



Executive Committee
10.30 a.m 25th May 2016

Chilterns Conservation Board
The Lodge, Station Road, Chinnor OX39 4HA

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of Interest
3. Minutes
4. Matters Arising
5. Public Question Time
6. Finance Report
7. Report of Internal Auditors
8. Review of Risk Register
9. Research and Evidence
10. Model AONB Planning Policy
11. HS2 Update
12. HLF Central Chilterns Landscape Partnership Update
13. Celebration of Chilterns Walking
14. A.O.B.



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON Wednesday 24th February 2016 at the offices of the Board, The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor OX39 4HA commencing at 10.30AM AND CONCLUDING AT 13.00 PM

Present:

Cllr David Collins	Board Member
Cllr. John Griffin	Board Member
Cllr. David Nimmo-Smith	Board Member
Ray Payne	Board Member
Cllr. Ian Reay	Board Member, Chairman of the meeting
Helen Tuffs	Board Member
Cllr Alan Walters M.B.E.	Board Member

Sue Holden	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer

In attendance	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board

15/16-29 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Heather Barrett-Mold, Secretary of State appointment.

15/16- 30 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

15/16- 31 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 9th December 2015 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

15/16- 32 Matters arising from the minutes 9th December 2015.

There were no matters arising not covered on the agenda.

15/16- 33 Public Question time

No members of the public were present.

10.32 The Countryside Officer joined the meeting.

15/16- 34 Updates:

1. **Chalk and Trees:** The Chief Officer informed the meeting that the magazine will in future be published once per year.
2. **Hillforts:** The Countryside Officer reported following the success of the stage 1 application of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant, recruitment for a Development Officer will take place in March.
3. **HS2:** The Countryside Officer reported that:
 - a. Jerry Unsworth, an external consultant, had been back to the Select Committee on 20/01/16 on behalf of Local Authorities and the CCB to press for a better deal for the AONB Review Panel. Further negotiations have given further assurances.
 - b. Parity with the Colne Valley Review Panel was achieved, a further £3m for additional enhancement works in the AONB to be made available, but neither an independent panel chair nor the panel's administration costs and professional costs over and above the £3m were agreed.
 - c. The final sitting of the SC was 23/02/16, with a report published. A worrying point in the report is "do not believe that the mitigated effects represent an intrusion into the AONB inconsistent with its status. HS1 demonstrates ability of HSR to blend into the landscape."
 - d. The next stage in the process is the House of Lords Select Committee, which is expected to start sitting around Easter. This may represent a second opportunity to reopen the case for the Long Tunnel.

The meeting discussed the position and considered the current fragmented long tunnel options. If a view could be reached for the option of 1 tunnel through the AONB, then regard for the AONB and the landscape, which have been disregarded by the SC, could set the scene for presentation to the House of Lords SC. The Committee maintained its position for the principle of a tunnel through the AONB.

4. **Landscape Partnership:** The Countryside Officer reported that an expression of interest, summarising the heritage and the project's purpose, had been submitted. The development phase of the project could be 18 months and the delivery of the Landscape Partnership a 5-year project. Discussions are ongoing with partners, which are vital to this project. She and the Chief Officer had had a meeting with the head of HLF for the region, which had been encouraging. A cautionary note had been issued that the first attempt is often not successful, but there is a second opportunity to apply. The concept of the project is clear, as is the timing. Many of the ideas have been on the backburner for a long time and now with the increasing pressures on the area and HS2, the time is right to start a scheme like this.

15/16- 35 Treasury Management.

The Finance Officer presented a report on the Conservation Board's Treasury Management Strategy and Policy. The new style of working and the requirement for better returns was discussed.

- 1. The Committee AGREED to adopt the Treasury Management Strategy outlined in the report and the Treasury Management Policy Statement as presented.**
- 2. The Committee AGREED that it should receive a report on the performance of the Treasury Management after the end of each financial year and AGREED to keep the Treasury Management strategy under review.**

15/16- 36 Finance Report and Budget 2016-17

The Finance Officer presented the financial position to the end of January and the projected outcome for the end of the financial year as well as a draft budget for 2016/17 to be considered for recommendation to the Board in March.

The projected loss for the year is less than budgeted (£13,668 vs £56,359).

The budget 2016-17 shows projected losses for the year. The Chief Officer has already cut a significant number of budgets and has a few more cuts in mind.

The Defra grant for the next four years has been offered and accepted, but the contributions from Local Authorities will not be known until later.

The Committee considered the proposed budget.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the financial position and RECOMMENDED the adoption of the budget 2016-17 to the Board, subject to final notification of Local Authority contributions and in-year initiatives to reduce the deficit.**

15/16-37 Business Plan and Action Plan

The Chief Officer had provided a revised Business Plan following feedback on the Plan presented to the Board in January. She had reviewed the action plan, reduced the actions and altered some priorities.

The Business Plan has been sent to Defra along with the contributions acceptance forms. The Business Plan has been sent to local authorities and will be discussed with the Boards' partners.

- 1. The Committee SUPPORTED the revised plans and the next steps.**

15/16-38 Other business.

There was no other business.

15/16-39 It was RESOLVED that members of the public be excluded from the meeting to consider the Staff Health Benefit Scheme and HR Policy changes.

1. The Committee AGREED the proposed recommendations.

Next meeting: Wednesday 25th May 2016 at 10.30 am at the offices of the Board in Chinnor.

Future meeting dates: Thursday 8 September 2016 and Thursday 8 December 2016

The meeting closed at 12.15

The Chairman.....

Date.....

Item 6 Finance Report – Provisional outturn 2015-16

Author: Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary: Subject to any final adjustments the provisional results for 2015-16 indicate an overall surplus of £4,428. Of this amount £3,807 reflects operating activity and £621 major project activity.

This compares to an original budgeted operating deficit of £46,003 and a project deficit of £10,356.

Purpose of Report: To advise members of the Board's likely financial position at the end of the financial year 2015-16. Detailed figures are attached, including the latest version of the 2016-17 budget.

Operating activity

1. The likely financial position shows a decrease in expenditure, compared to the budget, of £44,077, 7.2% lower than budgeted.
2. The main contributors to the underspend were consultancy support, training, members' allowances, personnel support and insurance. In addition some budgeted tasks did not proceed, including a contracted out marketing review and a Board members' fellowship.
3. Other activities which were underspent included the commons network, local nature partnerships, the hillforts bid, high speed two and special projects. The second edition of Chalk and Trees did not proceed, nor was the proposal to offer bursaries. The Board's contribution to the Box project was lower than budgeted.
4. Higher than anticipated contributions from the annual forum, 50th anniversary celebrations and planning earned income helped to boost the surplus.

Major projects

5. Two Major Projects were completed during the year and fully funded. The Chalk Streams Project realised a surplus of £621.

Reserves

6. The result of the surplus of £3,807 on operating activity, together with the £621 surplus on chalk streams will be to add £4,428 to reserves, leaving £549,980 to carry forward to 2016-17.

Next steps

7. Formal accounts will be prepared and presented to the Board in June, and will be subject to external audit

Recommendations

1. **To note the likely financial outcome and that the formal accounts will be presented to the Board in June.**

	2015-16	2015-16	2015-16	2016-17	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
	£	£	£	£	
Income					
Public Sector					
Defra	412,868	412,868	412,868	419,969	1.7% increase
Local Authorities	111,791	103,905	107,799	94,864	12% reduction
Town & Parish Councils	925	2,000	1,625	1,000	
	525,584	518,773	522,292	515,833	
External income					
Chalk Streams EA	5,000	10,000	10,000	-	to major project
Chalk Streams Water Co's	6,600	6,600	6,600	-	to major project
Chiltern Society	3,000				
	14,600	16,600	16,600	-	
Earned income					
Investment income	5,425	5,250	5,509	5,250	
Events net	13,397	10,000	8,143	5,000	
Merchandise sales	3,446	4,000	2,403	2,000	
Other income	8,407	9,565	14,974	9,470	
	30,676	28,815	31,029	21,720	
	570,860	564,188	569,921	537,553	
Expenditure					
Employment	392,549	351,856	356,713	393,833	additional post
Planning Consultancy	-	12,000	10,340	9,000	
Travel	5,973	5,830	6,662	4,290	30% reduction
Web site	328	530	3,168	300	
Printing / Distribution	1,037	1,800	46	1,800	
Events / Exhibitions	115	100	27	100	
Misc	275	785	267	-	
Marketing Review	-	1,500	-	-	
Annual Report	780	750	737	1,000	
Annual Forum	779	800	614	800	
Consultancy	5,486	12,600	5,824	-	
Subscriptions	167	190	78	100	
State of Environment Report	500	500	-	500	
Contbn to Woodland Project	6,500	7,000	7,000	0	
Planning Committee	458	520	534	500	
Training	3,800	4,500	2,567	1,000	includes national conference
Premises	28,070	28,985	29,183	29,385	
Office Costs	12,040	9,540	9,857	8,690	
IT	9,262	15,125	15,551	12,725	
Meetings / Events	3,161	1,935	1,480	1,935	
Finance	20,574	23,705	23,405	19,705	
Personnel	3,722	5,090	3,762	3,175	
Legal / Clerk	1,584	2,375	696	1,875	
Insurance	4,748	5,650	4,654	4,750	
Development Fund		-	-	18,000	
Members' Allowances	30,608	30,475	28,242	30,475	
Members' Fellowship	-	1,000	-	-	
National AONB	2,702	2,500	2,500	2,500	
Chalk and Trees	10,033	11,950	5,681	7,000	
Environmental Tourism	-	500	388	350	
Chilterns aetna	2,332	1,100	1,226	350	
50th Anniversary	-	3,000	3,411	-	
Commons Network	-	4,000	619	500	

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	2014-15	2015-16	2015-16	2016-17	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
	£	£	£	£	
Site Management (Small Works)	1,544	-	-	-	
Local Nature Partnerships	2,695	2,000	10	1,000	
Farm Advice Project	2,000	-	-	-	
Commons Project Contribution	4,000	4,000	4,000	-	
Box Project Contribution	2,500	6,000	2,907	-	
Hillforts Preparation / CCB contbn	2,271	7,500	4,870	5,000	CCB contribution
Traditional Farmsteads Project	-	3,000	-	-	
HS2	9,990	20,000	15,003	5,000	
Access Publications	704	1,000	1,153	1,000	
National Trail Projects	2,289	3,500	2,975	-	
Access Improvements	194	1,000	1,032	500	
Bursaries	-	2,000	-	-	
IT Upgrades	2,035			-	
Special Projects	9,889	12,000	8,935	10,000	
	587,695	610,191	566,114	577,138	
Net income / (expenditure)	- 16,836	- 46,003	3,807	- 39,585	
Major Projects					
Commons income	140,861	29,336	30,936		
Commons staff costs	- 38,794	- 16,317	- 19,744		
Commons other costs	- 102,067	- 13,019	- 11,192		
Box income	25,351	30,000	16,352		
Box staff costs	- 14,415	- 4,308	- 4,308		
Box other costs	- 10,936	- 25,692	- 12,044		
Chalk Streams income	9,595	38,049	13,778	17,150	
Chalk Streams staff costs	- 3,772	- 4,375	- 4,614	- 30,994	
Chalk Streams other costs	- 5,823	- 44,030	- 8,542	- 1,850	
Hillforts income				76,634	
Hillforts staff costs				- 34,421	
Hillforts other costs				- 42,213	
Chiltern Woodlands income				-	
Chiltern Woodlands expenditure				- 5,000	
Net expenditure	-	- 10,356	621	- 20,694	
Total Net Income (Expenditure)	- 16,836	- 56,359	4,428	- 60,279	
Reserves at year end	545,552		549,980	489,701	

Item 7 Internal Audit Report 2015-16

- Author:** Chris Smith Finance Officer
- Summary:** The Board's internal auditor, the Hertfordshire Shared Internal Audit Service, have completed their annual review and submitted their report.
- Purpose of Report:** To present the findings from the internal audit annual review.

Background

1. The Board has appointed the Hertfordshire Internal Audit Service (formerly Hertfordshire County Council Audit Department) to provide its internal audit service. This entails a one day visit to The Lodge, resulting in a written report with recommendations.
2. The internal auditor concentrates on financial and governance procedures and practices, and advises the external auditor of their findings.
3. Hertfordshire were appointed some years ago and re-appointed from time to time in view of their efficient service. The annual cost is £1,100.
4. The external auditor is appointed by the Audit Commission and its successor body and checks the accuracy and legality of the Board's accounting procedures. The annual cost is £1,920.
5. Both costs have reduced in recent years.

Conclusions

6. The auditor focussed on the internal controls linked to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Annual Audit Return submitted to the external auditor and concluded that **Substantial Assurance** on effective management can be provided.
7. Two "medium recommendations" are identified together with two "merits attention" all of which it is proposed to accept.
8. The medium recommendations deal with the need to present a risk register to the Board regularly, and to review the amounts that can be drawn from petty cash.
9. The items that merit attention cover the need to identify the date and meeting body on the face of every paper presented and the desirability of reviewing the Board's Standing Orders.
10. A copy of the report is attached.

Recommendation

- 1. Note and accept the report of the internal auditors.**



Final Internal Audit Report

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 2015/16

May 2016

Issued to: Sue Holden – Chief Officer
Chris Smith – Financial Officer

Copied to: Chiltern Conservation Board
(Final Only)

Report Status: Final

Reference: Z8050/16/001

Overall Assurance: **Substantial**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

- 1.1 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has provided the Internal Audit function to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CAONB) since 2005. HCC reports on the robustness of the financial control environment annually at the request of the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB).
- 1.2 This audit focused on the internal controls linked to the achievement of the objectives set out in the annual return that needs to be completed and sent to the external auditors. The purpose of the audit was to ensure that the controls were in place throughout the financial year and supported the achievement of the objectives of the CCB.

Overall Audit Opinion

- 1.3 Based on the work performed during this audit, we can provide overall **Substantial Assurance** that there are effective controls in operation for those elements of the risk management processes covered by this review. These are detailed in the Assurance by Risk Area Table in Section 2 below.
- 1.4 For definitions of our assurance levels, please see Appendix B.

Summary of Recommendations

- 1.5 To further strengthen controls, four recommendations were made following the audit, two were categorised as Medium Priority and two as Merits Attention.
- 1.6 Please see the Management Action Plan at Appendix A for further detail.

Annual Governance Statement

- 1.7 This report provides good levels of assurance to support the Annual Governance Statement.

2. ASSURANCE BY RISK AREA

2.1 Our specific objectives in undertaking this work, as per the Terms of Reference, were to provide the CCB with assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls, processes and records in place to mitigate risks in the following areas:

Risk Area	None	Limited	Moderate	Substantial	Full
Financial Regulations & Standing Orders					
Payments					
Risk Management					
Budget Setting & Monitoring					
Income					
Petty Cash					
Salaries to Employees					
Asset Register & Insurance					
Bank Reconciliations					
Year-End Procedures					
Managing the Risk of Fraud					
Review of Previous Recommendations					
Overall					

2.2 See definitions for the above assurance levels at Appendix B.

No.	Finding / Associated Risk	Priority	Recommendation	Management Response	Target Date
1.	<p>Reports Taken to the Board/ Committees</p> <p>Reports taken to the Board or Committees do not detail the date of the report or the title of the member body to which it was presented.</p> <p><u>Associated Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No record of when and to whom each document was presented hence no record of the review and update of the document or by when a future review is required. • Documents could be authorised by the incorrect member body and thus authorities inappropriately applied. 	Merits Attention	All reports produced for the Board or its Committees should be dated and include the name of the body which received it.	<p>Responsible Officer: Donna Webb</p> <p>Action to be taken: Papers are normally marked with the date and the title of the body. However, occasional reports are submitted late and do not go through the agreed procedure.</p> <p>All reports will in future be marked as recommended.</p>	1 st May 2016
2.	<p>Standing Orders</p> <p>A significant number of sections within the Board's Standing Orders have been updated as standalone documents since the most recent review of the Constitution in 2005. However, a review of Standing Orders in their totality has not been undertaken since the 2005 review.</p>	Merits Attention	The Standing Orders should be reviewed in their totality and updated to reflect current procedures and practices in place.	<p>Responsible Officer: Sue Holden Chris Smith</p> <p>Action to be taken: Standing Orders will be examined and updated as necessary.</p>	30 th September 2016

No.	Finding / Associated Risk	Priority	Recommendation	Management Response	Target Date
	<p><u>Associated Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No up to date manual of standing orders for reference if required hence incorrect processes could be applied. Conflicting guidance could emerge between standalone documents and Standing Orders resulting in confusion over what procedures to follow which could result in incorrect procedures and practices being used. 				
3.	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>Financial Regulations state that the Risk Register should be reviewed regularly by the Chief Officer with any significant changes reported to the Executive Committee and presented to the Board annually.</p> <p>The review of the Risk Register report states that the Risk Register should be reviewed at each Executive Committee meeting. However, none of the minutes reviewed for the financial year 2015/16 show any record of it being discussed. The only reference to the Register being discussed by the Executive</p>	Medium	<p>Responsibility and frequency of review of the Risk Register needs to be clearly established and any discussion and approval of the Risk Register should be included in the agenda and minutes of the Executive Committee.</p> <p>The Register should be reviewed at least annually and more frequently if there is a significant change in the risk profile of the organisation. The Risk Register itself should clearly show the last review</p>	<p>Responsible Officer: Chris Smith</p> <p>Action to be taken: An updated register will be presented to the Executive Committee on 25 May 2016 and at regular intervals thereafter.</p>	25 th May 2016

No.	Finding / Associated Risk	Priority	Recommendation	Management Response	Target Date
	<p>Committee is made in the Board meeting minutes of 25/06/15.</p> <p>The Risk Register is not up to date. All the responsibilities in the risk register are for named persons not the post holder so the responsible officer for all the Chief Officer duties is the Acting Chief Officer who returned to her normal duties in September following the appointment of a new Chief Officer.</p> <p><u>Associated Risk</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No minuted record from the Executive Committee that the Risk Register has been reviewed this year contrary to the financial regulations. • Responsibilities are not up to date so there could be confusion over the responsible officer and inappropriate action taken. 		<p>date and the due date of the next review.</p> <p>All updates that are required should be made and approved by the Executive Committee and noted by the CCB.</p>		
4.	<p>Petty Cash</p> <p>Significant use is made of petty cash including some high value purchases such as lunches for member body meetings, refreshments etc.</p>	Medium	The use of petty cash should be reviewed to establish what should be purchased using cash and whether better methods are available ie	Responsible Officer: Chris Smith Donna Webb	

No.	Finding / Associated Risk	Priority	Recommendation	Management Response	Target Date
	<u>Associated Risk</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best value may not have been achieved. 		extending the use of the corporate credit card or raising orders so payment is made on an invoice.	Action to be taken: A policy on petty cash usage will be prepared that responds to this issue.	30 th June 2016

Levels of assurance	
Full Assurance	There is a sound system of control designed to achieve the system objectives and manage the risks to achieving those objectives. No weaknesses have been identified.
Substantial Assurance	Whilst there is a largely sound system of control, there are some minor weaknesses, which may put a limited number of the system objectives at risk.
Moderate Assurance	Whilst there is basically a sound system of control, there are some areas of weakness, which may put some of the system objectives at risk.
Limited Assurance	There are significant weaknesses in key control areas, which put the system objectives at risk.
No Assurance	Control is weak, leaving the system open to material error or abuse.

Priority of recommendations	
High	There is a fundamental weakness, which presents material risk to the objectives and requires urgent attention by management.
Medium	There is a significant weakness, whose impact or frequency presents a risk which needs to be addressed by management.
Merits Attention	There is no significant weakness, but the finding merits attention by management.

Item 8 Review of Risk Register

Author: Sue Holden Chief Officer
Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary: The Risk Register first adopted in 2008 and is reviewed at each meeting of the Committee.

Purpose of Report: To approve the review of the Risk Register in accordance with the Committee's policy and to seek guidance on what changes should be made to ensure that the risk process is fit for purpose.

Background

1. The Board's objectives and the environment in which we operate, are constantly evolving and, as a result the risks we face are continually changing.
2. Effective risk management requires a reporting and review structure to ensure that risks are identified and assessed and that appropriate controls and responses are in place.
3. Risk management comprises two separate activities:
 - Risk identification and evaluation
 - Management of the risk
4. The first step is to identify the risks facing the Board. Each risk is then evaluated by assessing both its likelihood and its impact on a scale of 1 to 4. The two scores are then multiplied to give an overall risk score. (For example a likelihood score of 3, with a severity of impact if it occurred of 4 would give an overall score of 12).
5. The next step is to manage each risk by identifying a suitable response. There are four possible responses;
 - (a) transfer it (e.g. insurance)
 - (b) tolerate it (accept the risk)
 - (c) remove it (discontinue the activity that gives rise to the risk)
 - (d) treat / reduce it (take action to control it)
6. The Risk Register is a live document that will be reviewed and amended on a regular basis. The Executive Committee will review the latest version at each meeting.

7. The current version appears on the following pages. Highest scores are classified as red risks, with lower scores classified as amber or green as appropriate.

Recommendations

1. **To review and approve this version of the Risk Register.**

Risk Categories

	4 Very High	3 High	2 Medium	1 Low
4 DISASTER Significant service failure / total loss of public confidence / fatality / major financial crisis.	RED	RED	RED	AMBER
3 MAJOR Significant service disruption / serious public criticism / serious injury / large financial cost.	RED	RED	AMBER	GREEN
2 NOTICEABLE Some service delivery disruption / reduced public confidence / minor injury / unplanned financial cost.	RED	AMBER	AMBER	GREEN
1 MINIMAL Minor service delivery disruption / adverse public comment / no injury / low financial cost	AMBER	GREEN	GREEN	GREEN

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
1. REPUTATION: Any action or inaction that could damage the profile and status of the Board										
1a	Reputation	Poor results from Audit Commission inspection leading to lack of credibility / loss of public confidence.	2	3	6	Robust Executive Committee, with regular reports from Section 151 Officer. Regular discussions at staff meetings. Internal audit.	Sue Holden Chris Smith	1	3	3
1b	Reputation	Loss of reputation due to member scandal / impropriety.	2	2	4	PR response	Chairman Sue Holden Claire Forrest	1	2	2

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
1c	Reputation	Public conflict between Board and Defra / central government / local governments leading to loss of reputation.	2	3	6	Regular liaison at Chairman and Chief Officer level.	Chairman Sue Holden	1	2	3
2. PERFORMANCE: Failure to establish appropriate frameworks to deliver the required standards										
2a	Performance	Lack of strategy and plan to create a sustainable future and deliver on duties.	3	4	12	Regular discussions at Board and Executive Committee. Business Plan. Production of 5 year Management Plan.	Executive Committee Chairman Sue Holden	1	3	3

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
2b	Performance	Ineffective working relationship with Defra and/or partners (local authorities, National trust, etc.)	2	3	6	Regular liaison at Chairman and Chief Officer level.	Chairman Sue Holden	1	2	2
2d	Performance	Inadequate staff capacity - turnover, lack of training, inability to recruit.	3	3	9	Training programmes. Support from Service Level Agreements (Legal Services).	Sue Holden	2	2	4
2e	Performance	Insufficient capacity and capability to deliver Reduction in morale due to funding cuts and change.	3	4	12	Staff appraisals. Staff meetings. Staff feedback.	Sue Holden	1	2	2

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
		Ineffective Board / limited contributions from Board Failure to deliver projects				Personal development planning. Support negotiated from local authorities / commercial providers in the event of loss of key personnel.				
2f	Performance	Major failure of IT Systems	2	4	8	Contract with IT maintenance engineer. Programme of replacement to keep hardware & software up to date. Effective back up system.	Sue Holden Donna Webb	1	3	3
2g	H & S	Failure or dangerous malfunction of electrical equipment.	2	2	4	Annual check for all electrical equipment.	Claire Forrest Donna Webb	1	2	2

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
2h	Performance	Failure to ensure business continuity in the event of significant incident.	2	4	8	Business Continuity Plan.	Sue Holden	1	3	3
3. FINANCIAL: Weaknesses of planning, control and monitoring										
3a	Financial	Lack of resources due to Defra and local authority grant allocations.	4	4	16	Detailed scrutiny of planned spending and income generation. Seek longer term funding agreements with Defra and local authorities. Effective management of reserves, including maintenance of minimum operational	Executive Committee Sue Holden Chris Smith	2	3	6

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
					8	reserve.				3
		Insufficient reserves to cover cashflow needs, emergencies and to invest in new developments	2	4	8	Policy to maintain reserves at appropriate level Clear business cases for investments	Sue Holden Chris Smith	1	3	3
3b	Financial	Poor planning, control and monitoring	2	3	6	Preparation of medium term financial plan. Detailed scrutiny of proposed annual budget to match costs with resources. Provide adequate resources for the repair and renewal of assets. Review budget	Executive Committee Sue Holden Chris Smith	1	2	2

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
					6	monitoring reports on a regular basis.				3
3c	Financial	Failure to pay salaries and allowances to staff and members.	2	3	6	Sage payroll operated in-house. Both Finance Officer and Administration Officer conversant with procedures.	Chris Smith Donna Webb	1	3	3
3d	Financial	Failure to manage cash flow effectively.	3	3	9	Production of Treasury Management Policy. Production of cash flow	Chris Smith Sue Holden	1	3	3

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
					6	forecasts Expenditure controls.				2
4. STATUTORY: Failure to meet legal requirements of any sort										
4a	Statutory	Failure to comply with legal obligations, leading to action resulting in loss of reputation.	2	3	6	Appointment of Section 151 Officer. Health and safety Policy. Appointment of Monitoring Officer.	Sue Holden Chris Smith Monitoring Officer	1	2	2
5. GOVERNANCE: Failure to operate as an effective and efficient body										

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
5a	Governance	Failure to comply with corporate governance requirements (eg legal obligations, diversity agenda, health and safety requirements).	2	2	4	Standing Orders Regulations Codes of Conduct Appointment of Monitoring Officer.	Sue Holden Bucks CC Chris Smith	1	2	2
5b	Governance	Sufficient quantity and capability of externally appointed Board members.	2	1	2	DEFRA selection process Guidance to Parish Councils	DEFRA	1	1	1
5c	Governance	Failure to provide adequate level of HR support to staff.	2	3	6	Appointment of HR consultant.	Sue Holden	1	3	3
5d	Governance	Failure to combat financial				Appointment of internal audit service.	Executive Committee			

No	Area	Description	Assessment – NO controls in place			Control Measures	Responsibility	Assessment – WITH controls in place		
			Likelihood	Impact	Score			Likelihood	Impact	Score
		mismanagement, fraud, theft.	2	4	8	Appointment of Section 151 Officer	Sue Holden Chris Smith	1	3	3
5e	Governance	Failure to ensure public and staff safety at external events.	3	3	9	Risk assessment undertaken for all events. Public liability insurance in place.	Sue Holden Cathy Rose Allen ~Beechey Neil Jackson	1	3	3

Item 9 Research and Evidence

Author: Sue Holden Chief Officer

Summary: Evidence and information is required for future work including the Management Plan Review 2018. In order for this to be gathered research will have to be commissioned, which at present there is no budget for.

Purpose of Report: To seek the Committee's approval for a Research and Evidence budget of £5,000

1. The final accounts for 2015-16 are more positive than the original budget so it is proposed that the Board creates a new budget for 2016-17 for Research and Evidence.
2. As the Board heads towards the Management Plan Review in 2018, there are a number of areas in which evidence and information need gathering and potentially some research to be commissioned.
3. In addition, a piece of work on the economic and social value of the AONB is needed to give our funding partners a strong case for their ongoing support, and evidence on the opportunities which justify their involvement.
4. We are also getting the opportunity to join in with other protected landscapes on pieces of evidence gathering e.g. a piece of work being planned which will contribute to the thinking around 'London as a City Region' (with potential huge implications for the protected landscapes near to London)
5. And, finally, there is potential for one or two pieces of strategy development as a few subjects need a depth of exploration which we do not have time for and where, given the interest of a number of partners, an independent external perspective would be valuable.
6. A starter budget of £5,000 is proposed. If more is needed the Committee's approval will be sought.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee approve a budget of £5,000**



A Model Policy for the Chilterns AONB, Draft v1, 22 March 2016

Introduction

All the 13 local planning authorities that cover the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are in the process of reviewing their Local Plans. Now is a good time to reflect on current policies and ensure that the best approach is taken in the new plans. Much has changed since the existing local plans and saved policies (of various ages) were prepared: the publication of the NPPF in 2012, the policy and strategy gaps left by the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies and Structure Plans, the evolving nature of AONB policy issues and guidance, the threats to the AONB from major infrastructure including HS2, the unprecedented level of pressure for new development arising from housing needs assessments, the Duty to Co-operate, and an emerging focus on AONB mitigation. One of the outcomes of a meeting of Buckinghamshire policy planners in January 2016 was a request to the Chilterns Conservation Board to propose a model AONB policy, drawing on good practice and experience locally and from others AONBs. This model policy, first draft below, could potentially be incorporated in all the emerging Local Plans that cover the Chilterns AONB or its setting. This would provide consistency, save officer time, and represent a positive example of the local authorities working together to safeguard the future of a shared nationally protected landscape area. Views are welcomed on the model policy.

The Chilterns Conservation Board advocates:

- 1) Incorporating the model AONB policy (as finalised – first draft below)
- 2) Embedding of AONB aims and objectives within the vision, objectives and strategies of Local Plans
- 3) Explaining the special qualities and characteristics of the Chilterns AONB in the portrait and descriptive material of the area.
- 4) Referring (eg a footnote) to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Section 85 Duty of Regard that all public bodies are under to have regard to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/85>
- 5) Incorporating indicators that monitor change and development in the AONB
- 6) Meeting the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive by appraising policies and site allocations against sustainability objectives including conserving and enhancing the AONB, and assessing cumulative effects as well as effects of individual proposals or sites.

The draft model policy below is drafted on the basis of a stand-alone policy. Policy must be appropriate to meet local circumstances and may be framed alternatively depending upon the structure of the local plan in question. The policy template can be adjusted as appropriate. Some lower case policy text could also be suggested by CCB if helpful. In all instances, CCB would welcome engagement with policy officers on their preparation of AONB policies and be happy to comment on any draft policy wording that individual local authorities wish to share.

DRAFT POLICY FOR THE CHILTERNES AONB

Policy x The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally designated landscape and as such permission for major developments will be refused unless exceptional circumstances prevail as defined by national planning policy. Planning permission for any proposal within the AONB, or affecting the setting or appreciation of the AONB, will only be granted when it:

- a. conserves and enhances, in accordance with criterion f-m below, the Chiltern AONB's special qualities, distinctive character, tranquillity and remoteness in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purpose of the AONB designation;**
- b. is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or is desirable for its understanding and enjoyment;**
- c. meets the aims of the statutory Chilterns AONB Management Plan¹, making practical and financial contributions towards management plan delivery as appropriate;**
- d. complies with the Chilterns Building Design Guide and technical notes by being of high quality design which respects the natural beauty of the Chilterns, its traditional built character and reinforces the sense of place and local character;**
- e. avoids adverse impacts from individual proposals (including their cumulative effects), unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated.**

Actions to conserve and enhance the AONB shall be informed by landscape and visual impact assessment, having considered all relevant landscape character assessments and shall focus upon:

- f. the Chilterns AONB's special qualities which include the steep chalk escarpment with areas of flower-rich downland, broadleaved woodlands (especially beech), commons, tranquil valleys, the network of ancient routes, villages with their brick and flint houses, chalk streams and a rich historic environment of hillforts and chalk figures;**

¹ Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 A Framework for Action, or its future replacement, <http://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/management-plan.html>

- g. the scope for enhancing and restoring those parts of the landscape which are degraded or subject to existing intrusive developments, utilities or infrastructure;**
- h. locally distinctive patterns and species composition of natural features such as chalk downland, trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, rivers and chalk streams;**
- i. the locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings, including the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the edge of settlements;**
- j. visually sensitive skylines, geological and topographical features;**
- k. landscapes of cultural, historic and heritage value;**
- l. important views and visual amenity, including key views from the steep north-west facing chalk escarpment overlooking the low clay vale, and foreground views back to the AONB; and**
- m. tranquility and remoteness and the need to avoid intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.**

More radical approaches

The draft above is a conventional style standalone policy and an evolution of what we already have. If there is an appetite for more radical approaches, embedding the protection of the AONB throughout a local plan, CCB would be happy to work on this. Please see for example the approach of the emerging South Downs National Park Local Plan (note that National Parks and AONB have exactly the same status in planning – NPPF para 115)

The Local Plan will help shape the future of the South Downs National Park by:

- *putting landscapes first while still serving the needs of our communities and local economy;*
- *protecting the special qualities of the South Downs;*
- *valuing nature both for its own sake and for the things it gives us – like clean water, food and space to breathe; and*
- *applying a single set of planning policies across the National Park to ensure all planning decisions reflect its special qualities.*

Source: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/national-park-local-plan/>

Recommendation

- 1. That Executive Committee notes the report and provides feedback on the first draft model policy.**

6. In addition to the work directly relating to the Review Group, there is also a need for the Board to consider the work that will be generated in relation to responding to the planning applications that will be submitted by HS2 for construction of the scheme, and how to resource the planning input that will be needed to respond to these. An internal meeting is planned (KD, LM, SH) to discuss this prior to the next Review Group meeting.

House of Lords Select Committee

7. The second reading of the Bill took place in the House of Lords on 14th April. There were no great surprises in the debate, with some peers focussing on local issues, many expressing support for the proposals. The question of whether the committee will hear cases from petitioners who are asking for tunnels and other changes which would require an additional provision has not yet been resolved and it is likely that this will be left to the committee to decide.
8. The select committee has now been appointed and is as follows:
 - Lord Walker of Gestingthorpe (Chairman): Cross-bencher, former Supreme Court Justice
 - Lord Brabazon of Tara (Conservative): former Lord Chairman of Committees, so familiar with Bill procedures and used to dealing with private bills
 - Lord Freeman (Conservative): former MP and minister Roger Freeman
 - Lord Jones of Cheltenham (Lib Dem): former MP Nigel Jones. He was on the Crossrail Bill committee
 - Baroness O’Cathain (Conservative): former MD of the Barbican Centre. She has been on a private bill committee that we promoted
 - Lord Plant of Highfield (Labour): an academic
 - Lord Young of Norwood Green (Labour): former union leader. He was also on the Crossrail Bill committee.
9. The Board deposited a petition in the Lords against the bill, and has contributed to pulling together a partnership of 14 organisations (local authorities and the main local groups) to prepare a single joint case for the House of Lords Select Committee for further tunnelling in the Chilterns. The Board’s contribution to this is in kind (officer time KD / NJ in preparation, and SH to present evidence).
10. 821 petitions have been deposited in the Lords (compared with 1,925 against the bill in the Commons). The locus standi of 414 of the petitioners has been challenged by the Promoter, including some (but not all) HS2-specific action groups, all MPs and individual local councillors.
11. The select committee will meet in public for the first time on 19 May 2016. Site visits by the House of Lords Select committee are anticipated prior to the hearing.

Recommendation

1. That the Board notes the update

HLF grant request	1.9 million
Cash match funding	0.4 million

The match funding target of £400,000 would largely need to be secured during the development phase by the development partners. The Project Advisory Group considers this to be a realistic target, looking at a number of options including match funding other schemes (e.g. HS2 Community and Environment Fund; National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative; LEADER etc).

6. It is proposed that a Project Development Manager, Project Officer and Trainee are employed by the Board, should the Stage 1 bid be successful. We will hear the outcome of the Stage 1 bid in October. The Project Development Manager would be line managed by the Countryside Officer, and would have overall responsibility for working with partners to ensure the match funding is secured, developing the stage 2 bid and developing the partnership.
7. HLF Landscape Partnership Bids are highly competitive; should the bid not be approved on first submission it is expected that there would be opportunities to further develop and re-submit in May 2017.

Recommendations

1. **That the committee approves the proposal that the Board underwrites up to £15,000 towards the costs of the Development Stage, should the stage 1 bid be approved.**
2. **That the committee notes the**

Item 13 Chilterns Celebration of Walking: Proposal for a 3 year programme of Walking Festivals and events

Author: Annette Venters

Summary: The CCB is developing a 3 year programme to promote walking in the Chilterns through a series of Walking Festivals and events. We are applying for funding from the Chilterns Leader programme, the outline application was successful and a full application will be submitted, for £50,750 on 23rd May. The Leader programme requires match funding to accompany the full application and we will seek £10,000 match funding through sponsorship and partner contributions. As this will not be secured in time for the full application we are asking the Executive Committee to agree that we underwrite the £10,000 match-funding

Background

1. The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) is developing an exciting 3 year programme to promote walking in the Chilterns through a series of Walking Festivals and events, starting April 2017. Despite the popularity of the Chilterns as a walking destination and the outstanding walking offer, there are no Chilterns-wide Walking Festivals – this creates a great opportunity!
2. The Chilterns Walking Festivals will provide opportunities for a regional/national promotion campaign, working with the rail companies and the London press to attract a far wider and bigger audience than could be achieved by local events each working individually. It is estimated that the project will attract 10,000 participants over the 3 year period, at the same time increasing the visibility of the Chilterns to far greater audiences.
3. There will be 6 primary festivals over three years in the Spring and Autumn, to extend the visitor season and capitalise on seasonal highlights (bluebells, autumn colours), starting April 2017 and finishing October 2019, as follows:

About the project

4. The aims of the project are:
 - a. To use the Walking Festivals as a hook to attract more visitors and to extend visitor stays in the Chilterns
 - b. To increase visitor spend and accommodation occupancy
 - c. To extend the visitor season.
 - d. To involve volunteers, community groups and businesses in delivering the walk programme and events

- e. To provide opportunities for local people and visitors to learn about the Chilterns
- f. To strengthen the Chilterns brand and raise its profile as a visitor destination
- g. To encourage business collaboration and development of accommodation offers and packages linked to the Walking Festivals.
- h. To increase participation in walking and outdoor activities, with resulting health benefits
- i. To build up the Chilterns Walking Festivals and provide a sustainable model for the future, to ensure it is self-financing and able to take place without reliance on further public funding.
- j. To increase demand for visitor facilities and contribute to their viability (eg rural accommodation)

Target Audiences

5. The walks programmes will appeal to different audiences – different age groups, different interests and different levels of ability, so there is something for everyone, for example walks/events aimed at families, those with limited mobility or specialist interests as well as more mainstream walks. There will be a strong focus on attracting visitors from outside the area, linking in to popular themes and creating walks or activities which take place over several days to encourage overnight stays. Themed walks and events will be developed, capitalising on the Chiltern's destination strengths and distinctiveness, for example:
- a. Food and Drink themed walks – incorporate a visit to a vineyard, brewery, farmshop, farm, cream teas or food tasting/lunch. Demonstrations, tastings and 'have a go' sessions (press your own juice, make your own bread etc).
 - b. History and heritage walks, Chilterns hill forts, town heritage trails
 - c. Walks featuring film locations including Midsomer Murders walks
 - d. Nature walks – glow worm walks, night sky walks, chalk downland flowers, bluebells, autumn colours
 - e. Access for All walks - Wheelchair and stile-free walks suitable for those with limited mobility
 - f. Family walks- mini-beast Trails, geo-caching
 - g. Creative walks – incorporating photography, painting, learning about Chilterns artists and craft heritage (eg Box woodland)

Project Costings

Walking Festival Project costs	Total over 3 years
Project Management Costs – short-term salaries associated with developing and managing the 3 year programme (will be outsourced)	25,000
Project Management hosting fee at CCB office	3,750
Specialist PR/Social Media input	10,000
Website design/technical updates	5,000
Programme design (6 programmes) and publicity material, Branding	5,000
Venue hire, refreshments, specialist speakers/guides	2,000
TOTAL Project Costs	£50,750

6. Leader Funding expected (80% of total project costs) £40,600
7. Match funding (20% of total project costs) £10,150. There have already been indications of interest from potential sponsors and partners, including the Chiltern Society and Fox's of Amersham.
8. The project would capitalise on existing Partnerships and relationships, working closely with others, to promote their walks and events, in addition to encouraging/organising new ones. Partners who have supported the concept include the National Trust and the Chiltern Society.

Recommendation

1. **To approve the CCB under-writing £10,000 match funding required for the Chilterns Celebration of Walking 3 year programme of Festivals and events.**