including to the House of Commons library.
2. The main areas of activity in recent months have been the submission of comments on the Draft Environment statement and the preparation of a report on the benefits of a tunnel.
3. On 10th September HS2 Ltd officials confirmed that the Environment Statement to accompany the Hybrid Bill will not include a longer tunnel. The report making the case is, therefore, intended to be presented to the parliamentary Select Committee (petitioning stage) seeking their support.
4. There has been continued and high level criticism of all aspects of the proposal; Government ministers however have continued to defend HS2 in the media.
5. The legal challenge in the Appeal Court on whether an SEA should have been carried out was unsuccessful. But leave to appeal to the Supreme Court was granted and the hearing will be on 15th October. Although the Supreme Court ruling (if it accepts the appeal) may significantly alter the timetable by extending it for a year or so whilst an SEA is prepared, it is assumed that the Hybrid Bill will be lodged by the end of 2013.
6. The challenge for opposing groups over the next few months is to organise the petitioning of Parliament for changes including for a full length bored tunnel under the Chilterns. Those seeking changes need to collaborate to select those amendments most widely supported which will bring maximum benefits. General advice is to seek a lead petitioner and for other to support that person or organisation.
7. The meeting discussed the case for the Board to consider taking a leading role in petitioning for a tunnel with staff and Board members preparing and presenting the case with, if necessary, legal advice and training.
8. The Committee discussed the possibility of a new alignment further to the west of Wendover as a full length bored tunnel would not need to follow the existing alignment. As the Secretary of State has recently said "it is not about speed" there is an argument that the design speed of the line could be lowered for the tunnelling section giving a

greater flexibility over alignment. This would provide the opportunity to move the line further to the west of Wendover, which would then be less affected by the noise of trains as they enter and emerge from the tunnel.

The Committee expressed a vote of thanks to Ray Payne for not only contributing substantially to the report and producing it, but also for the wider promotion of the report.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the progress on the Report prepared by Peter Brett Associated on the non-market benefits of a longer tunnel.**
- 2. The Committee AGREED to make a case for a re-alignment of a tunnel further to the west of Wendover and for a lower line speed to facilitate such a change.**
- 3. The Committee AGREED to present to the Board in October the implications of being a lead petitioner for a longer bored tunnel.**

13/14-91. Item 13- Proposal for a Chilterns Skills, Learning and Fun Programme.

The Chief Officer informed the Committee that all events which the Board organises and promotes should help to generate greater interest from the public if marketed as a rolling programme. To maximise income earning opportunities a more organised approach would be required.

The Committee discussed and made suggestions for various ways of using more commercially conscious methods of generating a greater public interest and a wider target market. The Chief Officer will provide members with a template of activities already undertaken.

- 1. The Committee PROVIDED feedback on the proposal.**

13/14-92 Any other business:

There was no other business.

13/14-93. Future meeting dates: Thursday 12th December 2013, Tuesday 4th March 2014, Thursday 22nd May 2014, Thursday 18th September 2014 and Wednesday 10th December 2014 at 10.30am at the offices in Chinnor.

The meeting closed at 12.40m

The Chairman.....

Date.....