



**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 by remote video conferencing commencing at 10.01 am**

Present:

Alison Doggett	Board Member
Cllr John Griffin	Board Member
Cllr Charles Hussey	Board Member
Cllr Lynn Lloyd	Board Member
John Nicholls	Board Member
Paul Mains	Board Member
Prof. Ray Payne	Board Member
Cllr Ian Reay	Board Member, Chairman

In attendance:

Graham Hurst	CCB Finance Officer
Dr Elaine King	CCB Chief Executive Officer
Cllr Phil McDowell	Board Member

Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
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The Chairman welcomed all present and introduced Cllr Phil McDowell as the new member for Dacorum Borough Council, to his first meeting of the CCB. Cllr Phil McDowell was invited to introduce himself. Cllr McDowell explained that he has lived in various parts of the Chilterns for most of his life, has degrees in ecology and law, and has a keen interest in the environment.

*This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 no. 392*

**19/20.26 Apologies for absence.**

No apologies for absence were received.

It was noted that Cllr Bill Bendyshe Brown had stood down as a member of the CCB.

**19/20.27 Declarations of interest**

None.

**19/20.28 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 were approved as a true record after the following addition was made:

19/20.21- 'Buckinghamshire Council' was added to the post meeting note in between 2020/21 and funding.

### **19/20.29 Matters arising**

None

### **19/20.30 Finance Report**

The Finance Officer had circulated the financial report to the Committee on the draft financial position to the end of the 2019/20 financial year.

He explained that the office closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that the accounts were closed later than usual. He went through the figures and reported that income and expenditure were both higher than budgeted. After contributions to projects, the CCB has made a net surplus of £1094.

The Committee discussed the financial report.

The timetable for both internal and external audit has been changed due to the Covid-19 lockdown. The final date for submission of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is now 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020, this means the AGAR can be approved and signed at the October Board meeting. Internal audit arrangements have not been finalised yet.

### **1. The Committee NOTED the financial results for the year ending 31 March 2020.**

### **19/20.31 Interim Budget 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23**

The Finance Officer presented the budget update for 2020/21 with projections for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

It was noted that there is clear visibility of income for 2020/21 as long as the terms and conditions of the DEFRA settlement are met and the Local Authorities honour their commitments.

The Finance Officer brought the financial uncertainty due to Covid-19 to the Members attention.

71% of the CCB's core expenditure is payroll and any inflationary pay rises have been deferred until the true financial consequences of Covid-19 become clear. The precise levels of future pension contributions made by the CCB are also uncertain.

The impact of Covid-19 on Project income and expenditure is difficult to predict due to the impact of current Covid-19 restrictions on the projects.

Going forward to 2021/22 and 2022/23 the financial situation is not clear. The current DEFRA financial settlement is for one year only. The cost of Covid-19 will no doubt put constraints on Government spending and Local Authorities will also face financial constraints.

By keeping a tight control on expenditure, and assuming income will remain broadly the same, the CCB's Budget Equalisation Reserve will be depleted in three years' time. This would not be prudent and would leave the CCB depleted of cash reserves, which are necessary for the

smooth running of the CCB and its projects. Whilst immediate action is not yet necessary, the Finance officer and CEO will continue to monitor the situation.

The Finance Officer and the CEO were thanked for their forward-looking approach.

It was agreed that the Covid-19 situation provides opportunities that can be harnessed.

The Members discussed the budgets and provided feedback.

**1. The Committee NOTED the changes made to the 2020/21 Budget and the financial effects based on the assumptions for 2021/22 and 2022/23.**

**19/20.32 Operational update**

The CEO provided the Members with an operational update on the organisation's ongoing work, especially in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Chairman and the CEO thanked John Nicholls and Elizabeth Wilson for their assistance with the CCB's planning work.

John Nicholls, the Planning Advisor and the Conservation and Landscape Officer were thanked for their help with the recruitment of the new Principle Planning Officer.

All the staff were thanked for their work and many achievements during these unprecedented times.

The Members discussed the update and provided feedback.

**1. The Committee NOTED the paper and PROVIDED feedback.**

**19/20.33 Long Term Establishment and Governance Policy.**

Following the Landscape Review proposals and the Government's current work to explore their implementation, in addition to other factors, the Vice-Chairman brought forward recommendations to take account of the opportunity to start a review of the Board's establishment order, Statutory Instrument 2004 no. 1778, and its Code of Governance (June 2019).

The Statutory Instrument was written in a time and place which is very different nearly 20 years later. The trading environment, thinking and procedures have changed in the intervening years.

DEFRA has also welcomed the CCB plans to review its governance arrangements.

The Members discussed starting a review and it was agreed to set up a discussion group/working party to progress a review. The Chairman, CEO, Vice-Chairman and John Shaw will start this work. Other Members were invited to let the CEO know if they are interested in joining this group.

[Subsequently Paul Mains and John Nicholls also offered to join the Working Party which will now consist of Elaine King, Ian Reay, Ray Payne, John Shaw, Paul Mains and John Nicholls.]

**1. The Committee AGREED a review of the Statutory Instrument and the Board’s Code of Governance.**

**19/20.34 Any Other Business**

1. Members commented on the success of the meeting via Zoom and suggested to look at future meetings in this way.
2. The CEO informed Members that the CCB is following Government guidelines on Covid-19, which includes the external messaging Stay at Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives.
3. It was noted that the Chilterns Woodland Project ceased to exist on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.
4. The HR Advisory Group will start work this week.
5. The Coronavirus legislation allows for all meetings to be held remotely. The next Annual Board Meeting is scheduled to be held 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Regulation 4 of this legislation provides for all appointments to continue until the next Annual meeting or such times as the authority may determine.
6. The Chairman and CEO decided to postpone the next Board meeting due to Covid-19. The Chairman suggested that he would email all members asking them for nominations for the Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship and to indicate what committees they would like to join for the following year. He and the Vice-Chairman are prepared to remain in their positions until the Annual Meeting 2021. Any changes to Committees can be confirmed at the next Board Meeting.

**Next meeting: Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 at 10.00 am location TBC.**

The Chairman.....

Date.....