



## **Executive Committee**

**10.30 a.m. 23<sup>rd</sup> May  
The Lodge, Chinnor**

### **Draft Agenda**

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of Interest
3. Minutes
4. Matters Arising
5. Public Question Time
6. Financial Accounts 2011-12
7. Internal Auditor's Report
8. Medium Term Financial Plan (2011-2015)
9. HR Report
10. Report on HS2
11. Management Plan Review 2014-2019
12. Report on Traditional Farmsteads Project
13. Proposed new publication - People and Places
14. A.O.B.
15. Dates of meetings



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON  
FRIDAY 2 MARCH 2012 at THE LODGE, 90 STATION ROAD, CHINNOR OXON. OX39  
4HA COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.40PM**

Present:

Mike Fox	Board member, Chairman of the meeting
Cllr Bill Storey	Board Member
Cllr John Griffin	Board member
Cllr Marion Mustoe	Board member
Cllr Richard Pushman	Board member
Cllr Jeremy Ryman	Board member
Mike Woods	Co-opted
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer

In attendance	
Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board

**42. Item 1- Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from: Cllr Alan Walters, Cllr Shirley Judges and Ray Payne

**43. Item 2- Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**44. Item 3- Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman after amending the attendance list, Mike Woods is not a councillor nor is he a Board Member.

**45. Item 4- Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011:**

There were no matters arising.

**46. Item 5- Public Question time**

No members of the public were present.

**47. Item 6- Finance Report to January 2012:**

The Finance Officer advised members of the Board's financial position as at the end of January 2012 and what the likely position would be at the end of the year. Detailed papers were issued to the members for review. To the end of January 2012 the expenditure against

the core budget was 3.2% below profile and income was almost on target. By the end of the year core expenditure is forecast to exceed the budget by £6,138 or 1%. Core income will exceed the budget by £29,414 or 5%, largely due to higher than anticipated local authority contributions. After meeting costs, £9,963 will be added to the Development Reserve rather than withdraw £18,865 from the Equalisation Reserve as originally budgeted.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Officer for his hard work and detailed explanations.

**1. The Committee NOTED the financial position for the year to January 2012.**

**48. Item 7- Budget 2012-2013:**

The Chief Officer and the Finance Officer presented the draft budget for 2012-2013 based upon the assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Forecast as discussed at the last meeting of the Committee, now updated with the latest information on funding and expenditure pending confirmation of grant income from local authorities.

Following the last meeting other changes now included are:

1. Website expenditure is significantly reduced
2. A Countryside Management small works budget has been created by moving funds from elsewhere.
3. All HS2 expenditure will be met from existing earmarked reserves.
4. An Access for All Improvements budget has been created by moving funds from elsewhere.
5. Defra income reflects the reduction announced at the start of the four year grant settlement.
6. Local Authority income reflects the reduction assumed in the four year plan, although grant allocations are still to be confirmed. Town and Parish Council grants are included at £3,000.
7. The Sustainable Development Fund will be maintained at £40,000 by applying £22,100 of core income.

The changes will provide a total draft budget of core expenditure of £558,265, a reduction of £13,215 over the current year. With the exception of the SDF, non-core activity will be funded by a combination of income and reserves. The net results will be to apply £2,255 from the Budget Equalisation Reserve, £5,000 from the Development Reserve and £22,120 from Earmarked Reserves. The draft budget provides a broadly balanced core budget.

**1. The Committee CONSIDERED the draft budget for 2012-2013 and RECOMMENDED presentation of a final version to the Board at its meeting on 29 March.**

**49. Item 8- 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, following the latest predicted outturn for 2011-12 and the draft budget for 2012-13. The Finance Officer went through the figures and explained the aim to balance the books by 2014-15.

The revised medium term plan includes the following amendments:

- Interest earned on reserves likely to be low
- A further additional 1% cut in Defra grant.
- Assumed use of the ring fenced and earmarked reserves for the purpose they were intended for. The Development Reserve will be used to meet the costs of unforeseen project expenditure for which there will be no provision in the core budget.

If no further action is taken a funding shortfall of £118,000 is expected. This compares to a figure of £175,000 when the first four year plan was prepared.

**1. The Committee APPROVED the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2012-2015.**

**50. Item 9- Use of Development Reserve.**

The Chief Officer gave the Committee some background information on the projects for which he was seeking approval of the use of the reserves (up to £30,000 is available 2012-2013) as there are insufficient funds available in the core budget. The committee was asked to consider the following allocations:

- |                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| • Land Use Survey      | £5,000         |
| • IT Replacement Fund  | £3,000         |
| • Research Programme   | £5,000         |
| • Box Woodland Project | £3,000 *       |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>£17,000</b> |

- £3,000 would also need to be committed for 2013-14. Some of this sum may be met from the core budget.

**1. The Committee APPROVED the proposed allocations to projects from the Development Reserve in 2012-2013.**

**51. Item 10- Review of Internal Audit:**

The Finance Officer presented a review of the effectiveness and performance of the internal auditors. The Board's internal audit service is provided by Hertfordshire County Council, who are considered to be very capable of providing a satisfactory level of performance. A review document will be incorporated in a note to the Board.

- 1. The Committee NOTED and AGREED the review of the effectiveness of the internal audit.**

**52. Item 11- Review of Risk Register:**

The Finance Officer and Chief Officer reported that the Risk Register adopted by the Committee on 27/02/2008 had been reviewed. The Finance Officer explained to the Committee the various control measures in place to identify, assess, evaluate and manage risks that are faced in a continually changing environment. 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 every six months.

**The Committee decided to reduce the risk arising from a major IT failure as it felt that sufficient measures had been taken to reduce the likely impact of such an event.**

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

**53. Item 12- Treasury Management**

The Finance Officer presented a draft Treasury Management Strategy for the Conservation Board for the approval of members. Whilst there is no legal requirement for the Board to adopt such a Strategy, it is considered to be good practice for the Board to adopt a Treasury Management Strategy. The Board adopted a Treasury Management Strategy for the first time in February 2008. The first report for 2012-13 covering policy and Strategy was presented.

- 1. The Committee ADOPTED the Treasury Management Strategy outlined in the report and the Treasury Management Policy Statement detailed in Appendix 'A' of the agenda.**
- 2. The Committee RECEIVED a report on the performance of the Treasury Management after the end of each financial year and REVIEWED the Treasury Management strategy before the start of each year.**

**54. Item 13- Report on HS2:**

The Chief officer informed the Committee of the Board's on going involvement with opposing HS2. The Board has to concentrate on analysing the impact of the proposed route alignment and indirectly support the case for a judicial review.

Next steps are:

1. Impact of Design Changes
  2. Legal Challenges
  3. Environmental Impact Assessment
  4. Environmental, Planning and Community Fora
  5. Revised Business Plan
  6. Liaison with Local groups, Local authorities and MP's
- 1. The Committee AGREED to maintain an active campaigning role to stop HS2**
  - 2. The Committee AGREED 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. The Committee AGREED that if approaches are made by HS2 Ltd for information, to only release it if all costs are met in full by HS2 Ltd.**

**55. Item 14- Review of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan:**

The Chief Officer reported 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 and a reviewed plan needs to be published by early 2014. The process can take up to two years and based on the current plan costs approx. £20,000. The process to review the current plan must begin in 2013. There are cost implications, but at this stage it is not possible to be precise as it may be possible to use much of the previous work and there may be no need to employ external consultants.

Progress will be reported regularly to the full Board from June 2012 onwards giving all Board members the opportunity to make input.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the process of reviewing the 2008-2013 Management plan for the AONB will begin in April 2012 with anticipated publication in spring 2014.**
- 2. The Committee NOTED that a detailed and costed programme will be presented to the Executive Committee in May and the full Board in June.**

**56. Item 15- Chief Officer's Report:**

The Chief Officer has submitted written reports on the following:

High Speed 2, Ancient Woodland inventory, Commons, Chalk Streams, Web-site, Parish Councils, Sustainable Development Fund, Box Wood, Aston Rowant National Nature reserve, Penn Woods near Hazlemere, Luton Airport, Traditional Farm Buildings survey, Farmer's forum, Access Conference and Woodland Conference.

An Ancient Woodland survey will take place 28/06/12 at Piggotts, North Dean.  
Members were invited to ask questions.

**1. The Committee NOTED the Chief Officer's reports.**

**57. Item 16- Any Urgent Business:**

- Marion Mustoe had received thanks from the Queensbury School, Dunstable for the SDF money they had received which allowed the pupils to take up bee-keeping as well as raise money for the school by selling the honey.

**58. Future meeting dates:** Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2012, Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at 10.30am at the offices in Chinnor.

**n.b. the date of the next meeting will now be 23<sup>rd</sup> May**

**The meeting closed at 12.40pm.**

The Chairman.....

Dates.....

## **Item 6      Finance Report – Provisional outturn 2011-12**

**Author:**                                  Chris Smith                          Finance Officer

**Summary**                                  Subject to any final adjustments core expenditure totalled £565,979, £5,501 or 1% below the original estimate for the year. Core income was £26,429 or 4.6% above the original estimate at £601,724. Some changes will be made to restricted and earmarked reserves.

**Purpose of Report:**                      To advise members of the Board’s likely financial position at the end of the financial year 2011-12.

### **Background**

#### ***Core Activity***

1.      The likely financial position shows a small reduction in expenditure and an increase in income compared to the original budget. Expenditure was under-spent by 1%. Income increased by 4.6% compared to the budget.
2.      The main contributors to the additional income were local authority grants and an increase in earned income achieved, partly on the Countryside Festival, partly investment interest and partly initiatives in response to the staff incentive scheme.
3.      Detailed figures are attached.

#### ***Non-core Projects***

4.      “Non-core projects” are those funded by DEFRA (SDF and Chalk Streams), and others funded by other external sources and from Earmarked and General Reserves. These are also detailed in the attached document.
5.      Income raised through Red Kite related activity did not cover expenditure in the year. The excess will taken from the restricted reserve.
6.      The continuing net cost of the Ancient Woodland Survey will again be taken from the earmarked reserve.
7.      Additional expenditure on HS2 activity will be met by a combination of Project Support Budget and the HS2 Reserve.
8.      Chalk Streams income exceeded expenditure by £45,787 as a result of Environment Agency grant not being fully spent by the end of the year. This will be added to the existing earmarked reserve for application in 2012-13.



9. Commons Project income exceeded expenditure by £30,086 due mainly to partner funding being received ahead of expenditure. This will be added to the existing earmarked reserve for application over the life of the project.
10. Sustainable Development Fund expenditure exceeded the allocation from the DEFRA grant by £6,733. As agreed this will be met from the Budget Equalisation Reserve.

***Earned Income***

11. A detailed sheet of “other income” is attached.
12. The amount achieved for the year exceeded the budget by £9,917 at £39,542, due largely to the Countryside Festival and a number of new income sources. Investment income increased to £9,448.

***Overall Position***

13. After these transactions have been recorded there remains an excess of income of £35,910. This will be added to the Development Reserve.

***Next steps***

14. Formal accounts will be prepared and presented to the Board in June, and will be subject to audit by the Audit Commission.

**Recommendation:**

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

Chilterns Conservation Board Executive Committee - 23/05/12

BUDGET 2011-12				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2012				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
<b>Expenditure</b>				
<b>Department 100:</b>				
<b>Promotion and Awareness</b>				
<b>Core expenditure:</b>				
Information Officer & E&A Officer	(88,315)	(88,196)	119	
Travel and subsistence	(1,700)	(1,372)	328	
Subscriptions magazines / newspapers	(400)	(547)	(147)	
Web site	(13,000)	(19,773)	(6,773)	Additional costs to be met from reserve
Printing & distribution costs	(2,400)	(1,694)	706	
Events and exhibitions	(1,500)	(1,012)	488	
Photography	-	-	-	
Miscellaneous	(400)	(51)	349	
<b>Core projects:</b>				
103 Countryside Festival	(4,510)	(4,696)	(186)	
105 Annual Report	(1,100)	(1,179)	(79)	
106 Annual Forum	(2,000)	(935)	1,065	
107 Chalk and Trees / What's On	(13,365)	(11,381)	1,984	
108 Environmental education	(2,500)	(1,018)	1,482	
109 Getting Close to Nature	(1,000)	(1,411)	(411)	£411 from Red Kites Reserve for tree climbing monitoring
110 Enjoying Woodlands	(3,500)	(3,500)	-	
111 Environmental Tourism	(1,000)	(657)	343	
112 Chilterns Awards	(500)	-	500	
113 Historic Environment	(2,000)	(1,816)	184	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(139,190)</b>	<b>(139,239)</b>	<b>(49)</b>	

BUDGET 2011-12				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2012				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
<b>Expenditure</b>				
<b>Department 200:</b>				
<b>Countryside Management</b>				
<b>Core expenditure:</b>				
Countryside & FLU Officer	(73,345)	(72,619)	726	
Travel and subsistence	(2,000)	(1,177)	823	
Publications	(250)	-	250	
Events / exhibitions	(300)	(165)	135	
Miscellaneous	(200)	(78)	122	
<b>Core projects:</b>				
203 Commons	(7,000)	(6,977)	23	Including £4,000 applied to Commons Project
204 Chalk grassland group	(3,000)	(2,989)	11	
205 Land management survey	-	-	-	
206 State of Environment Report	(2,000)	(1,546)	454	
207 Support for Trees & Woods Mgt	(3,500)	(3,500)	-	
208 Orchards Project	-	-	-	
209 Ancient Woodland Survey	(5,000)	-	5,000	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(96,595)</b>	<b>(89,052)</b>	<b>7,543</b>	

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BUDGET 2011-12				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2012				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
<b>Expenditure</b>				
<b>Department 300:</b>				
<b>Planning and development</b>				
<b>300 Core expenditure:</b>				
Planning Officer	(59,280)	(59,246)	34	
Travel & subsistence	(1,180)	(1,178)	2	
Miscellaneous	(150)	-	150	
<b>Core projects:</b>				
301 Planning Committee	(570)	(430)	140	
302 Planning conference	(1,200)	(1,032)	168	
303 Design guidance	-	(23)	(23)	
304 Building design awards	(1,500)	(1,228)	273	
305 Technical assistance	(1,500)	(1,497)	3	
309 Wood Fuel Group	(500)	(500)	-	
310 Planning Policies	(1,500)	-	1,500	
311 High Speed Two	(1,000)	(3,000)	(2,000)	£2,000 added by Exec Cttee for external experts - Balance Project Support
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(68,380)</b>	<b>(68,133)</b>	<b>247</b>	

BUDGET 2011-12				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2012				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
<b>Expenditure</b>				
<b>Department 400:</b>				
<b>Recreation and Access</b>				
<b>Core expenditure:</b>				
Access Officer	(25,635)	(25,641)	(6)	
Travel and subsistence	(500)	(450)	50	
Miscellaneous	(100)	(232)	(132)	
<b>Core projects:</b>				
401 Chiltern country leaflets	(3,100)	(2,615)	485	£520 moved to 405
402 Access conference	(1,000)	(719)	281	
404 Countryside Close to Home	-	-	-	
405 Cycling in the Chilterns	(3,000)	(4,769)	(1,769)	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(33,335)</b>	<b>(34,427)</b>	<b>(1,092)</b>	

<b>BUDGET 2011-12</b>				
<b>MONTH 12: MARCH 2012</b>				
<b>Department 500:</b>				
<b>Corporate Services</b>				
<b>Core expenditure:</b>				
Chief Officer / Admin Officer	(99,405)	(101,155)	(1,750)	
Travel and subsistence	(1,750)	(1,907)	(157)	
Staff training	(2,555)	(1,546)	1,009	
Incentive scheme distribution	-	(9,368)	(9,368)	
Premises	(27,570)	(25,916)	1,654	
Office costs	(14,115)	(13,627)	488	Including corporate clothing
Office furniture & equipment	(1,000)	(703)	297	
IT (incl OS licences)	(10,470)	(6,571)	3,899	
Meetings & events	(375)	(440)	(65)	
Finance	(19,810)	(19,936)	(126)	
Personnel	(1,580)	(1,485)	95	
Legal services	(6,000)	(3,752)	2,248	
Insurance	(8,200)	(8,549)	(349)	
Miscellaneous	(565)	-	565	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(193,395)</b>	<b>(194,954)</b>	<b>(1,559)</b>	

Chilterns Conservation Board Executive Committee - 23/05/12

BUDGET 2011-12				
MONTH 12: MARCH 2012				
Description	Annual Budget	Actual to date	Variance	Notes
	£	£	£	
<b>Expenditure</b>				
<b>Department 600</b>				
<b>Member Services</b>				
<b>Core expenditure:</b>				
Members' allowances	(34,320)	(32,454)	1,866	Excludes SDF Panel allowances
Board member training	(1,750)	(1,321)	429	
Board meetings	(1,355)	(1,113)	242	
Miscellaneous	(50)	-	50	
<b>Core projects:</b>				
601 Executive Committee	(150)	(116)	34	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(37,625)</b>	<b>(35,004)</b>	<b>2,621</b>	
<b>Central Budgets</b>				
Inflation at 2% on non staff costs	-			Absorbed in cash limited budgets
Increase in VAT rate	-			Absorbed in cash limited budgets
502 Project support budget	(2,960)	(5,171)	(2,211)	Applied to High Speed Two expenditure - excess from HS2 Reserve
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>(2,960)</b>	<b>(5,171)</b>	<b>(2,211)</b>	
<b>TOTAL CORE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(571,480)</b>	<b>(565,979)</b>	<b>5,501</b>	

<b>BUDGET 2011-12</b>				
<b>MONTH 12: MARCH 2012</b>				
<b>Description</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual to date</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
<b>Other expenditure</b>				
<b>Contribution to SE Protected Landscapes Co-ordinator</b>	<b>(2,000)</b>	<b>(2,458)</b>	<b>(458)</b>	
<b>Merchandise purchases</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Project expenditure:</b>				
<b>- Friends of Red Kites</b>	<b>(1,000)</b>	<b>(453)</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>Part met from reserve</b>
<b>- Conserving the Chilterns Chalk Streams</b>	<b>(37,865)</b>	<b>(36,790)</b>	<b>1,075</b>	<b>Additional Environment Agency Project</b>
<b>- EU Timber Project</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(4,500)</b>	<b>(4,500)</b>	<b>Met from reserve</b>
<b>- Sustainable Development Fund</b>	<b>(40,000)</b>	<b>(38,575)</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>Including SDF Panel allowances</b>
<b>- Ancient Woodland Survey</b>	<b>(18,000)</b>	<b>(42,353)</b>	<b>(24,353)</b>	<b>Part met from reserve and part from core budget 209</b>
<b>- Chilterns Commons Project</b>	<b>(78,835)</b>	<b>(45,237)</b>	<b>33,598</b>	
<b>- Commons non HLF</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,728)</b>	<b>(1,728)</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>(749,180)</b>	<b>(738,072)</b>	<b>11,107</b>	



Chilterns Conservation Board Executive Committee - 23/05/12

<b>BUDGET 2011-12</b>				
<b>MONTH 12: MARCH 2012</b>				
<b>Description</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual to date</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
<b>Income</b>				
Natural England: SDF	19,320	31,842	12,522	
Natural England: Chalk Streams	19,220	19,220	-	
Natural England: Core	465,305	452,783	(12,522)	Limited to 80% of core expenditure
Local Authorities	75,335	105,085	29,750	Greater than forecast grants
Merchandise sales	5,000	4,314	(686)	
Other earned income	29,655	39,542	9,887	
Red Kite donations	1,000	60	(940)	
Chalk Streams external income	18,645	63,357	44,712	Additional Environment Agency Project
Ancient Woodland Survey external income	18,000	20,188	2,188	
Chilterns Commons Project: HLF	53,130	46,106	(7,024)	
Chilterns Commons Project: other	25,705	26,995	1,290	£4,000 applied from core Commons budget
Commons non HLF	-	3,950	3,950	
<b>GRAND TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>730,315</b>	<b>813,442</b>	<b>83,127</b>	
<b>NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>(18,865)</b>	<b>75,370</b>	<b>94,235</b>	

<b>BUDGET 2011-12</b>				
<b>MONTH 12: MARCH 2012</b>				
<b>Description</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Actual to date</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
<b>RESERVE MOVEMENTS:</b>				
<b>Restricted Reserves:</b>				
- Red Kites Reserve	-	(393)	(393)	Donations not now being sought actively
- Red Kites Reserve		(411)	(411)	for tree climbing monitoring
<b>Earmarked Reserves:</b>				
- Budget Equalisation Reserve	(18,865)	(6,733)	12,132	to fund deficit on SDF
- Development Reserve	-	35,910	35,910	balance of surplus funds
- Woodland Research	-	(26,665)	(26,665)	for EU Timber Project match funding & Ancient Woodland Survey
- High Speed 2 Reserve	-	(2,211)	(2,211)	
- Chalk Streams Reserve	-	45,787	45,787	income received for special EA project but not yet spent
- Commons Project Reserve	-	30,086	30,086	match funding received but not yet spent
<b>TOTAL TRANSFERS TO / (FROM) RESERVES</b>	<b>(18,865)</b>	<b>75,370</b>	<b>94,235</b>	

Chilterns Conservation Board Executive Committee - 23/05/12

	Other Income		Budget	Actual	Variance
			for year	to date	
			£	£	£
12					
100.4900	Promotion & Awareness	Earned income	-	260	260
103	Countryside Festival	Income	4,510	9,769	5,259
106.4900	Annual Forum	Income	500	360	(140)
107.4004	Chalk & Trees	Advertising income	4,345	4,152	(193)
107.4901	Chalk & Trees	Electronic subscriptions	-	390	390
109.4900	Getting Close to Nature		1,000	2,781	1,781
108.4900	Environmental Education		-	1,350	1,350
113.4900	Historic Environment		-	42	42
203.4900	Commons		300	751	451
204.4001	Chalk Grassland		200	264	64
206.4900	State of the Environment Report		-	270	270
300.4900	Planning	Earned income	-	670	670
302.4900	Planning Conference		1,200	1,105	(95)
304.4003	Building Design Awards		500	750	250
400.4400	Recreation & Access	Advertising income	-	790	790
401.4900	Access Publication		2,500	695	(1,805)
402.4900	Access Conference		1,000	645	(355)
405.4400	Chilterns Cycleway	Advertising income	-	200	200
500.4008	Corporate	Investment income	7,000	9,448	2,448
500.4900	Unidentified income	Incl Penn Wood	6,600	2,526	(4,074)
	Parish Councils	Funding from Parish Councils	-	2,325	2,325
			29,655	39,542	9,887
	Merchandise sales				
	Promotion & Awareness			1,978	
	Planning			- 189	
	Cycleway guidebooks			2,525	
			5,000	4,314	(686)

## **Item 7      Report of Internal Auditors**

**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 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.

### **Conclusions**

2. The auditor conducted a high level review of important and current risks and concluded that an overall **Full Assurance** on effective management can be provided.
3. No recommendations were found to be necessary.
4. A copy of the report is attached.

### **Recommendation**

1. **Note and agree the report of the internal auditors.**

## **Internal Audit Report**

# **Chilterns Conservation Board**

**April 2012**

**Issued to:** The Chilterns Conservation Board

**Copied to:** Steve Rodrick – Chief Officer  
Chris Smith- Financial Officer  
Donna Hunter – Office Administrator

**Report Status:** V1. 02 – Private & Confidential

**Reference:** Z8050/11/002

**Overall Assurance:** Full

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

- 1.1 The County Council is actively involved in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CAONB) - designated in 1965 and covering parts of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire. Its role is to preserve, enhance and protect the countryside in the area.
- 1.2 The CAONB had operated until 2005 as a shadow Conservation Board overseen by a voluntary joint committee. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 enhanced the status of AONB's and provided for the setting up of recognised Conservation Boards.
- 1.3 The shadow body moved from Buckinghamshire County Council who had overseen it, to setting up its own accommodation, management and financial functions. In 2005, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) was asked to provide the Internal Audit function and to develop a strong financial control environment. Since that date HCC have reported on the robustness of the financial control environment annually upon its proper application annually since, at the request of the CAONB Board.
- 1.4 It has been agreed with the Board that the 2011/12 audit will be a high level overview dealing with current or important risks. Areas that have been given full assurance in recent years have not be audited again this year.
- 1.5 Current risks facing the CAONB in 2012 and beyond; the Birmingham rail link (HS2); the loss of many quangos' including Natural England which were the main funding vehicle; reductions in the grants received from various allied Councils and lack of investment income caused by the current financial status of the country.

### Overall Audit Opinion

- 1.6 The CAONB officers continue to provide a high level of support for the work of the CAONB Board. There are sound financial management and risk management procedures in place to support the various programmes of work. During the audit some the following suggestions were made to help support the achievement of the required efficiencies and savings. Smaller items such as cameras, 'phones, GPS etc. are 'self-insured' as none have been lost or damaged. This could reduce a high building & contents premium. Negotiations should continue with Defra regarding VAT registration.
- 1.7 Defra have reduced the grant by 5.2% for two years, and then they will review. CAONB have included a further 1% reduction when predicting their budget for years 3 & 4.
- 1.8 Local authorities are being predicted to make the same level of cuts in a worse case scenario figure for the budget. CAONB still have yet to hear from the various local authorities for 2012/13.
- 1.9 To try and make up some of this shortfall it was decided to approach the 117 Town & Parish councils in the area. Eighteen positively responded and provided an income of £2200 this year. Two more said they would give in the next financial year (2012-13). CAONB aim to have half of the councils involved in contributing by 2014/15.

1.10 CAONB have made real progress in engendering real commitment to budget responsibilities especially with Project Managers. They have taken on board the requirement to generate income where possible.

- All events must now be cost neutral, there are no more free lunches.
- The Countryside Festival was very well attended last summer and raised a surplus of £5k.
- Project profiles now include staff fees for talks, advice training etc.
- There is a bid on for Outreach work at a local nature reserve.
- Conferences must also break even on costs. They are professional events that count towards Continuing Professional Development (COD) so they are upping the charges for these events.
- The Commons project is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and they are not allowed to charge for any events on HLF projects.
- They have an online shop with is taking £250 per month and will hopefully increase in turnover and they will investigate linking the specialist books to Amazon to increase coverage.
- Currently there is no need to large print runs in order to obtain competitive prices. Therefore the stocks of leaflets have been reduced leading to lesser printing costs and storage space.
- Reductions have been sought and granted on the costs of the GIS software, use of OS maps, mobile telephones and Internal Audit.

1.11 Based on the work performed during this audit, we can provide overall **full assurance** that there are effective controls in operation for those elements of the risk management processes covered by this review, which are detailed in the Assurance by Risk Area Table in section 2 below.

1.12 For definitions of our assurance levels please see Appendix B.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

1.13 We are pleased to state that we wish to make no formal recommendations. The main recommendation in last year's audit regarding Budget Managers agreement to their responsibilities has been fully implemented.



## 2. ASSURANCE BY RISK AREA

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

<b>Risk Area</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Substantial</b>	<b>Full</b>
The decisions made by the Board, affecting the CAONB activities and projects are subject to risk management, scrutiny and are transparent.					
Budgets are controlled in accordance with Financial Regulations.					
There is proper treasury management of reserves, and other income.					
<b>Overall</b>					

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

<b>Levels of assurance</b>	
<b>Full Assurance</b>	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.
<b>Substantial Assurance</b>	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.
<b>Moderate Assurance</b>	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.
<b>Limited Assurance</b>	There are significant weaknesses in key control areas, which put the system objectives at risk.
<b>No Assurance</b>	Control is weak, leaving the system open to material error or abuse.

**Item 8      Medium Term Financial Plan 2012-2015**

**Author:**                                  Chris Smith                          Finance Officer  
   Steve Rodrick                        Chief Officer

**Summary**                                      The outline medium term plan for the period 2012-2015, as adopted at the last meeting, has been revised to reflect the provisional results for 2011-12.

**Purpose of Report:**                        To seek Committee approval for the update to the medium term financial plan for 2012-2015.

**Background**

1.      The Board's operating budget for 2011-2012 was prepared in the context of a four year medium term financial plan covering the period 2011-2015. One year on that medium term plan has been revised to reflect experience of 2011-2012, the budget for 2012-13, and anticipated changes to the operating environment for the next three financial years.
2.      The Board also decided to re-structure its reserves to create a Budget Equalisation Reserve intended to help balance the budget over the next three years.
3.      The Committee has approved a 1% pay award for 2012-13. The Plan reflects this and provides for the same award in 2013-14 and 2% in 2014-15.
4.      A paper presented to the Committee in March 2012 forecast a funding deficit of £118,000 by 2014-15 unless no action was taken. Options were presented that largely removed that deficit.
5.      The Plan has now been further updated to reflect the provisional results for 2011-12.
6.      These calculations do not affect the funding shortfall of £118,000 by 2014-15 if no further action is taken. However, reserve levels would increase by £22,000 by the end of 2014-15.
7.      The Plan is based on an assumed use of the ring fenced and earmarked reserves for the purposes they were intended for. The Development Reserve will be used to meet the cost of unforeseen project expenditure for which there will be no provision in the core budget.

**Recommendations:**

2. **To approve the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2012-2015 subject to changes above.**

Chilterns Conservation Board Executive Committee - 23/05/12

Item	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Notes
	£	£	£	£	
<b>Expenditure:</b>					
Core - staff employment costs	347,795	357,030	367,741	382,451	
Core - non staff costs	218,183	201,235	201,235	201,235	
Contribution to SE Landscapes Officer	2,458	3,000	3,000	3,000	
Chalk Streams Project	36,790	150,180	41,985	41,985	
SDF	38,575	40,000	40,000	40,000	
EU Timber Project	4,500				
Ancient Woodland Survey	42,353	15,620			
Commons Project	46,965	152,810	146,420	146,420	
Friends of Red Kites	453				
Merchandise purchases					
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>738,072</b>	<b>919,875</b>	<b>800,381</b>	<b>815,091</b>	<b>If no further action is taken</b>
<b>Income:</b>					
Defra Core	452,783	439,490			
Defra Chalk Streams	19,220	17,900			
Defra SDF	31,842	17,800			
<b>Defra Total Grant</b>	<b>503,845</b>	<b>475,190</b>	<b>449,530</b>	<b>418,096</b>	21.5% reduction excl. inflation
Local authorities	105,085	96,630	90,450	83,860	Addl 1% reduction from 13-14
Town and parish councils	2,325	3,000	3,000	3,000	
Chalk Streams external funding	63,357	85,095	15,103	13,466	35% reduction excl. inflation
Commons Project	77,051	122,725	146,420	146,420	
Ancient Woodland Survey	20,188	-			
Earned income, sales, donations	41,591	31,990	31,990	31,990	
<b>Total income</b>	<b>813,442</b>	<b>814,630</b>	<b>736,493</b>	<b>696,832</b>	<b>If no further action is taken</b>

Chilterns Conservation Board Executive Committee - 23/05/12

<b>Funding shortfall</b>	<b>- 75,370</b>	<b>105,245</b>	<b>63,888</b>	<b>118,259</b>	<b>If no further action is taken</b>
<b>Item</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	
<b>Options</b>					
Increase Earned Income	-	-	5,000	10,000	compared to 11-12
Reduction to SDF	-	-	5,000	15,000	compared to 11-12
Reduction of core non staff expenditure	-	-	5,000	10,000	compared to 11-12
Reduction in Chalk Streams Project expenditure	-	-	5,000	6,000	compared to 11-12
Reduction in members' allowance payments	-	-	750	1,000	compared to 11-12
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,750</b>	<b>42,000</b>	
<b>Use of Equalisation Reserve (- addition)</b>	<b>6,733</b>	<b>2,255</b>	<b>33,138</b>	<b>59,259</b>	
<b>Use of Earmarked / Restricted Reserves (- addition)</b>	<b>- 46,193</b>	<b>97,990</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>17,000</b>	
<b>Use of Development Reserve (- addition)</b>	<b>- 35,910</b>	<b>5,000</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>- 75,370</b>	<b>105,245</b>	<b>63,888</b>	<b>118,259</b>	
<b>Reserves</b>					
Brought forward	522,393	597,763	492,518	449,380	
Earmarked reserves	46,193	- 97,990	- 10,000	- 17,000	
Equalisation reserve	- 6,733	- 2,255	- 33,138	- 59,259	deficits taken from this reserve
Development reserve	35,910	- 5,000	-	-	surpluses added to this reserve
<b>Total</b>	<b>597,763</b>	<b>492,518</b>	<b>449,380</b>	<b>373,121</b>	
<b>Breakdown of Reserves</b>	<b>End of 11-12</b>	<b>End of 12-13</b>	<b>End of 13-14</b>	<b>End of 14-15</b>	
General	135,000	135,000	135,000	135,000	
Budget Equalisation	143,267	141,012	107,874	48,615	
Development	149,376	144,376	144,376	144,376	
Earmarked	146,339	48,349	38,349	21,349	
Restricted	23,781	23,781	23,781	23,781	
<b>Total</b>	<b>597,763</b>	<b>492,518</b>	<b>449,380</b>	<b>373,121</b>	



5. Whilst the CCB is not specifically listed as one of the public bodies in Schedule 19 of the Public Sector Equality Duty, it is determined to play its part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all through considering all individuals when carrying out its day to day work; shaping policy, delivering services and also in relation to its own employees. This is an on-going area in all aspects of our work.
6. The new employer duties under the Pension Auto enrolment are being implemented on a staged basis. The CCB's staging date is scheduled for between 1 June 2015 and 1 April 2017. Although all our employees are currently in the Pension Scheme, there are detailed requirements which CCB will have to follow. In summary these include that we will need to show that we have tested our Pension Scheme against the minimum requirements; we register with tPR; we have a system for keeping accurate records i.e. certain records will need to be kept for at least six years which can be produced if required by the Pension Regulator.

#### **Summary of Absences during 2011-2102**

7. The total number of sick days was 6.5 all were covered by self certification. This represents an absence rate of 0.33 %. A further 15 days were taken as compassionate leave.
8. The compares with 32.5 days last year which was an exceptionally high figure. The average over the period 2004 -2012 is 14.6 days.
9. There were no days when posts were vacant.

#### **Recommendations**

1. **To note that the Board's HR policies and procedures have been reviewed during the year and the necessary amendments made.**
2. **The CCB always aims to show that its decisions are being made in a fair, transparent and accountable way, and when introducing a new policy or practice, the equality impact will be part of the planning from the outset.**
3. **The requirements under the Pensions auto enrolment are monitored and when appropriate any necessary changes will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval.**
4. **To note the exceptionally low level of absences.**



## Item 10 Report on High Speed 2

**Author:** Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

**Summary:** This report brings the Committee up to date on current and anticipated activities related to High Speed 2. The main issues are the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment; the HS2 community forum meetings; the development of a mitigation programme and position statement; and the legal challenges. Currently no unplanned expenditure is envisaged.

**Purpose of Report:** To advise members of HS2 activities and to seek approval of the draft position statement on mitigation.

### Summary of Current Activity

#### Legal Challenges

1. It is known that at least five applications for a Judicial Review have been submitted. It is believed they will be heard in November, probably as a group.

Who	Grounds for Challenge
Bucks CC on behalf the 51M group of local authorities	1. Flawed consultation
HS2 Action Alliance	1. Non compliance with EU environmental legislation 2. Flawed consultation on compensation
Heathrow Hub Ltd	1. Failed to give weight to aviation strategy. (they believe the wrong route has been chosen)
Aylesbury Golf Club	It is not known what the grounds for the challenge are. The course will be cut in half as it lies across the route between Aylesbury and Hartwell House.

2. The Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) has submitted a formal complaint to the EU on the grounds of non compliance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations and the Habitats and Species Directives.

#### Scoping Report on the draft Environmental Impact Assessment

3. As previously reported the Government believes that HS2 need not be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment, but only a more limited Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of its current proposal. The purpose of this assessment is to identify likely significant

environmental impacts and show how it intends to respond, if at all, to those impacts. Following the EIA, these findings and proposed responses are incorporated in an Environmental Statement which is subject to public consultation.

4. The first stage in this process is to publish, for consultation, a draft report on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment which must include identification of the measures by which impact will be assessed and the methodologies for identifying and assessing impacts. That report was published on 27<sup>th</sup> March and the closing date for comments is 30<sup>th</sup> May. It is essential the Board submits comments and staff are currently preparing a response. Many local groups, which do not have sufficient technical capacity, have requested an early sight of the Board's submission in order to prepare their own comments.
5. At the time of writing a number of critical deficiencies have been identified. It may be coincidence, but HS2 Ltd has not convened any community forum meetings during the period of public consultation on the EIA scoping report.
6. The Board was not listed by HS2 Ltd as a formal consultee. A formal letter correcting their misunderstanding on the Board's status is being sent to the Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd.
7. HS2 Ltd have begin field survey work for the EIA but it is known that several land owners in the Chilterns have denied access to their surveyors.
8. It is believed that HS2 Ltd intend to publish the draft Environmental Statement, based on the EIA, in spring next year, but have allowed very little time to adjust the project design in light of feedback from the public. There is a widespread belief that an EIA for a project of this size cannot be undertaken satisfactorily in such a short space of time.
9. It has reinforced the view that environmental considerations are not being given full weight. For example, the impact on the biodiversity was not given any value in the formal HS2 Value for Money study - contrary to Government policy. In a recent letter to Cheryl Gillan MP, the Secretary of State for Transport claimed that one form of mitigation on ancient woodland in the Chilterns was to move it. For the avoidance of doubt, this is not possible.

### **Community Forum Meetings**

10. As reported to the Board in March, HS2 Ltd had convened meetings of the Community Forums to cover Chalfont to Amersham and South Heath to Wendover. The county council had boycotted the meetings until their summit had been held on 19<sup>th</sup> April. Neither meeting was considered particularly constructive and some might call them ill tempered. A number of improvements have been suggested such as

broadening the range of groups involved, allowing in the press, appointing an independent chairman and formally minuting the meeting.

11. Following an approach by some members of the Wendover forum HS2 Ltd has since changed the area to be covered by each of the two Chilterns forums. One will now cover Chalfont to South Heath and the other Wendover, Dunsmore and Halton. This has caused some local friction.
12. HS2 Ltd is being asked to treat the boundaries as blurred and to allow members of adjacent forums to attend their neighbours' meetings. It has also been agreed that it would be useful to agree a list of generic technical issues for all forums to cover, which should be generally be discussed without HS2 present in order to ensure more orderly meetings with a greater degree of agreement on the main points.
13. The Board should continue to attend both forums and to convene the wider Chilterns group which provides a means of discussing pan Chilterns issues.
14. It is the intention of Bucks CC to convene a Bucks wide group to which the Board will be invited.
15. The Board has been informed by HS2 Ltd that it will be invited to the Planning Forum for Bucks and Herts, but no information been provided subsequently nor any date when it is proposed to meet. It has undermined confidence that this group will be engaged fully HS2 Ltd.
16. The Environment Forum will only comprise government departments and agencies. This been met by widespread condemnation.
17. The Board is working with partners to ensure that the external challenge group to set up by HS2 Ltd in early 2010 to monitor the effectiveness of its community engagement does its job properly. To date it has only met three times and only once since January 2011.
18. On 19<sup>th</sup> April the Board took part in the HS2 summit organised by Bucks CC. The principal objective was to organise more effectively participation in the community forum meetings and to begin the preparation of a mitigation plan - Plan B - in case Parliament actually gives the go ahead.

### **The Business Case for HS2**

19. Last month HS2 Ltd admitted it had made a mistake which meant that the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) had to be down graded from 1.4 to 1.2. It is notable than in 2010 it was claiming a BCR of 2.4.

20. Normally such a poor BCR would lead to the project being cancelled. The Government subsequently started to claim that the business case was only one element of the argument for HS2.
21. It emerged, under questioning, of a Cabinet Office official at a hearing of the Public Accounts Committee, that the Major Projects Authority (set up by the Cabinet office to assess major projects) had assessed High Speed recently and rated it as Amber/Red. In their words:  
  
‘The successful delivery of the project is in doubt, with major risks or issues apparent in a number of key areas. Urgent action is needed to ensure these are addressed, and whether resolution is feasible.’
22. Their assessment of the Major Projects Authority will not be released for 2 years. Local MPs are helping to secure its release as soon as possible.
23. In light of the poor performance of High Speed 1 against not only the initial forecasts (less than 35% of demand forecast) and the recent forecasts (18% lower than the forecast of only 2008) the Public Accounts Committee was scathing about the Department for Transport’s poor track record on demand forecasting.

### **Mitigation**

24. The Board’s staff have been preparing an initial assessment of the possible impacts of the proposed alignment and design, although little information has been released on the latter. It is one of the major concerns about the EIA, that so little information has been released about its design, that it is hard to know what the impact might be and the best mitigation. (n.b all such assessments should begin with avoidance of adverse impacts). Mitigation does not include avoidance, only reduction of impact.
25. An area of considerable effort is the development of a proposal for a fully bored tunnel for the entire length under the Chilterns. A tunnel group has been set up, including Ray Payne, which has made considerable progress in developing a small number of options which would comply with all the necessary legalisation and safety requirements, reduce significantly the environmental impacts and could be constructed within a realistic timeframe and a budget very close to (ideally the same as or less) than that in place.
26. The issue of mitigation is very sensitive and must be placed in a hierarchical policy context so that there can be no confusion on the Board’s position towards High Speed 2. The following is proposed as the Board’s position statement on mitigation:

**Draft Position on Statement on Mitigation – Plan B**

1. The Board does not accept the case for High Speed 2 as currently presented. It does not believe that an adequate economic, social or environmental case has been presented to justify the economic and environmental costs.
2. The Board believes, as it stated in its consultation response in July 2011 and its evidence to the Transport Select Committee in September, any proposal for a high speed rail network must be in the context of a national strategy for transport infrastructure. Further, it must be complemented by a strategy to reduce the need to travel.
3. Consequently the Board opposes the building of High Speed 2.
4. The Board believes that any decision to support the building of a High Speed Railway should only take place following a strategic assessment of the environmental impacts of range of options, which have been subject to full scrutiny and public consultation.
5. Such an assessment must give full weight to any impacts on nationally protected heritage including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. That must give highest weighting to options which avoid AONBs.
6. If, after all the above conditions have been satisfied, high speed rail is still deemed to be in the national interest and the route cannot avoid the Chilterns AONB then the alignment and design which minimises adverse impacts should be chosen.
7. The Board's preferred mitigation option, so called Plan B, is a fully bored tunnel from east of the M25 to north of Wendover, with no permanent surface access other than via ventilation shafts, and no significant disposal of spoil or change to the natural topography. In so doing the visible and audible disturbance during and after construction must be minimised.
8. Any visible structure, including associated infrastructure such as access roads, be designed to the highest possible standard for its specific setting.
9. The specification of any aspect of design must accord with the best international practices further evolved in light of the long life of HS2 - so called "future proofing".
10. The costs must give full weight to the environmental, economic and social benefits of a tunnel compared to a surface route.

**Recommendations**

- 1. The Board should continue to attend local community forum meetings.**
- 2. The Board should accept the invitation to participate in the Planning Forum.**
- 3. The Board should seek a close working relationship with those bodies represented on the national Environment Forum, if full membership is not offered.**
- 4. The Committee endorses the draft Position Statement on Mitigation**

**Item 11**                      **Report on the Review of the  
AONB Management Plan**

**Author:**                      Steve Rodrick                      Chief Officer  
   Colin White                         Planning Officer

**Summary:**                      The Board has a statutory duty to publish and review the management plan for the AONB every five years. The current plan runs until 2013 and a new plan should be in place by early 2014. It is estimated the total cost will be up to £12,000 which should be met from the Development Reserve rather than the operating, core budget.

**Purpose of the Report:**      To seek committee approval for the programme for reviewing the AONB Management Plan.

**Background**

1.      Following the paper presented to, and considered by, the Board at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March (appendix1). This report provides further detail on the required commitment of resources and the timetable.
2.      Although new guidance is anticipated by Natural England and DEFRA on reviewing AONB Management Plans, it has yet to be published so it has been assumed, supported by informal advice from DEFRA, that the process to be followed is the same as for the current plan. This is particularly notable for the requirement to comply with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) regulations which, whilst onerous, give the Plan standing.
3.      A significant proportion of the cost of preparing the previous plan was the employment of a consultant to prepare the SEA. It is believed that a significant proportion of the current SEA can be re-used as the scale of change has not been significant to render it redundant. For this reason it is proposed to undertake that element in-house and only to engage a consultant if the process subsequently proves more complex or onerous than expected. For this reason it is not proposed to allocate a cost at this stage to employ a consultant.
4.      Previously a second area involving significant costs was the production of relatively large number of printed draft and final plans. It is proposed to significantly reduce the number of printed plans and to rely to a great extent on the availability of electronic formats.
5.      A final and, potentially, significant cost saving measure will be to use the web site and social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.) as major components of the public consultation process. Whilst this will not substitute entirely for workshops and public meetings it will enable the Board to reach many more people and more cost effectively.

## **Timetable**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Planning the review	April - June 2012
In-house review + partners	June - Dec 2012
Prepare draft SEA Scoping Report	Jan - March 2013
Formal draft SEA Scoping Report issued for consultation	March -May 2013 (6 weeks)
Preparation of draft Management Plan and draft Environmental Statement	By October 2013
Consultation on draft Management Plan and draft Environmental Statement	Nov – Jan 2014 (12 weeks)
Review of consultation feedback	By end of Feb 2014
Publish Review of Management Plan	April 2014

SEA: Strategic Environmental Assessment

## **Costs**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Printing and publication of draft EIA Scoping report	£2,000
Printing and publication of draft Management Plan and draft Environmental Statement	£4,000
Printing and Publication of final Review of AONB Management Plan	£5,000
Contingency	£1,000
Provision of technical support	Up to £5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£17,000</b>

6. Nearly all costs will fall in 2013-14.

## **Conclusion**

7. This timetable and estimate of costs is considered to be realistic, based on the presumptions that the guidance issued by DEFRA/Natural England will not significantly alter the process or technical requirements on content etc. It also assumes that much of the SEA prepared for the current plan can be re-used, to the extent that the process can largely be undertaken by the Board's staff, without the need for external consultancy assistance. It also assumes considerable use of electronic media and that relatively small numbers of printed documents will be provided. n.b but printed versions will be available.

## **Recommendations**

1. **To approve the proposed approach to reviewing the AONB management plan and programme for its publication.**
2. **To approve expenditure of up to £12,000 to be met from the Development Reserve.**



Paper presented to and approved by the Board on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012

**Item 17     Review of the Chilterns AONB Management plan**

**Author:**                             Steve Rodrick             Chief officer

**Summary:**                             The Board has a duty to publish and review the management plan for the AONB on a five year cycle. The current plan runs from 2008- 2013 and a reviewed plan needs to be published by early 2014. The process can take up to 2 years and, based on the current plan, costs approx. £20,000. It is likely that the Board will need to include policies on a possible review of the boundary.

**Purpose of Report:**                     To inform the Committee that the process of reviewing the current plan must begin in 2012 but the cost implications are not yet known.

**Background**

1.     In 2004 the statutory duty to prepare a Management Plan for the Chilterns AONB was transferred from the local authorities to the Board. The first plan published by the Board was in 2008 which covers the five year period to 2013. It is a statutory duty to review the plan every five years. The next plan should be published in early 2014.
2.     Because the management plan is a statutory plan it is covered by the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment regulations, which are thorough and, can be a, time consuming process. It is understood that the full process has to be complied with for a review as well as the initial plan. For the current plan the full SEA cost £15,000, however, it is believed that much of that assessment is still relevant and up to date so significant time and costs savings could be made.
3.     The last plan was undertaken in accordance with guidance issued by the Countryside Agency. The result was a time consuming and relatively expensive process. Representations were made to DEFRA that the process should be made more cost effective and less time consuming. There was sympathy for this approach but no revised guidance has been issued, so the Board needs to comply with the current legislation and guidance. However, revised guidance can be anticipated within the next 12 months.
4.     At this stage the Committee is being informed that the process will begin shortly using the same methodology as previously There will be a cost implication but it is not possible at this stage to be precise

because, as mentioned, much of the previous work could be used and there may be no need to employ an external consultant as with the 2008-2013 plan.

5. During the process there will be public consultation on both the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the draft plan itself. With electronic media the costs of this process can be significantly reduced and once again it is not possible to be precise on the actual cost. For this reason no specific allocation has yet been made in the budget.
6. The programme for undertaking the review is in preparation. It is likely any costs to be incurred in 2012-2013 can be accommodated within the core budget, but there may be a need for a use of the Development Reserve. The approval of the Executive Committee will be sought if, and when, that stage is reached.
7. As with the current plan, as far as possible, the Board will use existing technical groups to help undertake the review limiting the need to convene special groups just for the purpose of working on the plan. However, it is likely that at each meeting of the full Board from June 2012 onwards there will be an item on the agenda, giving all Board members a regular opportunity to make an input.

#### **Review of the AONB Boundary**

8. The legal powers 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 consultation. The views of the Board would be integral to the process.
9. In view of the decision by Natural England to lift the moratorium on reviewing the boundaries of AONBs, the issue of whether or not to seek a review of all or part of the Chilterns AONB boundary would need to be addressed in the 2014-2019 Management plan. It would also need to be covered by the public consultation the Board needs to undertake in order to prepare the review of the Management Plan.

#### **Recommendations**

1. **To note that the process of reviewing the 2008-2013 Management Plan for the AONB will begin in April 2012 with an anticipated publication date in spring 2014.**
2. **A detailed and costed programme will be presented to the Executive Committee in May and full Board in June.**

## **Item 12                      Report on Traditional Farmsteads Project**

**Author:**                      Colin White                      Planning Officer  
   Barbara Wallis                      Board Member

**Summary:**                      The Board has authorised a bid to the HLF for funding for a project to survey Chilterns traditional farmsteads. The Board's commitment will be officer and member time and up to £5,000 p.a. from the Development Reserve. The project should be delivered within three years of its start.

**Purpose of the Report:**      To advise the Committee about and to seek its approval for the resource commitment and timetable involved in submitting and managing an HLF project to survey Chilterns Traditional Farmsteads.

### **Background**

1.      The aim of this project is to identify and survey the traditional farm buildings of the Chilterns. Whilst many farm buildings are known to be of historical and architectural interest most are not formally listed so little is known about them. Indeed many have not even been identified. These types of buildings are under pressure as they are often redundant as they are no longer suitable for modern farming or are being converted often with considerable additions. It is important that the more is known both this part of our heritage and better guidance prepared to ensure they are properly conserved and, where, appropriate, sensitively converted or developed
2.      Following the paper approved by the Board at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March (Appendix 1), this report provides further detail on the required commitment of resources and the timetable for the HLF project.
3.      This project will help to deliver several policies and strategic actions identified in the AONB Management Plan, particularly those to do with the Historic Environment and Planning and Development.
4.      The main outputs of this project will be:
  - a.      An database on traditional farm buildings
  - b.      Published guidance on sensitive conservation and conversion
  - c.      Trained volunteers
  - d.      Training programme for planners, architects and developers

### **Resources**

4. The proposed bid to HLF for this project will seek funding of £75,000 principally for the recruitment and employment of a part-time project officer. The project officer would be in post for three years.
5. The Board's main resource commitment would be time (Planning Officer and up to two Board Members) and expenses associated with training days (possibly 3 at the start of the project), regular Steering Group meetings (about 4 half-days a year) and management of the project and its officer (which would equate to about £1,000 p.a.).
6. It is anticipated that funding will also be required and that this is likely to be of the order of £5,000 p.a. for three years from late 2012 and it is proposed that this be drawn from the Development Reserve.
7. A significant element of the matched funding will be volunteer time. For skilled work this is £150 per day and for professional work £350 per day. The project will involve the training of volunteers to survey traditional farm buildings and analyse the information. It is anticipated that the value of this volunteer time will be approx. £75,000

### **Timetable**

8. It is anticipated that the application to the HLF will be submitted by late summer with the aim of starting the project, if the grant application is successful, before the end of 2012. Recruitment of the project officer will take place at the end of 2012 with a view to them being in place early in 2013.
9. Training days will quickly follow in spring 2013 with survey work being undertaken over the following 18 months. Analysis, interpretation and dissemination of the information will be undertaken from the start of the project, though is likely to be concentrated in the year from January 2015 to the end of the project (end of 2015).

### **Management**

10. The project will be managed on a day to day basis by the Planning Officer and overseen by a steering group comprising two members of the Board, local authority conservation officers, The Chiltern Society with the support of English Heritage.

### **Recommendation**

3. **That the Committee approves the Board's resource commitment and timetable as detailed in the report.**



5. The project would involve a significant number of activities including the following:
  - a. Collation of existing data
  - b. Training of volunteers
  - c. Liaison with owners and other interested parties
  - d. Survey of buildings and recording of information
  - e. Preparation of condition reports with recommendations and statements of significance
  - f. Publication of accessible online archives
  - g. Promotion and dissemination of information
  - h. Engagement with local communities including the farming community
  - i. Increase the use of the Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation report
  - j. Walks and talks
  - k. Recruitment of a part-time project officer
6. To encourage involvement by owners the information on individual buildings would not be published without their agreement nor used to formally list a building.
7. The project is likely to last for 3 years and a bid would be made for £75,000. The main cost to the Board will be in officer time. It may be that the Board will be required to provide a small amount of cash match funding (less than £5,000 p.a.), which could be allocated from the Development Reserve. A costed proposal will be considered by the Executive Committee in May. It is hoped to submit a full application during the summer with the aim of starting the project, if the grant application is successful, before the end of 2012.

### **Recommendation**

1. **That the Board provides feedback on this proposal and authorises a bid to be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund**

**Item 13**                      **Proposed new publication – People and Places**

**Author:**                      Claire Forrest                      Information Officer

**Summary:**                      The HLF-funded People and Places of the Chiltern Hills project created a large number of profiles of famous people which would make an attractive publication to be sold to the public. The production of the booklet would require an investment of up to £5,000 from the Development Reserve. It would generate income over the next 5 years to pay back that investment and generate a surplus.

**Purpose of the Report:**      To seek approval to draw down up to £5,000 from the Development Reserve to publish a “People and Places of the Chilterns” booklet.

**Background**

1.      In 2007 the Board secured funding of £13,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run the People and Places of the Chiltern Hills Project. The Project ran from April 2007 to March 2009 and The Chiltern Society was a key partner.
2.      The aim of the Project was to highlight the Chilterns’ wealth of associations with famous authors, artists, politicians, royalty and historic figures and publicise places connected with them which can be visited.
3.      Over 30 volunteers contributed to the project by researching and preparing over 60 profiles of famous figures and historic features. This information was put on a special section of the website ([www.chilternsaonb.org/people-and-history](http://www.chilternsaonb.org/people-and-history)). Since its launch in 2008 this section has been one of the most popular parts of the site and has attracted over 66,000 page views.

**Booklet**

4.      The information and resources that were collected for the People and Places project, including written profiles, images, details of attractions to visit and references to further information, lend themselves very well to a printed publication.
5.      The public has a strong interest in the lives of famous people and an attractively-produced, full colour publication with a good balance of text and images would be popular with local residents and visitors. Such a publication would fully support the Board’s aim of promoting understanding and enjoyment of the Chilterns AONB. It would also

generate revenue for the Board once the costs of production were covered.

6. It is envisaged the most appropriate format for such a publication would be similar to the Red Kites in the Chilterns booklet, i.e. an A5 stapled booklet with glossy cover and approximately 48 pages. This format is inexpensive to produce, is easy for outlets to stock and can be priced competitively.
7. The Red Kites booklet has been selling at an average of 1,000 copies per year for the last 7 years with approximately one third sold direct to the public and two thirds sold to trade outlets.
8. Examples of people that could be included in the booklet are Rupert Brooke, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Enid Blyton, Charles de Gaulle, John Mills, William Penn, Dusty Springfield, John Bunyan. As with the online People and Places information, only people that are dead would be included.

### **Costs and income**

9. The costs of producing the booklet would comprise graphic design, printing and marketing. The total cost depends on the number produced, with the per unit cost decreasing as the print run is increased. There would also be a resource commitment in terms of staff time in producing and marketing it.
10. Distribution costs (postage and packing) would be re-couped from the purchaser on top of the price of the booklet.

<b>No. booklets produced</b>	<b>Design, print and marketing costs</b>	<b>Total gross income over 5 years</b>	<b>Total net income over 5 years</b>
5,000	£3,185 (unit cost 64p)	£18,250*	£15,065 (£3.00 net profit per unit)

\*Assumes 33% sold at £4.99 (retail) and 67% sold at £2.99 (trade)

11. There are likely to be other, small, unknown costs which is why a total draw down of up to £5,000 is requested.
12. The main risk in investing in this publication is that stock remains at the end of 5 years. Such remaining stock would be in danger of deterioration and becoming out of date, leaving the Board with little option but to sell it at a large discount, which would reduce the total net income.
13. An initial print run of 5,000 is suggested to minimise the risk of stock remaining at the end of its 5 year lifespan. If the publication proves very popular and sells quickly a re-print of 5,000 would cost around



£2200 (per unit cost of 44p) which would be taken out of the gross income.

14. If the publication sells steadily and finds an interested market a sum of around £3000 should be set aside from the gross income to cover the costs of updating it and printing another 5,000 copies as the first stocks run out.

### **Conclusion**

15. An investment from the Board in the production of a People and Places of the Chiltern Hills booklet could produce a net income of at least £15,000 over the next 5 years

### **Recommendation**

4. **That the Committee approves the Board's resource commitment to this publication as detailed in the report.**