



Planning Committee

10.00 a.m. Wednesday 5th September 2012
The Chilterns Conservation Board office,
90 Station Road, Chinnor

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Public Question Time
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting
5. Matters Arising
6. High Speed 2 – update
7. AONB Management Plan Review
8. Feedback from events – Planning Forum, Design Awards and Planning Training for Parish and Town Councils
9. Planning Conference 2012
10. Student research project report (internet land sales)
11. Luton development issues
12. Development Plans Responses
13. Planning Applications – update
14. Any Urgent Business
15. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 28th November 2012 at The Chilterns Conservation Board office, 90 Station Road, Chinnor, OX39 4HA

Future meetings – **6th March, 22nd May and 11th September 2013**

Item 4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisations: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Budget of £520 per year for minute-taker plus staff time

Summary: Minutes of the previous meeting are attached (at Appendix 1) and need approving.

Purpose of report: To approve the Minutes of the previous meeting.

Background

1. The draft minutes from the meeting on 16th May 2012 have been previously circulated and are attached (at Appendix 1) for approval.

Recommendation

1. **That the Committee approves the minutes of its meeting which took place on 16th May 2012.**



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th MAY 2012 AT THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD OFFICE, STATION ROAD, CHINNOR, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.40 PM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Member

Appointing Body

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr Roger Emmett

Wycombe District Council

Cllr Brian Norman

Three Rivers District Council

Cllr Chris Richards

Aylesbury Vale District Council

Appointed by the Secretary of State

Mike Fox

(Chairman of the Board, observing)

Bettina Kirkham (Chairman)

John Willson

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr Margaret Jarrett

Hertfordshire Parish Councils

Cllr Barbara Wallis

Buckinghamshire Parish Councils

OTHERS PRESENT

Co-opted Members

Gill Gowing

Strategic Planning Adviser to The Chiltern Society

Mike Stubbs

The National Trust

Officers

Colin White

Chilterns Conservation Board

Others

Deirdre Hansen

Minute taker

31. Apologies

Cllr David Barnard, North Herts District Council and Cllr Bill Storey,
Hertfordshire County Council

32. Public Question Time

No members of the public were present.

33. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest in items on the agenda were made.

34. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

35. Matters Arising from the minutes

1. Item 21: a new contract for the minute taker has been arranged.
2. Item 27: a sub-group had been set up to look at the Luton Northern Bypass (M1 to A6). A site meeting had been postponed due to thick fog. The sub-group will meet soon and the Planning Officer will circulate some suggested dates.
3. Item 20: the representation by the members appointed by the Secretary of State is due to be sent out in the next week.
4. Item 24: the Grand Union Canal is being kept open by closing all its arms.

36. High Speed 2 – update

The Planning Officer reported details as far as possible on the five judicial reviews that have been submitted, a complaint by the Wildlife Trusts submitted to the EC, the first Community Forums held, the summit called by BCC, the EIA Scope and Methodology report published for comment and the wider HS2 group meetings.

The Board is an interested party in connection with the judicial reviews and the complaint to the EC.

HS2 is also organising Planning and Environment Forums. The Board has asked to be present at both, though has heard nothing in reply.

The BCC summit on 19th April discussed both mitigation and compensation, although the emphasis was on mitigation. The Committee briefly discussed the possible changes to the format and constituent members of the Community Forums in the AONB. Mitigation measures were also mentioned with some discussion taking place about tunnel issues. These are likely to be resolved shortly.

The summit coincided with the publication by HS2 of the EIA Scope and

Methodology report. The consultation finishes on 30th May. The officers of the Board have subdivided the report and a draft response will be circulated shortly in order to help local groups and others input into the process.

1. The Committee NOTED the report.

37. AONB Planning Forum

The Planning Officer updated the Committee on the visits made with the Chairman to the Chilterns local authorities in connection with the AONB Planning Forum. 10 local authorities had been visited, two more will be visited before the end of June, with one date remaining to be organised.

The visits have provided an excellent opportunity for exchange of views and examining ways forward.

Topics for the Forum were discussed and explored. It is clear that future agendas for the Forum need to be focussed and not too many topics should be covered. It is accepted that the forum meetings are important and the authorities all agreed to send officers and members when available to do so.

One issue that was the subject of some discussion was in connection with the types of planning application that the Board wished to be consulted on. The Committee felt that this should be dealt with as part of a report to its next meeting.

The next Planning Forum will be held Tuesday 22nd May at Watling House (Central Beds Council Offices) Dunstable, commencing at 10.00 and finishing at 13.00.

1. The Committee NOTED the report.

2. The Committee AGREED, on completion of the visits being made by the Chairman and Planning Officer, that the notes should be circulated.

3. The Committee NOTED the arrangements for the next Planning Forum.

4. The Committee AGREED that it should receive a report at its next meeting specifying the types of planning applications that the Board would and would not wish to comment on.

38. Planning Training for Parish and Town Councils

The Planning Officer reported that three planning training sessions for parish and town councils had been organised, promoted and bookings are being taken. Members were asked to continue promotion where possible to ensure good uptake.

A £15 charge is being made to cover costs. Those town and parish councils that have made a financial contribution to the Board's work are being offered a second place free of charge.

The training will be led by the Planning Officer and Mike Stubbs. Local

authority Planning Officers and representatives of communities involved in Neighbourhood Planning will also be involved. The events will include information about recent planning reforms.

Board members have agreed to welcome people to the events and to give an introduction to each of the events.

1. **The Committee NOTED the updated details for the parish and town council training events.**
2. **The Committee AGREED to promote the events as widely as possible.**

39. Chilterns Buildings Design Awards

The Planning Officer highlighted the changes that had recently been made to the Design Awards scheme in order to refresh it.

The Judges had recently made their visits to a short list of entries and agreed on a number of winners which will be announced at the Awards Ceremony on 14th June at Restore Hope Latimer, Latimer Park. The arrangements for the ceremony were noted and various Members asked to be added to the list of attendees.

1. **The Committee NOTED the arrangements for the Design Awards ceremony.**
2. **The Committee AGREED to inform the Planning Officer if they wished to attend.**

40. Proposed student research project – implications of internet land sales

The Planning Officer gave a verbal update and informed the Committee that the student research project to investigate the implications of internet land sales had been undertaken and is in the process of being written up. Once the written version has been received it will be available for the Committee to view. The key conclusions will be reported at a later meeting. The Committee discussed suggesting future research topics.

1. **The Committee NOTED the current position in connection with the proposed student research project.**
2. **The Committee AGREED to put forward ideas for future research projects.**

41. Development Plans Responses

The Planning Officer informed the Committee that responses had been sent in connection with the following development plan documents: **Bucks Rural Affairs Group** Rural Strategy Issues Paper; **DCMS** relaxing the restrictions on the deployment of overhead telecommunications lines; **Three Rivers DC** Development Management Policies Pre-Submission Consultation; **South Oxfordshire DC** Core Strategy Main Modifications; **Central Beds Council**

Development Strategy Issues and Options; **North Herts DC** Core Strategy New Housing Growth Targets; **London Luton Airport Limited** (owner) Luton Airport expansion proposals; **Great Missenden Parish Council** Village Design Statement; **London Luton Airport Operations Limited** (operator) Luton Airport expansion proposals; **South Oxfordshire DC** Core Strategy comments following publication of NPPF.

All responses were made under delegated powers.

The Planning Officer had circulated the reports on the above Development Plans. He was thanked by the Chairman for all his hard work on the above Development Plans.

- 1. The Committee NOTED and APPROVED the responses already made on behalf of the Board in connection with the consultation exercise on the development plan documents as detailed above.**

42. Planning Applications Update

The Planning Officer informed the Committee about the various representations that had been made in connection with planning applications, and updated the Committee on any outcomes.

Last year the Board was consulted on 171 planning applications and had made 36 formal representations (33 objections and 3 supports).

This year the Board has been consulted on 16 applications and has made 3 formal representations (all objections).

The details of the formal representations were presented to the Committee and updates were provided where known.

- 1. The Committee NOTED and APPROVED the responses made in connection with the applications listed.**

43. Any Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

44. Date of the next meeting

Wednesday 5th September 2012 at the office of the Chilterns Conservation Board, 90 Station Rd, Chinnor commencing at 10.00 am.

Future meetings: 28th November 2012, 6th March and 22nd May 2013.

The meeting closed 12.40

The Chairman

Date

Item 6 High Speed 2 update

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisation: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Staff time.

Summary: Progress has been made with the judicial reviews, Community Forums have been held, a response was submitted on the EIA Scope and Methodology report, the Board has had a bi-lateral meeting with HS2 and others, the Buckinghamshire Mitigation and Compensation Panel and the wider HS2 group continue to meet.

Purpose of report: To update the Committee about the latest developments in connection with a possible high speed rail route through the Chilterns.

Background

1. It is understood that the five judicial reviews will be heard over about a week starting on 3rd December. Limits have been placed on the claimant's costs.
2. The second round of Community Forums have been held in the Chilterns. These were once again attended by a large number of people from a variety of different organisations. The meeting in Wendover failed to deal with any substantive issues though it was resolved that a series of eight standard items (suggested by the Board and others) would form part of each agenda. The next Community Forum in Wendover will discuss noise and rights of way issues and it is understood that HS2 will be publishing a Code of Construction Practice that will also be on the agenda.
3. HS2 has also been organising Planning Forums. These have not taken place in Buckinghamshire thus far, though when they do the Board should be represented. The Environment Forum (a national forum) has not yet met. Though the Board asked to be present at this forum it is understood that we will not be invited.
4. The EIA Scope and Methodology report was the subject of public consultation in May. The Board prepared and submitted a response which was widely circulated to local groups and others.
5. The Board had been consulted on a series of proposed viewpoints associated with the production of a landscape and visual assessment as part of the forthcoming environmental statement. The information that had been provided was very poor quality and would not allow the Board to prepare a proper response. Representatives of the Board, National Trust and Natural England met HS2 and consultants in a bi-lateral meeting to discuss issues in connection with the viewpoints. The Board is to be provided with further, more useful, information to enable a response to be prepared.
6. The Buckinghamshire Mitigation and Compensation Panel and the wider Chilterns group continue to meet and provide an opportunity to discuss relevant issues. The most recent meetings of the wider Chilterns Group have been well attended.

7. Any change in the situation will be reported to the Committee in the future.

Recommendation

1. That the Committee notes the report.

Item 7 AONB Management Plan Review

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisation: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Staff time.

Summary: The current AONB Management Plan runs from 2008 to 2013. A review of the Plan has commenced and some key contextual issues have been identified. The Committee is asked to review relevant sections and to note the programme.

Purpose of report: To seek the Committee's views on the contextual issues that have been identified for the AONB Management Plan review and to inform the Committee about the programme for the review.

Background

1. The current AONB Management Plan was adopted in 2008 and runs from then until the end of 2013. Based on past experience it is necessary to start the review of the Plan well in advance of the proposed adoption date (2014). The Board's staff met in August to discuss the context for the review and the likely timetable.
2. Some key issues have arisen since the adoption of the 2008-13 Management Plan including the following which have particular relevance to the Planning Committee:
 - the possibility of boundary changes
 - large developments taking place in the setting of the AONB
 - issues being considered on a landscape or catchment scale
 - consideration of natural capital and ecosystem services
 - the implications of the Big Society, Localism and neighbourhood planning
 - economic regeneration
 - biodiversity and other offsetting
 - water use, cost and availability
 - health and well-being
 - noise and tranquillity
 - information and communication
 - climate change
3. It will be necessary to address these issues (as well as others not identified here) as part of the review. To start the process off the Committee is asked to review the extracts from the Management Plan included at Appendix 2 in order to clarify if these are still relevant or not and to suggest any additions or changes that should be investigated. For the Development section key matters will be: developments affecting the setting of the AONB (reference will be made to the Board's position

statement), the key changes to the planning system, offsetting, noise and tranquillity and the implications of any boundary changes.

4. The Board has started to investigate the current AONB boundary with a view to making recommendations in the Management Plan about possible amendments. Some larger areas are the subject of initial investigations and include the following: to the south of the M40 north of Slough; to the south of the River Thames between Cookham and Henley-on-Thames; to the south of the A505 towards Whitwell; around Totternhoe and south of the A41 between Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead and Sarratt. No doubt other, smaller, areas will be considered at a future date.
5. The programme for production of the Management Plan will involve the following key tasks:
 - Preparation of a draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report (January to March 2013). A lot of effort went into this matter for the current Plan and it is unlikely that this will need anything more than a light touch.
 - Formal draft SEA Scoping Report will be issued for consultation (March to May 2013 for 6 weeks).
 - Preparation of draft Management Plan and draft Environmental Statement (by October 2013).
 - Consultation on draft Management Plan and draft Environmental Statement (from November 2013 to January 2014 for 12 weeks).
 - Review of consultation feedback (by end of February 2014).
 - Adopt and publish the reviewed Management Plan (April 2014).
6. Progress with the review will be reported to subsequent meetings of the Planning Committee and Members are asked to input as and when required. The next few months will involve some intensive work in order that feedback can be given to influence the content of the SEA, Environmental Statement and the Management Plan itself. Officers will collate feedback in December.

Recommendations

1. **That the Committee notes and comments on the context for the Management Plan review.**
2. **That the Committee reviews and comments on the extracts from the 2008-13 Management Plan as detailed in Appendix 2.**
3. **That the Committee notes the programme for the production of the Management Plan 2014-19.**

A Vision for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Management Plan is based on a vision for the Chilterns AONB in which:

- Large, linked areas of open chalk downland contain a diverse range of chalk-loving plants and associated fauna.
- Well-managed woodlands produce good quality timber and wood fuel as well as providing natural spaces for recreation and a home for wildlife.
- Chalk streams flow along natural river beds and provide a healthy environment for their specialised wildlife.
- Local farms are thriving businesses which help to maintain the farmed landscapes of the Chilterns and support healthy populations of farmland birds and other wildlife.
- New developments are built to high environmental standards and respect the architectural traditions of the Chilterns.
- A wide range of people, both local and from further afield, enjoys and values the Chilterns countryside.
- The impact of traffic on the area is reduced, with more people walking, cycling and using public transport and highway developments are appropriate and sympathetic to their surroundings.
- The rich historic environment of the Chilterns is conserved and appreciated by a wide audience.
- There is a good market for sustainably produced local products which contribute to the viability of local farms, and a wide understanding of the link between the production of local goods and environmental quality.
- The carbon footprint of the AONB is reduced and the special features of the area are resilient to climate change.
- The common land of the Chilterns is conserved and valued by local communities and visitors.
- The tranquillity of the Chilterns is maintained and where noise is a problem peace and quiet is restored.

INTRODUCTION

The special qualities of the Chilterns AONB

1. In 1965 an area of 800 sq kms of the Chiltern Hills was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Later, following a review of the boundary, the

AONB was enlarged to 833 sq kms. There are no plans to review the boundary during the lifetime of this Management Plan.

2. The Chilterns AONB was designated for the natural beauty of its landscape and its natural and cultural heritage. In particular, it was designated to protect its special qualities which include the steep chalk escarpment with areas of flower-rich downland, woodlands, commons, tranquil valleys, particularly on the , the network of ancient routes, villages with their brick and flint houses, chalk streams and a rich historic environment of hill forts and chalk figures.
3. There is an extensive network of protected sites within the AONB, including 63 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), three National Nature Reserves and three European-designated Special Areas of Conservation. In 2008 90% of the Chilterns' SSSIs are in favourable or recovering condition.
4. One fifth of the Chilterns AONB is wooded and of this about 56% is ancient woodland (a site which has been continuously wooded since at least 1600). The AONB also has a nationally-important concentration of high quality chalk grassland with over 137 protected sites.
5. Commons are amongst the most characteristic features of the AONB – part of its social and cultural heritage, accessible green places for recreation and public enjoyment and home to a wide diversity of wildlife. Today there are 2002 hectares of registered common land in the AONB – around 2.4% of the total area.
6. Some of the Chilterns' most distinctive natural features are its chalk rivers and streams, fed by groundwater from the chalk aquifer. A globally scarce habitat, chalk rivers support a range of specialised wildlife and in the Chilterns provide a home for the threatened water vole. Another significant water feature of the area, the River Thames, forms much of the southern boundary of the AONB.
7. The Chilterns is possibly the most heavily-visited landscape in the UK with 55 million leisure visits a year. Visitors come to enjoy over 2000km of public rights of way, the Ridgeway and the Thames Path National Trails and many more special routes. The area is rich in history with ancient man-made features scattered through the countryside and a legacy of grand houses and designed landscapes from the 17th and 18th centuries. There are 122 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the AONB and 15 parks and gardens on English Heritage's register.

The Chilterns Conservation Board

1. The Chilterns Conservation Board was established by Parliamentary Order in 2004. It is one of the first two Conservation Boards (the other is for the Cotswolds) set up under the Countryside and Rights Of Way (CROW) Act 2000 which enabled the establishment of independent statutory bodies to manage AONBs. The Board superseded the shadow Chilterns Conservation Board which operated from 2001 – 2004 and the Chilterns Conference established in 1965.
2. The Board has two statutory purposes:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and
 - to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.
3. In fulfilling these purposes, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the AONB, without incurring significant expenditure.
 4. There are 29 members of the Board: 15 are appointed by the 15 local authorities in the Chilterns AONB, eight are appointed by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and six are elected by parish and town councils in the AONB.
 5. The Board has a small staff team based in Chinnor in Oxfordshire. It is also assisted by volunteers who lead guided walks, give talks, help at events and carry out project work.

Chilterns AONB Management Plan

1. The CRoW Act places a duty on all local authorities which include an AONB, and Conservation Boards, where they exist, to produce a plan which outlines their policies for the management of the AONB and how they will carry out their functions in relation to it. Management plans must be reviewed at least every five years.
2. The previous management plan for the Chilterns AONB, *The Framework for Action: 2002-2007*, was published by the shadow Chilterns Conservation Board in 2002 and adopted by the newly-established Board in 2005.
3. A difficulty during the life of the previous plan was monitoring landscape quality and change. This remains a challenge in the absence of nationally-agreed criteria on measuring quality and change at the landscape level. It is an objective of the new Plan to increase the amount of environmental data on the AONB which will be published in an annual State of the Environment Report and will contribute to monitoring of the plan's progress.
4. *The Framework for Action: 2008-2013* contains a number of broad aims for the management of the Chilterns AONB. The more detailed policies and actions in the Plan outline how these aims will be achieved by the Board and all other parties with an interest in the AONB.
5. The aims, policies and actions in the Plan have been formulated by the Board in consultation with a very wide range of organisations and individuals. During the Plan's lifetime the Board will guide its implementation and will be responsible for undertaking many of the actions in it, in partnership with others. However, the Plan is not solely for the Board but is a guide for local authorities, statutory agencies, local organisations, landowners, businesses, communities and all whose activities influence the AONB.

6. To highlight how this Management Plan for the AONB is to be implemented a complementary Delivery Plan has been produced. The Delivery Plan links the policies, actions and indicators together with the activities of relevant organisations. This strategic Delivery Plan will be updated annually with more details on specific actions, resources and planned outputs.
7. For clarification, the Delivery Plan will require the collaboration of many organisations - it is not a work programme for the Chilterns Conservation Board alone. The Plan identifies which organisations need to be involved if the action is to be implemented successfully. It is not an exhaustive list and neither does it mean that all those listed are able to commit themselves to undertaking that action. Inevitably, the programme will be affected by the priorities of each partner and availability of resources.

Global, national and regional context of the AONB

1. The Chilterns AONB is one of 40 AONBs in England and Wales, which together cover 18% of the countryside. The AONB designation was created by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949, which also established the National Park designation. The aim was that the two designations would protect the finest countryside in England and Wales. In June 2000 the Government confirmed that AONBs and National Parks have the same level of landscape quality and share the same level of protection.

Map showing AONBs and National Parks in England

2. AONBs are part of the global network of protected landscapes. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has six management categories covering all types of protected areas. AONBs (and National Parks) fall into Category V – landscapes managed mainly for conservation and recreation.
3. The Chilterns Conservation Board is a member of Europarc, the umbrella organisation for Europe's protected areas. As a protected landscape the Chilterns AONB, along with other AONBs, is playing a key role in the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, ratified by the UK in 2006. The Convention aims to improve the protection and management of important landscapes and to increase co-operation across Europe.
4. The Board is an active member of the National Association for AONBs which represents the interests of the designation and those bodies responsible for them at a national level.
5. The Board also participates in the South East Protected Landscape group to develop collaborative initiatives across the region and to develop working relationships with a range of regional partners. There is further scope for collaborative working in the East of England.

Influences on the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB

1. There has long been pressure on the Chiltern Hills for development and for changes in land use which would have a deleterious effect on the quality of the landscape. It was partly these pressures which led to the designation of the area as an AONB in 1965. In more recent times the pressures have grown, leading to a greater-than-ever need for a comprehensive and widely-implemented Management Plan.
2. Sitting on London's doorstep, and immediately adjacent to several large towns, the Chilterns provides highly valued landscapes and places to escape to. It is a place which has to cope with growing populations and increasing traffic levels as well as pressures for development which come right up to the boundary. Luton, Aylesbury and the Thames Corridor have been identified as part of growth areas by the Government and will see population increases in the coming years, which will result in a greater number of people travelling through the AONB and using it for recreation. The consequent demand for road improvements and greater infrastructure at countryside sites could have a damaging effect on the AONB so needs to be appropriately managed.
3. Greater development close to the Chilterns, and some inevitable development within the area, will lead to more consumption of scarce water resources. Abstraction of water for domestic use already has an impact on Chilterns streams and rivers and it is vital that public demand for water is managed sustainably.
4. The landscape of the Chilterns is dominated by farmland and woodland, and changes in these land uses have a major influence on the natural beauty of the area. The reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy and the introduction of new agri-environment schemes in the UK are affecting farming, with a greater emphasis on wildlife conservation. The de-coupling of support payments from production is enabling farmers to respond more readily to world market conditions. Rising grain prices are boosting arable farming but livestock farming, which is crucial to the management of special habitats like chalk grassland, has been in decline for some time.
5. Loss of traditional management practices - in particular grazing - and a decline in 'commoning' (the exercise of common rights) has affected the open habitats often associated with common land.
6. The long term decline in the market for UK timber is having a pronounced effect on Chiltern woodlands, with many suffering from a lack of management. The ageing beech woodlands no longer produce significant volumes of timber and are more valuable as places for recreation than as a part of the rural economy. The promotion of wood as a renewable fuel may stimulate improved management of some woodlands.
7. The pressures for development and the long urban fringe along the AONB boundary means there will be continuing pressure which may lead to urbanisation, illegal activities such as fly tipping and problems for landowners especially those who wish to continue commercial farming. This pressure may also lead to loss of tranquillity

due to increases in noise from roads, railways, aircraft and the general background noise created in built up areas.

8. Climate change could have a major but unpredictable influence on the natural beauty of the Chilterns. It is likely that the long term changes will alter the species composition of woodlands and the type of crops grown by farmers leading to subtle but ultimately significant alteration to the landscape - this is covered in more detail below and in Section 4.

Cross cutting themes of the Management Plan

A number of important themes, which will have a significant influence on the management of the AONB over the next five years, cut across all the chapters of the Plan. They are:

- climate change
- social inclusion
- health and well-being
- lifelong learning

1. Climate change

A changing global climate, principally caused by human activities, is now regarded as an indisputable fact by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC)¹. How much global temperatures will rise and how quickly are still under debate, but there is a broad consensus of opinion on the likely changes to the climate of southern England, and therefore the Chilterns AONB, over the next few decades. The likely long term changes are:

- summers will become warmer and drier.
- winters will become milder and wetter.
- storm events will become more frequent.
- weather generally will become more unpredictable.

Even short to medium term climatic cycles may be uncertain but there is consensus on the likely long term trends.

These changes have the potential to affect the landscape, wildlife and communities of the Chilterns in many ways. Woodlands may be dominated by oak and ash which cope better than beech with the likely changes in climate. The range of crops grown by farmers will change and there may be more growing of biofuels, although concerns over the security of food supplies may affect that market. Flows in rivers and streams could become more erratic and there will be changes in the fauna and flora of all habitats. The impact of tourism is particularly unpredictable. People may decide to holiday in the UK rather than to go abroad if the summer weather becomes warmer and sunnier but, as in recent years, poor weather may lead to fewer holidays taken in the UK. All these potential changes and ways to manage and mitigate them are discussed in Section 4.

2. Social inclusion

¹ IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change (2007)

The Chilterns AONB is a national treasure, protected for all to enjoy and it receives millions of visits every year. Despite this, there are many who could benefit from the area and yet remain unaware of what it has to offer, or who face obstacles in accessing it. Ensuring that as wide an audience as possible understands the special qualities of the AONB and takes an active part in enjoying and caring for it is essential to the future of the area. The Management Plan seeks to achieve this in a variety of ways including reaching out to those in urban areas close to the Chilterns, improving public participation in conservation activities and increasing awareness of the AONB and its special qualities amongst those who are not regular visitors at the moment.

3. Health and well-being

Rising obesity levels and the ever-increasing costs of healthcare have prompted a much greater emphasis on preventative health solutions. There is an increasing perception of the countryside, and green space in general, as a place which offers tangible benefits to health and well-being. The value of protected countryside, like AONBs, in providing walking, cycling and riding routes and a tranquil rural escape from stressful lives is increasingly being seen in economic and social terms as well as environmental.

4. Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is the concept of providing people with learning opportunities at all ages and in many different contexts: at work, at home and during leisure pursuits as well as through more formal channels such as adult education. It is a Government priority and one which ties in with the Conservation Board's primary purpose of increasing understanding and enjoyment of the Chilterns AONB. With greater understanding comes a sense of ownership and of stewardship. The popularity of the natural environment amongst the public combined with the resources that the AONB offers such as wildlife, special habitats, history and built heritage creates many opportunities to stimulate understanding, develop skills and encourage creative responses.

In Section 5 there is a matrix showing which Management Plan policies address each of the cross-cutting themes.

Development Introduction

1. The attractiveness of the Chilterns' landscape is due to its natural, built and cultural environment. It is not a wilderness but countryside adorned by villages, hamlets and scattered buildings. It is surrounded by large towns and is within easy commuting distance of London, all of which increase the pressure for new development. As a result house prices in the Chilterns are amongst the highest in the country and there is a severe shortage of affordable housing.
2. Towns, villages, hamlets and individual buildings all form a vital part of the character of the Chilterns, particularly because of the widespread use of local building materials (bricks, clay tiles and flint) and the locally distinctive architecture. New development,

both within and adjacent to the AONB, should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

3. The Chilterns is very accessible due to the number of roads, railway lines and waterways running through it. Major transport routes link the Chilterns to London and other major cities and towns. With the exception of a single road (the modern successor to the Icknield Way) which follows the foot of the escarpment, very few transport links run south west to north east. The network of ancient routes, railways and canals has added to the cultural heritage of the Chilterns, but more recent works have often had a negative impact on the landscape.
4. The continued pressures for new development, particularly housing, create demands for aggregates and other minerals for construction. Historically, large quantities of chalk were extracted to manufacture cement, but these quarries are now largely redundant. Three relatively small brick-making enterprises survive using local clay.
5. Local communities generate considerable quantities of waste. The redundant quarries are not suitable for land filling and, other than on a small scale, it is unlikely that there will be suitable sites for new waste incinerators.

Broad Aims

- Ensure that the natural beauty, local distinctiveness and aesthetic qualities of the built environment of the Chilterns are conserved.
- Ensure that all new development contributes to the special qualities of the built environment of the Chilterns.
- Improve the built and natural environment of the Chilterns, particularly degraded landscapes, to enhance its distinctive character.
- Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Chilterns in the development and operation of transport networks and services.
- Reduce the negative impacts of transport on the environment of the Chilterns including lighting, noise and emissions of greenhouse gases.
- Reduce any adverse impact of former extraction sites on the character of the AONB.
- Ensure that the policies within local and minerals and waste development frameworks complement the objectives of AONB designation.

Special Qualities

1. The attractiveness of the Chilterns' landscape is partly due to its settlements and buildings.
2. There are many attractive villages such as Ewelme, Turville, Hambleden and Aldbury which are popular places to live and visit.

3. The Chilterns has a distinctive vernacular architecture based on the use of local brick, clay roof tiles and flint. Despite this other architectural styles ('Metroland' for example) have also had an important influence.
4. There are many notable individual buildings and follies including stately homes, monuments, mausoleums and windmills. They provide interest in the landscape and support the tourist industry.
5. There is a wealth of medieval churches, many built from flint.
6. There is a strong link between the management of the countryside and the character of old and new development. The vernacular architecture, as so often, was based almost entirely on the use of locally available materials. In the Chilterns this included clay to make bricks and roof tiles, timber, chalk for mortar and flints from fields and quarries. All these materials remain available for new development.
7. Many buildings are of historical importance either in their own right or for the people with which they are connected.
8. The ancient lanes, canals and railways (including significant Brunel bridges) are important parts of the landscape.

Key Issues

1. The Chilterns and surrounding areas, particularly within the Milton Keynes and South Midlands and Cambridge-Stansted-Peterborough Growth areas, are under considerable pressure to accommodate significant numbers of new houses.
2. There is continuing pressure to locate large scale developments in or adjacent to the AONB. Assessment of the impact of these proposals needs to accord with national policy as set out in Planning Policy Statement 7 (paragraph 22)².
3. The retention of open space and the need to try and restrict the scale of new development are key to conserving the natural beauty of the AONB.
4. New development of all types needs to respect vernacular architecture, settlement character and the local landscape. This will require developers to do more than try to use standard designs. The Board has published guidance on design and the use of building materials.
5. All new development needs to accord with the highest environmental standards to minimise impact on the environment and help mitigate the causes of climate change. This means maximising energy efficiency and minimising water use (by the inclusion of grey water recycling for example). In order to help avoid flooding and to encourage aquifer recharge sustainable urban drainage systems should be encouraged.

² Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004)

6. There is a need for the design of new buildings to show adaptation to climate change, for example to ensure buildings remain cool in the summer without using air conditioning.
7. Society must seek ways of reducing its demand for energy (switching off streetlights is one of many) and reduce its dependency upon fossil fuels by switching to renewable energy sources. The options include solar, wood fuel, ground source, hydro and wind, all of which have some potential in the Chilterns. It is the prospect of wind turbines which would be most controversial. It is highly unlikely that large scale wind turbines would be appropriate because of the relative lack of wind and the visual intrusion, especially along the ridge of the escarpment but also when located outside the AONB within its setting. However there is scope for installation of smaller-scale turbines in less intrusive locations where there are suitable wind speeds. The use of wood fuel would be the preferred option because of the extent of the woodland resource which is currently under-utilised.
8. There is a need for a better understanding and awareness of what contributes to local distinctiveness, especially amongst those groups who propose, design and approve new development.
9. In some places the attractiveness of the landscape is diminished by degraded sites, unattractive buildings and other structures and their use. The challenge is to remove, screen or mitigate the visual intrusion.
10. There is a need for active promotion of environmentally sensitive construction methods and the necessary skills, particularly in the use of locally produced building materials.
11. There is an increasing need to guide developments and activities which are exempt from normal planning controls.
12. The physical impact of transport infrastructure and its use have major environmental impacts. The environmental damage or benefits need to be given greater weight. This includes ensuring that the design and management of highways, including maintenance and small works, does not damage environmental quality. They should be constructed and surfaced to minimise noise pollution, a particular problem along the motorways (M40, M25 and M1) and trunk roads. The Board and highway authorities have published the *Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns* which, amongst many issues, seeks reductions in road side clutter and light pollution.
13. There is a small number of active and redundant quarries for which there are no long term plans once quarrying has ceased. There is a need to decide their future, not least to maintain the environmental qualities they have (Chinnor Quarry is a geological SSSI). It is unlikely that landfill would be an acceptable use.
14. The Chilterns is a wealthy area and produces an above average amount of waste per capita. It is increasingly unacceptable to send waste out of the area in which it was generated. In future efforts must concentrate on minimising waste and the option of waste incineration (possibly to generate energy). The choice of suitable sites will be

contentious. It is unlikely that large scale incineration plants could be accommodated within the Chilterns AONB without unacceptable environmental impacts.

Policies

D1 Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB, by reinforcing the local distinctiveness of the built environment.

The design and location of new development and the extensive use of standardised, suburban designs and non-local materials has in the past resulted in many villages losing some of their special and distinctive character.

There is a need for a greater understanding of the factors that contribute to the visual harmony between built development and the landscape, and to local distinctiveness and the sense of place, so that these qualities can be conserved and enhanced through sensitive and imaginative design, and the character of existing settlements can be positively improved where appropriate.

It is the role of the Local Planning Authorities to firmly apply policies which safeguard the AONB from further detrimental change, while accommodating the small-scale development necessary for the continued economic and social well-being of Chiltern communities.

D2 Promote the highest standards of development which respect vernacular architectural styles and represent high environmental standards in terms of energy and water efficiency.

Buildings design guidance can help inform those involved in decision-making as well as helping landowners, developers, designers and local communities to plan for and control change in an appropriate way. The Board has published the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes on Chilterns Building Materials. Revisions to the Design Guide will address issues such as climate change, energy and water efficiency, renewable energy, and the development of new agricultural and other rural employment buildings.

Flooding is increasingly becoming an issue and in order to try and alleviate this problem, as well as to encourage aquifer recharge, sustainable urban drainage solutions should be considered. One way to decrease water usage would be by incorporating grey water recycling in new developments.

The intention is that the Guide will be added to the Management Plan as an Appendix in order that it can be taken account of as a significant material consideration in determining planning applications. The Design Guide will also aim to reduce the impact of those works which are 'Permitted Development' and do not require planning permission. If carried out unsympathetically these developments can contribute to the increasing 'suburbanisation' of the countryside.

D3 Promote best practice in the use of traditional materials, namely flint, brick and roofing materials.

The Conservation Board actively promotes environmentally sensitive construction methods (primarily the use of locally produced building materials and lime mortar) through the production and use of its Supplementary Technical Notes on Chilterns Building Materials – flint, brick and roofing materials (clay tiles in particular).

D4 Support the sustainable use of local natural resources, notably timber, clay (bricks and tiles) and flint, for local building purposes.

Bricks, tiles and flint are still commonly used in new developments. Local clay is still used for brick making by the three existing brickworks. The development of other small workings may be possible which would serve a useful purpose by providing a source of locally made materials for use in the area, ensuring compatibility with the materials traditionally used. Another source of locally produced building materials are the Totternhoe Clunch pits. They are only opened occasionally to provide material for historic building restoration. Although small-scale these activities also provide local employment opportunities.

D5 Seek a reduction in the damaging impacts of telecommunications infrastructure.

Many telecommunications masts were sited within the AONB in the past resulting in damaging landscape impacts. There has been a slowdown in the roll out of new systems which has meant that there are fewer applications for new masts. A reduction in the damaging impacts may be achieved by the removal of redundant masts and better design and siting of new masts through the application of guidance.

D6 Seek enhancement of the quality of the landscape of the AONB by the removal or mitigation of existing visually intrusive developments.

There is a need to ensure that all developments conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. The Board will promote action to improve the quality of the AONB landscape. This would be particularly valuable in the following contexts:

- around the fringes of urban areas, to soften the often harsh edge of new residential and other developments;
- in locations where it helps to screen or integrate unsightly buildings or structures;
- in strategic locations where it could help to reduce the visibility of intrusive infrastructure, and
- where it would result in the removal or enhancement of unsightly buildings or other eyesores.

Encouragement should also be given to the replacement or improvement of elements which detract from visual harmony, including domestic features such as inappropriate urban styles of fencing, street and other forms of lighting that leads to light pollution, as well as overhead electricity lines.

D7 Pursue opportunities for landscape improvement and creation of green space (green infrastructure) when development is proposed in, or adjacent to, the boundaries of the AONB.

With significant pressure for housing and employment growth there will be a need to provide green open space in the form of green infrastructure (which can have multi-functional benefits for biodiversity, landscape, access and in contributing to sustainable drainage), provided this does not conflict with the purposes of the AONB's designation. For new developments that are on the edge of the AONB, there will also be opportunities to improve degraded landscapes and access to the countryside.

D8 Encourage appropriate development, especially on previously developed land, that will improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area, whilst having regard to the special qualities of the AONB.

Sustainable development involves meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. This entails accommodating change whilst maintaining and, wherever possible, enhancing the quality of the environment for all. There will also be a need to meet the economic and social needs of the people who live and work in the Chilterns. Improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area might be achieved through:

- the delivery of affordable housing for local needs;
- improved employment opportunities;
- maintaining the viability of the rural economy;
- addressing the general decline in, and improved access to, key rural services, and
- open space and green infrastructure provision.

D9 Encourage appropriate densities on new housing developments which reflect the local context, whilst having regard to the special qualities of the AONB and to policies in Development Plans.

The Board will generally support the provision of smaller residential schemes that lead to the provision of affordable and local needs housing. All housing schemes should be sustainably located and should take particular account of the settlement's and site's contexts and should reflect densities that are prevalent locally. The operation of nationally agreed minimum densities is not always appropriate and in order to deliver wider benefits and the conservation of the special qualities of the AONB it may be better to operate to lower, maximum, density levels.

D10 Encourage the use of renewable energy, in appropriate circumstances, and particularly of wood fuel, solar, hydro-power and ground source heat pumps.

There may be pressure for the development of wind power in the Chilterns in the future, and full account should be taken of the potential impacts on the landscape, including the setting of the AONB. Other renewable energy forms that may be developed include solar (hot water and photovoltaics), small-scale hydro schemes and waste from woodland management and timber production. Solar power and ground source heat pumps are more likely to be installed at the domestic scale and there may be some supply from community based hydro-electric schemes. The use of locally sourced woodfuel from existing woodland could support both domestic scale and community-based combined heat and power schemes.

D11 Promote measures which assist adaptation to climate change which are compatible with the character of the built environment of the AONB.

The Board will work with others to promote measures which will help people and buildings to adapt to climate change, subject to the overriding consideration of the need to be compatible with the character of the built and natural environment. Some of the measures that will be considered include: a greater understanding of the embedded energy in any development; the increased use of local building materials; water and energy efficiency; the way that buildings are orientated, and allowing for more comfortable living conditions with increased summer shading.

D12 Seek a reduction in the level of noise and other forms of pollution caused by all types of aircraft flying over the Chilterns and associated vehicle traffic using the airports.

Growth in air traffic is continuing and expansion plans for major airports would exacerbate this. Significant numbers of passengers arrive at airports by car and there will therefore need to be much greater provision of public transport in order to allow modal shift. The Chilterns has a significant number of smaller airfields nearby and is increasingly being overflowed by all types of aircraft. The Board will work with operators to lessen the impacts of the use of these airfields.

Any proposals to alter flight paths in order to allow more aircraft to fly over the AONB will be strongly opposed and the Board will seek changes to take air traffic away from the AONB.

D13 Promote the restoration and management of redundant quarries into the landscape whilst conserving and enhancing their biodiversity, geological and archaeological features.

Large chalk quarries had a dramatic impact on the landscape, although only Kensworth in Bedfordshire is still active. Any restoration and management plans should ensure that any environmental qualities (including geological or archaeological remains) are maintained, protected and interpreted. In such cases landfill proposals are unlikely to be appropriate. Should landfilling take place in the future in smaller sites, only inert waste should be used and restoration of the site back into the landscape should be achieved using appropriate contouring whilst encouraging biodiversity.

Some quarries may be suitable for the development of both passive and active recreational facilities in conjunction with low key associated infrastructure (informal car parks, picnic areas and nature trails for example). The development of wildlife habitats, where natural re-vegetation has occurred or wet areas remain, will be encouraged.

D14 Encourage the continuation of the local brick-making industry, to ensure a continued supply of high quality, traditional building materials, consistent with the principles of environmental sustainability.

Within the Chilterns there are three remaining brick-makers. They are all small in scale and make high quality bricks in traditional ways. The use of such local materials in sensitive ways helps developments to have limited impacts and contribute to local distinctiveness.

If used locally such building materials will have travelled a limited distance and will emit lower levels of CO₂ in their transport comparative to other materials.

D15 Support the demand for local building materials by seeking their use in new developments, in accordance with the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and related Supplementary Technical Notes.

When responding to relevant planning applications the Board will seek the use of local building materials because of the positive impacts that their use would have on the landscape and environment. Developments should conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and planning applications should comply with the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes.

D16 Promote the reduction of waste by supporting policies which result in re-use, reduction and recycling of waste materials.

In the future there is going to be a greater focus upon 'sustainable waste management.' This will involve moving away from the landfilling of waste. Other methods of waste management may result in demand for sites for waste reduction, waste transfer or incineration which are likely to prove difficult to accommodate in the AONB. It will be important to ensure that any waste facilities are sensitively sited and located to avoid a detrimental impact to the landscape or settlement character and to avoid disturbance to local amenity.

D17 Seek to minimise the environmental impacts on the Chilterns of quarrying and management of landfill sites adjacent to the AONB, including the impacts of through traffic.

There are few active chalk quarries left within or near the AONB and any landfill operations associated with redundant workings will need to be very closely monitored and managed. Workings for aggregates are generally nearby rather than within the Chilterns AONB. However, deposits in the Thames Valley are known to extend into the AONB. Development pressures will maintain demand for aggregates. The Board will resist proposals for quarrying within the AONB due to the damaging impacts of both extraction and the through traffic associated with transportation.

Actions

1. Comment on significant planning applications which would affect natural beauty or its enjoyment.
2. Review and comment on all relevant planning strategies and policies which would affect the Chilterns.

3. Produce and promote revisions to The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide, particularly to take account of climate change, renewable energy and farm and other rural employment buildings.
4. Continue to promote the Supplementary Technical Notes on Chilterns Building Materials (flint, brick and roofing materials) and review, as appropriate.
5. Develop a monitoring system for the built environment to enable an assessment of changes.
6. Produce guidance that seeks to lessen the impact of telecommunications developments.
7. Continue to press for the undergrounding of overhead powerlines.
8. Support the local planning authorities in their efforts to bring about the provision of green infrastructure.
9. In conjunction with others (Building Research Establishment and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, for example) publish guidance on how building design should reflect the need to adapt to climate change.
10. Promote the use of the *Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns*.
11. Contribute to studies undertaken to assess tranquillity in the AONB.
12. Seek a reduction in noise pollution from road traffic, in particular the M40 and all trunk roads.
13. Encourage the use of low noise surfacing in connection with all new roads and any re-surfacing work.
14. Encourage highway authorities to switch off street lights in appropriate circumstances.
15. Seek a reduction in the noise pollution created by over-flying aircraft and a reduction in the number of over-flying aircraft of all types.

Section 5

Integration of cross-cutting themes with Management Plan policies

1. A number of important themes, which will have a significant influence on the management of the AONB over the next five years, cut across all the chapters of the Plan. They are:
 - climate change

- social inclusion
 - health and well-being
 - lifelong learning
2. Climate change and its likely impacts on the Chilterns have already been covered in detail in the previous Section. Social inclusion, health and well-being and lifelong learning are also issues being given priority at a national level.
3. The wealth of natural and cultural resources available in the Chilterns offers great potential to address these issues, and this is reflected in the policies that have been formulated for this Plan. Table 2 shows which policies address each of the cross-cutting themes.

Table 2. Matrix of cross-cutting themes and Management Plan policies

	<u>Cross-cutting Themes</u>			
<u>Chapters</u>	Climate Change	Social Inclusion	Health and Well-being	Lifelong Learning
Landscape	L9, L10, L11	L7	L7, L8, L9	L2
Biodiversity	NC8, NC10	NC4	NC4	NC4, NC7
Historic Environment	HE9	HE4, HE6, HE8	HE6, HE8	HE6, HE8
Development	D2, D10, D11, D15	D8, D9	D7	D3
Water Environment	WE9	WE10, WE11	WE10, WE11	WE4, WE9, WE11
Farming and Forestry	FF2, FF3	FF3	FF3	FF7
Understanding and Enjoyment	UE11	UE1, UE4, UE5, UE13, UE14, UE15	UE2, UE7, UE10, UE12, UE16	UE9, UE14
Social and Economic Well-being	SE2, SE3, SE4, SE10	SE1, SE2,	SE8	SE9, SE10

Item 8 Feedback from events

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisation: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Staff time.

Summary: The Board has held a number of events recently and feedback is given in connection with the Planning Forum, Design Awards and Planning Training for Parish and Town Councils. Following the Planning Forum visits a note has been prepared which highlights those planning applications that the Board would like to be consulted on.

Purpose of report: To inform the Committee about the feedback from recent events and to approve a note detailing the sorts of planning applications that the Board would like to be consulted on.

Background

Planning Forum

1. The Planning Forum was held on 22nd May at the Central Bedfordshire Council offices in Dunstable. There were 16 attendees representing 9 of the 13 Chilterns local planning authorities as well as The Chiltern Society and local Wildlife Trusts. The forum focussed on the local authority experience of the IPC process and key issues and concerns arising from the NPPF.
2. The resource implications and lack of opportunities to influence projects through the IPC process (now involving Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects [NSIPs]) caused some concern amongst the local authorities. The introduction of a model local plan policy through the NPPF also caused concern, though many authorities are likely to include a modified version.
3. The lack of detail in the NPPF will need to be addressed at some point. Similarly, the role of companion guides and other documents that are extant also needs to be clarified. It is understood that this will be undertaken by DCLG at some point soon.
4. There was a discussion about the application of the duty to cooperate and how this will be applied. The role of neighbourhood plans was also discussed though most of the authorities are not aware of that many plans that are likely to come forward.
5. The possible review of the AONB boundary was discussed and the forum was asked to let the AONB office know of any areas that local authorities considered likely candidates for review. The use of landscape character assessments as part of this process was highlighted and this led to a discussion about local landscape designations and their extent and applicability.
6. It was resolved that future forum meetings dates could be arranged through doodle polls and that it would be possible for many issues to be discussed electronically without the need for detailed discussion at forums.
7. The next forum will take place in mid November.

8. The notes from the visits that were undertaken by the Chairman of the Committee and the Planning Officer will be circulated shortly and are attached at Appendix 3 for approval and circulation. One visit to Luton Borough Council remains outstanding.
9. Many of the meetings that took place involved some discussion about what planning applications the Board would generally like to be consulted on. A note on this subject has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 4. The Committee is asked to approve this for circulation to the local planning authorities along with the notes of the Forum reinvigoration meetings.

Design Awards

10. The annual Chilterns Buildings Design Awards ceremony, in conjunction with The Chiltern Society, was held on 14th June at the Dairy at Restore Hope Latimer, Latimer Park. It was attended by about 50 people. The format was changed this year so that the event took place in the evening and was shorter with only one talk being given prior to the awards being presented. This year was the first time that the award winners had not been informed of their success prior to the event and this added to the excitement. This approach was very well received and positively commented on by a number of people.
11. One point was made that not all winners were well represented so it is proposed that the invites for next year's ceremony stress that, as the awards winners have not been announced, all invitees would be wise to attend.

Planning Training for Parish and Town Councils

12. The Planning Training for Parish and Town Councils took place on three evenings in late June and early July in Ballinger, Markyate and Woodcote. A £15 charge was made with one extra free place being given for those Parish or Town Councils that have financially contributed to the Board's work. The events cost £350 to put on and have generated £870 in income. The events were attended by a total of 95 people who were representing 42 different Parish and Town Councils.
13. The events addressed recent planning reforms including the Localism Act, Neighbourhood Planning and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the implications of Neighbourhood Planning. A mythical place was used to undertake an exercise in Neighbourhood Planning.
14. The training was led by the Board's Planning Officer and Mike Stubbs. One of the events also involved a local authority planning officer and another involved a representative of one of the communities involved in Neighbourhood Planning. There was also input from various Board Members who had agreed to help set up, welcome people and give an introduction to each of the events.
15. The two hour sessions were interactive, with presentations kept to a minimum and lots of time for questions and discussion. Key messages were delivered at the end of the session and the presentations have been added to the Board's website.
16. The key feedback from the events was that the attendees were generally very satisfied with the events. Most people would favour keeping the format and timings as they are presently (evening event for about 2 hours), though a number thought that the events could be held for an afternoon or even all day. Longer sessions would allow more time for questions and debate and for fully exploring the case studies that are considered. Though most people wanted the training to continue and

favoured keeping things as they are, about a third of respondents felt that the events should be annual, with a few suggesting that they should be much more frequent.

17. Suggestions were made for the following topics to be considered at future events: renewable energy; how to respond to planning applications and how applications are dealt with (this has been covered previously); the use of employment land for housing; S106 opportunities and use of obligations to provide community facilities; more detail about local plans, and consideration of other types of development apart from housing.
18. Specific comments were made about the following: there were too many questions at the Ballinger event (this was both positive [allowing debate and showing genuine interest on the part of attendees] and negative [taking too much time and some questions were answered by later parts of the presentation]) though the flexibility shown was welcomed by some; the case studies were not as useful as they could have been (time constraints); the events were very useful, well run, with good preparation; people were very satisfied overall; the events were informative and engaging; the events should be provided free of charge (costs need to be covered), and it was good to have a local venue.
19. It is proposed that the Parish and Town Council Training should continue provided there is adequate budgetary provision and that it should continue to take place every two years (next sessions in 2014). The format should continue as at present though it would be better to have a 3 hour session rather than 2 (starting at 6.30 and finishing at 9.30 to allow participants the chance to eat before coming).

Recommendations

1. **That the Committee notes the feedback from the various recent events.**
2. **That the Committee approves the notes of the Planning Forum reinvigoration visits.**
3. **That the Committee approves the note on planning applications that the Board wishes to be consulted on.**
4. **That the Committee approves the continuation of the Parish and Town Council Training and that the next sessions should take place in summer 2014.**



Chilterns AONB Planning Forum

Notes of meetings held between local planning authorities and the Chilterns Conservation Board

- Between October 2011 and May 2012 twelve of the Chilterns local planning authorities have been visited by the Chairman of the Board's Planning Committee and its Planning Officer (see table below).
- Only one local planning authority remains to be visited – Luton Borough Council.

Date	LPA	Board member	Cabinet member	Chief Officer	Contact officer
31.10.11 10.00 am	Herts CC	Bill Storey	Richard Thake	Richard Brown	Jon Tiley
07.11.11 10.30 am	Central Beds				Sue Frost and Richard Fox
15.11.11 pm	TRDC	Brian Norman		Peter Brooker	Renato Messere
17.11.11 10.30 am	DBC	Ian Reay	Cllr Holmes		Laura Wood
24.11.11 10.00 am	WDC		Hugh McCarthy	Jerry Unsworth	Chris Schmidt- Reid
2.00 pm 16.01.12	AVDC	Chris Richards	Carole Paternoster	John Byrne	Charlotte Glithero
2.00 pm 25.01.12	SODC	Anna Badcock	Angie Paterson		Tom Wyatt and Paula Fox
9.30 am 02.02.12, Room 34, Ground Floor, BCC, Walton Street	Bucks CC	Richard Pushman		Neil Gibson and Marcus Rogers	
2.00 pm 14.03.12	Chiltern DC	Jeremy Ryman	Nick Rose	Anna Cronin	
2.30 pm 15.03.12	Oxon CC	David Nimmo- Smith	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	Peter Lerner	Vicky Fletcher and Tamsin Atley
2.00 pm	N Herts	Dave	Tom Brindley		Louise Symes

24.05.12	DC	Barnard			and Helen Leitch
10.00 am	South	Alan Walters	Roger Reed	Peter	Ian Gillespie
15.06.12	Bucks			Beckford	
	DC				

1. The visits have provided an opportunity to re-invigorate the Planning Forum and to exchange information and provide updates about current projects and issues.
2. The most recent AONB Planning Forums took place in November 2011 and May 2012 with 8 and 9 (respectively) of the Chilterns local planning authorities being represented. These are a good number and may in part be due to the prominence being given to the visits made by the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Board's Planning Officer.
3. The meetings that have taken place have emphasised that the forum represents a good opportunity to exchange views with the Board and with other local authorities but that there may be different ways forward that should be explored. The combining of the Planning and Environment Forums was ultimately not considered to be appropriate. Though this may not have led to more meetings being scheduled it may have led to less interest from planning officers.
4. The number of meetings is causing a problem for officers as well as members. It was stressed that councillors should ideally be attending the annual Chilterns AONB Forum rather than the Planning Forum, though they would be welcomed at both.
5. It was thought that update information could be circulated electronically via a 'virtual' forum, allowing the meetings to get to the bottom of key issues.
6. All authorities are struggling with resources and the time required for meetings is hard to find.
7. The importance of the Board's forum meetings is accepted and the authorities have all agreed to send officers and members when able to do so. The offer of the Board's planning officer undertaking member or officer training was made to all authorities and in some cases this is likely to happen.
8. The 'duty to cooperate' emerging from the NPPF and Localism Act was discussed and it was recognised that the forums presented ideal opportunities to meet with neighbouring authorities to discuss common issues that may be relevant.
9. In order to try and get authorities engaged it was felt that it may be advantageous to host a future event and that if this was moved amongst the authorities it would help those that consider themselves to be more peripheral within the AONB to attend. Another way would be by asking an officer to do something specific (a telephone call is needed).
10. Useful updates were provided about the various local authority development plans.
11. The AONB boundary was also discussed with a request being made that any information about possible reviews be sent through to the Board's Planning Officer. Questions were asked about how any boundary review would be promoted – would it be via the Board or the Planning Forum? There is interest within some authorities for a review to take place, though it would help if any thoughts and ideas were shared so that a common approach could be taken, maybe even leading to a joint statement of intent for example. This may then help when engaging with Natural England.

12. Many authorities have recently been through re-organisations and these have meant that allocating issues like the AONB have not always been resolved. It was stressed that key contact officers should be known by both the Board and authority, particularly where these have changed. It may be possible for workshops to be organised as one way of highlighting AONB issues.
13. Some authorities mentioned the County or District groupings of officers and Members. In some instances the attendance by the Board's Planning Officer on an annual basis would be investigated as a means by which key issues could be presented.
14. It was suggested that meetings could be organised using online survey monkey/doodle poll or similar techniques and that information could be exchanged in a similar way, without it clogging up websites for example.
15. It was stressed that the local authority AONB contacts should be used for many issues and that these should be kept up to date (in some instances officers are moving on and likely to be changing).
16. Some authorities suggested that in connection with planning applications it would be useful to have a conversation with key officers about the types of applications that the Board needs to be consulted on. Equally there will be some applications that we do not need to comment on. There may be a need to address this via a Board Planning Committee decision. At the very least a short list could be prepared that details those sorts of applications that the Board would generally not comment on.
17. The Board's 'not commenting' letter was also discussed and it has been resolved that this should change to be unequivocal (this was discussed as part of the planning applications item at the Board's Planning Committee meeting on 8th February 2012 and changes have subsequently been made).
18. The need for officer and Member training was raised by a number of the authorities and it was stressed that the Board is happy for its Planning Officer to undertake such training. It can be tailored to the audience and if there is a particular issue to cover this can be dealt with.
19. Forum meetings should ideally have a set of outcomes which can be circulated after any meetings.
20. The need for involvement in some issues at an early stage was discussed with some authorities. This is invariably a useful thing to do, but the Board should not be seen as a free consultant.
21. Though the forum is seen as a welcome thing to have, care will be needed to make sure the agendas at future meetings are focussed and that there are not too many items to cover. An alert about the topics to be covered should be provided in advance. It should be clear what is being covered, why it is important and what we hope to get out of the meeting.
22. In some cases it would be useful to have officer only meetings to deal with some issues.
23. The AONB Management Plan should be discussed in some detail with emerging issues being subject to close scrutiny (equestrian use for example).
24. It would be useful to ask people in advance if there are any specific issues that ought to be covered (time permitting).
25. It might be useful to involve transport and minerals officers (more for County Councils).

26. A suggestion was made that meetings could be themed and that cross boundary issues could be addressed (consistency of approach for example).
27. Community Infrastructure Levy was mentioned as something that could be talked about, getting hands on the money and delivery of GI for example, though with offsetting more may take place off site.

LPA contact officers are asked to ensure that these notes are sent to key officers, the Cabinet Member of Portfolio Holder for Planning and Chair of the Planning Committee.



A note in connection with:

Planning applications that the Chilterns Conservation Board wishes to be consulted on

The Chilterns Conservation Board has a protocol in place with the local planning authorities covering the Chilterns AONB, which addresses consultation arrangements in connection with both planning applications and planning policy documents.

The protocol states that the local planning authorities will undertake to send the Board details of applications which are: 'considered by the Local Planning Authority to be of significance for the AONB, are contrary to local and national planning policy, or are likely to set a precedent for the future'.

Such applications will generally be of a scale or form that would warrant a response from the Board. However, in most instances the planning applications that are submitted to the local planning authorities would not generate a response from the Board. In those instances where the Board is consulted on such applications the Board's Planning Officer will respond with a 'not commenting' response along the following lines (approved at the Board's Planning Committee on 8th February 2012):

Thank you for consulting the Chilterns Conservation Board in connection with the application detailed above.

I am writing to let you know that the Chilterns Conservation Board will not be commenting on the planning application.

The Board recommends that the decision-maker takes into account the following:

- *The Chilterns AONB Management Plan*
- *The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes on Chilterns Building Materials (Flint, Brick and Roofing Materials)*
- *The Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns*
- *The Board's Position Statement on Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB*

In order to reduce the administrative burden on both local planning authorities and the Board it is requested that the Board is not generally consulted on planning applications for the following types of development:

1. Extensions where the extension is not significant in scale
2. Like for like replacement buildings

3. Small scale new buildings that are not in prominent locations
4. Internal or other minor alterations
5. Replacement or additional windows or doors
6. Amended plans for an application which the Board has not already commented on
7. Development outside the AONB which is unlikely to affect its setting
8. Change of use of buildings, unless it is likely to lead to the loss of a significant community facility (sole local employment site, pub or shop for example)

However, if the local planning authority considers that an application that falls within the categories detailed above is of such a scale, contrary to planning policy or likely to set a precedent, then it should use its discretion about whether to consult the Conservation Board or not. Note that the Board still has access to weekly lists of planning applications and can assess whether it is necessary to respond to certain applications.

In addition, the Board would welcome being consulted on all planning applications for the following types of development:

1. Telecommunications masts
2. Extraction of brickearth and development related to the local brick making industry
3. Waste activities
4. Floodlighting or other intrusive lighting
5. Equestrian development, particularly larger in scale and in prominent locations
6. Major housing development (10 dwellings or more or 0.5 hectare or more) or employment and similar development (1,000 square metres or 1 hectare or more)
7. Large scale agricultural development
8. Single, large isolated dwellings (new or replacement)
9. Land operations that involve significant cut or fill or alterations to landform
10. Noisy or intrusive recreation proposals
11. Gypsy and traveller accommodation
12. New visitor facilities

Item 9 Planning Conference 2012

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisation: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Budget of £1,200 and staff time

Summary: The next Chilterns AONB Planning Conference takes place on Wednesday 3rd October. Arrangements are being made and the event is being promoted.

Purpose of report: To inform the Committee about the details for the next Chilterns AONB Planning Conference and to encourage its promotion.

Background

1. The next annual Chilterns AONB Planning Conference will take place on Wednesday 3rd October 2012 at the Benson Village Hall in South Oxfordshire.
2. Four speakers have been confirmed. These are: Sebastian Charles, a planning lawyer, who will talk about decision-making post-NPPF; Tina Douglass, a planning barrister, who will talk about renewable energy and the NPPF's constraints; Jonathan Woods, Central Bedfordshire Council, who will talk about landscape master planning in practice (related to the duty to cooperate and local plan production), and the Board's Planning Officer who will talk about what seems to be missing from the NPPF and how the gaps may be filled.
3. A number of other speakers have been approached and so far none have agreed to come along. Approaches have been made to local authority contacts to try and get someone to come and talk about the new census information, population growth and the likely housing pressures that may emerge in local plans. Any change in this situation will be highlighted at the Committee meeting.
4. Based on the cost of hiring a coach and the fact that it will be very difficult to tie the conference theme to any specific sites it is proposed that site visits are not made as part of the conference programme this year.
5. Because of the limited number of available speakers it is also proposed that although the programme starts at 10 (with refreshments available from 9.30 as has previously been the case) but finishes with a buffet lunch at 1.15. With four or five speakers this will allow time for a break at about 11.15 as well as opportunities for questions and discussion through panel sessions. With the hall being booked until 3.30 there will also be an opportunity for networking.
6. A finalised programme is about to be issued and bookings encouraged. A message was sent to a wide audience in early August reminding people of the date and the fees (£30 for Parish and Town Councils, charities and similar organisations and £45 for all other attendees). A number of people have responded that they would like to attend and are looking forward to receiving further information.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee notes the arrangements for the next Chilterns AONB Planning Conference and promotes the event as widely as possible.**
- 2. That any Member wishing to attend informs the Planning Officer as soon as possible.**

Item 10 Student research project – implications of internet land sales

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisation: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Staff time.

Summary: The student research project to investigate the implications of internet land sales has been undertaken and the report has been received. Key conclusions and recommendations have been made and are reported.

Purpose of report: To inform the Committee about the key conclusions and recommendations emerging from a student research project to assess the implications of the sub-division of plots of land which are then sold on to numerous individuals.

Background

1. The Committee has previously approved the setting up of a student research project to investigate the implications for the landscape of the AONB of internet land sales.
2. A student in the Department of Planning and Real Estate at Oxford Brookes University agreed to undertake the project. A number of site visits were made, meetings took place with local authority planning officers whilst others have been approached for information in connection with some of the more historic sites.
3. A hard copy of the full report has been received and will be available at the committee meeting.
4. The report assesses sites at Stokenchurch and Cryers Hill. Both should be known to the Planning Committee as they have been visited previously as part of Planning Committee or Board tours.
5. The report concludes that there appears to be little or no formal agricultural use of the plots, apart from a very limited amount of sheep grazing. Some of the plots are taking on an unmanaged and unkempt appearance, with some plots appearing to be left to become an eyesore in an attempt to get some kind of beneficial planning permission in the future. Scrub encroachment is common.
6. In some instances, particularly at Cryers Hill, the lack of posts/fencing means that the land does not appear as sub-divided as was previously the case. Lack of proper management, however, has meant that though development has been stopped by the use of Article 4 Directions this has not solved the issue of the state of some of the land having an adverse impact on the landscape.
7. Changes were proposed by Government to the way that Article 4 Directions are served (without requiring the prior approval of the Secretary of State) which would allow the rapid serving of a notice. However, such changes have not been approved thus far. Advice is available to those that may be looking to buy such plots of land with web-based information warning possible purchasers about the likely pitfalls.

8. The report recommends greater use of Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (untidy site notices) when the landscape has become harmed. Such notices can require any damage to be repaired. It is recommended that the Board should contact local planning authorities to ask them to consider such actions when sites become untidy or the landscape harmed. Local authorities should continue to offer advice to prospective purchasers through their websites (this is already the case with the Board's website). It is also concluded that further research into this issue will be required.

Recommendations

1. **That the Committee notes the key conclusions and recommendations in connection with this student research project.**
2. **That local planning authorities are contacted in connection with untidy sites or those which are perceived to have damaged the landscape.**

Item 11 Luton development issues

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisation: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Staff time.

Summary: There are various proposals for development in the area around Luton. Site visits have been made to assess the implications and responses made to various planning consultations. The small working group that was recently set up should meet when required and should be kept informed of any other proposals.

Purpose of report: To inform the Committee about the recent site visit and to ensure that the small working group is maintained.

Background

1. The Committee will be aware of the various development pressures that exist around Luton. Various members of the Board (including members of the Planning Committee) visited the area to the north of Luton in late July to examine the likely implications arising from proposals for an urban extension to the north of Luton, a northern bypass (both of which would be partly located within the AONB) and a rail freight interchange. Notes of that visit are attached as Appendix 5.
2. The proposals are detailed in the Central Bedfordshire Draft Development Strategy which was the subject of recent consultation and a Board response (see Agenda Item 12).
3. A further document is being consulted on at present. The Southern Bedfordshire Chiltern Arc – Green Infrastructure and Access Vision Plan. This will be responded to shortly.
4. The various proposals have potential implications for the AONB and it will be necessary to keep a close eye on these and any other publications or proposals that emerge. There are likely to be implications for the AONB boundary. The Board is not aware of any other proposals in the areas to the south, east and west of Luton that are likely to have implications for the AONB or its boundary. It will be necessary to keep a close eye on plans for expansion at Luton Airport.
5. Because of the current pressures it will be necessary to maintain the small working group of Board members and others that was recently set up. It is proposed that meetings of this group be called as necessary.
6. As part of the review of the AONB Management Plan and the consideration of the AONB boundary, trips will have to be made to the area to the south of the A505 (east of Luton). It is suggested that the working group should also be involved in such field work.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee approves the maintenance of the working group.**

Notes from Chilterns Conservation Board site visit North of Luton 230712

In attendance:

Board Members: Mary Goldsmith, Bettina Kirkham, Marion Mustoe and Bill Storey

Officers: Steve Rodrick and Colin White

Purpose of site visit: to examine the likely implications arising from the proposed Luton Northern Bypass, strategic development area and rail freight interchange on the Chilterns AONB and its setting.

Key issues arising:

Road

- It would be better for any road to be located south of the two small areas of woodland which are just to the east of the overhead powerlines (the removal of these could be sought). This would help to protect the integrity of the woodlands, which would be put under a lot of pressure if included directly within any development.
- A more southerly and, particularly, sinuous alignment would also help to alleviate the view of the road from Galley Hill which is due east of the eastern end of the road (as currently proposed on the urban extension plan) with a potential view down much of the road's length.
- The road should be allowed to follow the contours rather than be on embankments or viaducts. Within cutting or under green bridges would not be a particular problem.
- A single carriageway road has been mentioned – this would not cause a particular problem in itself, though the width will need to be treated with great care (concerns were expressed about allowing extra land for possible dualling in the future), as will any signage and lighting (which should be at the absolute minimum).
- It was felt that access to the housing/employment area should be taken from the existing urban area – this is already mentioned in the text of the Development Strategy and is welcomed. This then puts a question mark over what purpose the bypass actually has as it would not sensibly link into the wider strategic road network.
- There is some concern about what might happen to the north of any road and what might be proposed. Whatever is proposed should blend seamlessly into the wider, normal and farmed countryside and provide a much softer urban edge than is currently the case around the north and east of Luton. If development is proposed then it should not turn its back on the countryside.

Housing development

- It was agreed that no development (road, housing, employment or park and ride) should take place within the AONB. This will clearly require a change to the boundary of the proposed urban extension which currently includes land within the AONB. This appears to be a result of copying the plan for the previous joint core strategy proposal into the new Development Strategy document. Although the text of the Development Strategy (para 13.36) does talk about a 'limited degree of incursion' into the AONB (which extends to about 31ha and which could accommodate about 750 houses). The Key Diagram is also wrong, particularly in connection with the alignment for the bypass (which follows the most northerly route that was proposed in the past). Any change in the area of the urban extension would lead to consequential changes to the revised Green Belt boundary. It would be sensible for the northern extent of the urban extension to be located sufficiently far south of the AONB to allow the setting of the AONB to be properly considered. The two boundaries should not be contiguous. The northern boundary of any development area should represent the southern boundary of the revised Green Belt.
- With a more southerly alignment being suggested for the road this puts a question mark over why development would need to be located within the AONB. This proposal does not reflect the text of the Development Strategy (para 13.31) which talks about 'adjoining' the AONB not being 'within' the AONB.
- Existing rights of way should remain and be improved with better signage and maintenance (where required).
- The provision of Green Infrastructure will be vital to ensure that better access to the wider countryside is available – there is currently a lack of routes that run north/south and there are various field margins that could be used and improved for access and wildlife. Use of S106/CIL monies should enable this to happen.
- Tree planting should take place within field boundaries – there are some remnant trees that will once have been on field edges, these should be protected and linked.
- The development should follow the contours to lessen landform changes that might be proposed – this will help to keep much of the development away from the skyline when viewed from within the AONB.
- Design/materials will be of paramount importance, particularly on the northern edge, but also within the development which will be looked down upon from Galley Hill – care will be needed with the layout so as not to lead to a huge area of roofs being visible. This could be broken up by sensible building orientation and tree planting.

Employment development

- It is considered likely that much of the employment development would take place at the western end of the site and opposite the employment site west of Sundon Park. The small settlement to the west of Lodge Farm on Sundon Road would be swamped by the Rail Freight Interchange, development area and changes to the highway network.
- Care will be needed with the design and layout of this part of the site as it potentially extends to within about 500 metres of the AONB at Lower Sundon. The setting of the AONB should be carefully considered. The impact of lighting will need very careful consideration.

- The Development Strategy also identifies the eastern end of the extension as a possible area for employment development. This area abuts the AONB and account must therefore be taken of the setting of the AONB and any proposal would need to be very carefully designed. The impact of lighting will also need very careful consideration here.

Rail Freight Interchange

- There was some discussion about whether or not a facility would be required at this site because there are other Interchanges not that far away.
- A proposal at Radlett³ near St Albans is the subject of an ongoing planning application which has still to be fully determined. It was refused by the Council with the decision being subject to appeal. The Inspector recommended that the appeal be allowed but the Secretary of State overturned the decision. This was then subject to appeal in the High Court and the decision quashed. The outcome is awaited.
- A site already exists at Daventry⁴ (next to Junction 18 on the M1) an extension for which was permitted in 2005 and constructed recently. A further extension is proposed which is at pre-application stage with the National Infrastructure Directorate at the Planning Inspectorate.
- Radlett and Daventry are about 65 miles apart, albeit on different rail lines (Midland Mainline for Radlett and West Coast Mainline for Daventry) they are both near the M1 motorway.
- Aside from questioning any need that might arise, it was felt that the impacts of the interchange on the AONB itself are likely to be limited. However, this should not mean complacency as the form, design and use of the site are likely to have some degree of impact on the setting of the AONB. Large, bulky buildings with lots of lighting and 24 hour a day use will have impacts over a wide area.

³ See: <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/railfreight/> and <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/railfreight/Railfreightplanningapplication.aspx> (plan)

⁴ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daventry_International_Rail_Freight_Terminal

Item 12 Development Plans Responses

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisations: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Staff time.

Summary: Responses have been sent in connection with the public consultation exercises on the following development plan documents: **English Heritage** Great Western Railway main line designation consultation; **Bucks CC** Proposed Changes Minerals and Waste Core Strategy; **Oxfordshire CC** Minerals and Waste Core Strategy proposed submission; **Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils** consultation on main and additional modifications to the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy; **Wycombe DC** Delivery and Site allocations DPD submission; **Luton BC** Local Plan 2011-2031 issues; **Central Bedfordshire Council** Draft Development Strategy.

Purpose of report: To inform the Committee about, and approve, the responses that have been made under delegated powers in connection with the development plan documents as listed.

Background

The following paragraphs detail the responses that have already been drafted and sent in connection with the public consultation exercises on the development plan documents as listed.

Great Western Railway Main Line Designation Consultation

1. The Chilterns Conservation Board was established by Parliament in 2004. The Board has two statutory purposes (as defined by Section 87 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000): To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB. In fulfilling these purposes, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the AONB.
2. The Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2008-13 A Framework for Action includes the following relevant policies with respect to the Historic Environment: HE1 Improve the understanding of the character, and conservation and management needs of the historic environment to assist site and property management, HE2 Resist land use changes and management practices which would harm nationally designated and locally important historic assets and their settings, HE3 Promote best practice for the conservation of the historic environment, HE5 Ensure the design and location of new development is sympathetic to the character of the historic environment, HE6 Promote community involvement in the conservation and interpretation of the historic environment, HE7 Support the preparation and implementation of conservation plans

for appropriate areas and sites and HE8 Promote public awareness and enjoyment of the historic environment and involvement in its conservation and stewardship.

3. Furthermore, Paragraph 115 of the recently approved National Planning Policy Framework states: 'Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas.'
4. With these policies in mind the Board has reviewed the published Great Western Railway Line designation consultation document and writes to support the following candidates for review: Gatehampton Viaduct (MLN1 4402) – currently listed Grade II and Moulsoford Viaduct (MLN1 4730) – currently listed Grade II.
5. They are considered to contribute greatly to the historic environment of the Chilterns AONB and are believed to be located within the AONB and its immediate setting. Anything that can be done to ensure that their architectural and historic integrity are retained and that they continue to enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB is welcomed by the Board.

Bucks CC Proposed Changes Minerals and Waste Core Strategy

6. Various modifications were supported as drafted – 23 (change to wording to reflect CRoW Act and AONBs), 46 (change to wording to refer to 'purposes' rather than 'objectives' of the AONB), 99 (alteration of title of section to refer to 'conservation and enhancement' of the AONB), 103 (change to wording to refer to 'purposes' rather than 'objectives' of the AONB)
7. Objections were submitted in connection with the following modifications:
8. 73 (relating to the waste transfer station at Amersham) - Though the modification involves moving text from one part of the policy to another, the implication remains that the policy still fails to take proper account of the requirement to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB. The Board previously expressed support for the waste option that involved Calvert and Wapseys Wood rather than an intensification of uses at High Heavens and London Road, Amersham and College Road North, Aston Clinton because it was considered that the latter alternative would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and could not be delivered without leading to significant detrimental impacts on the AONB and its enjoyment that could not be overcome. The proposal for London Road, Amersham would involve a very large, utilitarian building with a significant level of traffic generation which would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. The Board cannot see how the detrimental impact of these issues could be addressed whilst retaining such a facility at this site and considers that these matters would not be addressed through application of policy CS21 in the Core Strategy. The Board therefore maintains its objection to the waste transfer station at London Road, Amersham on the basis that its development: would not be consistent with Policy CS21; would be in conflict with the purposes of the AONB and would not comply with the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the National Planning Policy Framework (particularly sections 115 and 116 which require a clear demonstration that the tests for major

development in the AONB have been applied and passed, which the Board does not consider to be the case here). The Board notes that Figure 4 provides a clear indication that reliance on one strategic waste complex will lead to a significant amount of movement of waste within the County, much of which would be by road. The Board requested the following as a change: Remove London Road, Amersham as a proposed Waste Transfer Station and replace it with an alternative that has been subject to and passed the tests required by section 116 of the NPPF if it is located within the Chilterns AONB.

9. 107 (related to transport of material by road) - Though the Board supports this modification, it fails to see how it can be effectively achieved when taking account of the proposals for Waste Transfer Stations at High Heavens and London Road, Amersham, which would create a significant amount of movement of waste within the county on roads rather than rail. The Board did not seek a change to this modification but a change to modification 73 as detailed in separate comments.

Oxfordshire CC Minerals and Waste Core Strategy proposed submission

10. The submission document incorporates Policy M3 (ii) which includes the following: 'Caversham through extensions to existing quarries or new quarries to replace exhausted quarries' and 'a new area of working at Cholsey'.
11. The Chilterns Conservation Board objects to the Proposed Submission Core Strategy and particularly its effectiveness and consistency with national policy in relation to the proposed new mineral working site at Cholsey.
12. The Board notes that the proposed minerals site at Cholsey lies outside the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. However, it is immediately adjacent to, and lies in a gap between, these two AONBs. Similarly, the Board notes that the proposed extension/new quarry at Caversham also lies outside the Chilterns AONB. However, it is considered to be within the setting of the AONB.
13. The Board welcomes the fact that the Core Strategy includes positive support to exclude or restrict new minerals and waste developments from within the AONBs in line with the NPPF. The Board also welcomes the stance taken on development within the settings of the AONBs (Policy C6). The Strategy makes reference to and illustrates the AONBs at various points including: paragraph 2.2 and Figure 1; Policy M3; paragraph 4.29; Figure 11; paragraph 5.53; Figure 13 and in particular in paragraph 6.36 and Policy C6 in connection with landscape which deals specifically with AONBs and is welcomed.
14. However, the Chilterns Conservation Board still has serious reservations as to whether the Cholsey site, although not actually in an AONB, can successfully be exploited without in fact causing harm to both the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a statutory duty on the Council to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONBs and great weight is afforded to their protection through the NPPF.
15. Even though the Core Strategy seeks to protect and avoid the AONBs and to limit developments affecting their settings, the Board still considers that the Core Strategy is neither effective nor consistent with national policy because the site at Cholsey, although not in the Chilterns or North Wessex Downs AONBs is still in very close

proximity to the AONBs and likely to cause a significant level of harm to their settings.

16. The Chilterns Conservation Board responded to the Council earlier this year to the continued inclusion of the site at Cholsey and extension of the site at Caversham stating:
17. The Chilterns Conservation Board remains unconvinced that the Cholsey minerals site could be successfully worked out without causing some harm to the Chilterns AONB. The Board's preference is for investigating alternative sites to avoid this risk in the first place. If Cholsey remains as the only viable site having looked at and reported all alternatives, the Board would still need a number of matters of detail to be resolved before it would be in a position to reconsider this option.
18. The Cholsey site is immediately adjacent to the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. As you know these are nationally protected landscapes. This fact will therefore require the County Council to undertake a very careful consideration in weighing up whether this is an acceptable site in landscape terms. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 remains in place and requires all bodies, including Councils, to have consideration to the purpose of conserving and enhancing AONBs.
19. Last year the Board adopted and published its position statement on Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB. Although the setting does not have a defined geographical boundary, the Board considers that it is the area within which development and land management proposals, by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design could be considered to have an impact, either positive or negative, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Chilterns AONB.
20. The Board considers that the proposed minerals site at Cholsey to be of such a likely scale and is in such close proximity to the AONB to result in the potential for harm. The Board's preference is that this site should be avoided, and that other less sensitive landscape locations should be considered before this site to avoid harm to the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs.
21. The Board welcomes the production of the Strategic Landscape Assessment. However, the Board has the following comments to make by way of response to the assessment:
 - We would have expected an assessment of the landscape impact on each of the separate character areas, rather than the inclusion of the key landscape characteristics in a list.
 - Both of the AONBs have position statements on the impact of development on the settings of the AONBs (which include a series of tests) and these should be acknowledged and applied in this assessment.
22. Caversham
 - For the Caversham site, the Board considers more should be done to protect the character and views from the AONB's setting.
 - The desire to provide screening for the future extraction has led to a significant amount of planting which is changing the character of views from the lower slopes of the Chilterns plateau. The long views down the valley are being lost as they are obscured by new trees and tree and shrub belts. This planting is seen as

a positive thing in the assessment but there is no evidence that the Council has assessed whether this is a positive change. Many would see this as a loss of the open visual relationship between the river landscape and the plateau slopes. The planting is changing the landscape character of the valley floor and the visual character of the AONB plateau setting.

23. Cholsey

- For the Cholsey site screen planting could have an adverse long term impact on the character of the boundaries of the AONBs and the settings of the AONBs.
- This area is currently undisturbed by extraction so any quarry would clearly have a greater impact than at Caversham.
- Although the assessment finds a moderate to slight adverse impact it seems to have been swept under the carpet on the basis that the long term restoration will be fine.
- For 6 months of the year native planting serves little purpose for screening.
- Extraction here is considered to be at a high risk and likely to be harmful.
- Full details of the level of extraction, associated traffic and detailed methods of extraction and restoration would be needed.
- Full and appropriate restoration would be required, a series of permissions for other waste or mineral related uses would extend the time span of harm from this site and would result in visual coalescence between Cholsey and Wallingford.
- Given the proximity of the AONBs, the Board considers that more detailed analysis is needed before any part of the site should be allocated, or extraction figures included in the Plan.
- The final conclusion is not substantiated by the study (even as far as it goes) and there is no real evidence to support the claim that any impacts can be significantly mitigated.

24. The Board would only reconsider its position if all other opportunities in less sensitive landscape locations have been fully considered and reported and dismissed for valid reasons. Even then we would still need far greater detail before we would be convinced that mineral extraction in the Cholsey area could be undertaken in such a sensitive way that it would still at least conserve the natural beauty of the edges of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs.

25. The Board sought the following changes:

26. Remove the Cholsey site from the Core Strategy. In addition, all other opportunities in less sensitive landscape locations should be fully considered and reported and if dismissed this should be for valid reasons. Should the Cholsey site remain as part of the Core Strategy then the Board considers that much greater detail is needed in connection this site. This should include the level of extraction, likely associated traffic generation and routing and detailed methods of working and restoration.

27. For Caversham, greater consideration should be given to the likely implications of any extension/new quarry on the setting of the AONB and of the impacts of the increased level of screen planting that is proposed and taking place. Such considerations should be reported in the Core Strategy.

Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils consultation on main and additional modifications to the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy

28. On page 10 there is a reference to AONBs and legislation – it states that: ‘There are two major land use designations in the Plan area which are significant influences upon this Core Strategy. They are the South Bedfordshire Green Belt, and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These have the benefit of protection under national policy and legislation’. The proposed change would delete the reference to legislation. This is a mistake. AONBs are protected under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This is a piece of legislation which places upon Councils a duty to have regard to the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of AONBs. The Board suggests that this proposed deletion should be reversed.

Wycombe DC Delivery and Site allocations DPD submission

29. Policy HWTC1 (delivering the town centre vision) - The Board supports this policy as drafted, particularly as it applies to the utilisation of the River Wye for place making and its re-opening to improve the river corridor (criterion e).
30. Paragraph 3.17 (town centre vision) – The Board supports this paragraph, specifically as it relates to the de-culverting of the River Wye.
31. Policy HWTC2 (town centre environment) – The Board supports this policy as drafted, particularly as it applies to the improvement and utilisation of the River Wye for place making.
32. Paragraph 3.25 (town centre environment) – The Board supports this paragraph, specifically as it relates to the de-culverting of the River Wye and enhancement of the river corridors.
33. Policy HWTC10 (Swan frontage) – The Board supports this policy as drafted, particularly as it relates to the enhancement of the River Wye corridor (criterion 3b) and seeks de-culverting of the River Wye (criterion 5).
34. Paragraphs 3.70 and 3.77 (Swan frontage) – The Board supports these paragraphs, specifically as they relate to the de-culverting of the River Wye and enhancement of its corridor.
35. Policy HWTC16 (Oxford Road roundabout) - The Board supports this policy as drafted, particularly as it relates to the de-culverting of the River Wye (criterion 5).
36. Paragraph 3.121 (Oxford Road roundabout) - The Board supports this paragraph as drafted, particularly as it relates to the de-culverting of the River Wye.
37. Policy HWTC18 (Baker Street) – The Board supports this policy as drafted, particularly as it relates to the opening up and enhancement of the River Wye corridor (criterion 2c).
38. Paragraph 3.133 (Baker Street) - The Board supports this paragraph as drafted, particularly as it relates to the opening up and enhancement of the River Wye corridor.

39. Policy HW2 (delivering new open space and river corridor improvements) – The Board supports this policy as drafted.
40. Paragraph 3.152 (delivering new open space and river corridor improvements) - The Board supports this paragraph as drafted.
41. Policy DM10 (green networks and infrastructure) – The Board supports this policy as drafted.
42. Policy DM11 (green spaces) – The Board supports this policy as drafted.
43. Policy DM12 (conservation and enhancement of sites, habitats and species of biodiversity and geodiversity) – The Board supports this policy as drafted.
44. Policy DM13 (biodiversity in development) – The Board supports this policy as drafted.
45. Policy DM14 (protection and enhancement of river and stream corridors) – The Board supports this policy as drafted.

Luton Local Plan 2011-2031 issues

46. The Council prepared a simple leaflet and questionnaire that was filled in online with the following answers to a number of questions.
47. 1 a) How can we plan for future housing needs? The Chilterns Conservation Board has no specific comments to make about this statement other than to suggest that any development that is proposed should clearly take account of its context, be well designed and sustainably constructed. This is particularly pertinent in connection with any proposals that might be located on the edge of the urban area in close proximity to the nationally designated Chilterns AONB. The Council has a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of the Chilterns AONB in any decision that may affect it (Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and clearly any development should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.
48. 1 b) What are the main issues or reasons that influenced your answer above? The Chilterns AONB abuts the built up area of Luton and growth pressures may place undue stress on the nationally protected landscape.
49. 2 a) Do you have ideas on how to encourage housing, jobs and wellbeing within the limited space of the town over the next 20 years without destroying our natural and built environment? The Chilterns Conservation Board has no specific comments to make about this statement other than to suggest that any development that is proposed should clearly take account of its context, be well designed and sustainably constructed.
50. 3) How can a 20 year plan improve the pattern of facilities such as shopping, jobs, leisure and services within the town to meet future needs, eg libraries, health clinics, dentist and Council services? The Chilterns Conservation Board has no specific comments to make about this statement other than to suggest that all facilities that are required as a result of any new development should be provided with that development by the developers where possible.
51. 4 a) What are your priorities to help improve connections between people, green space, jobs and services while minimising traffic grid lock, harmful pollution and risks of climate change associated with CO2 emissions? The Plan should provide for all

necessary infrastructure including Green Infrastructure which takes full account of the locality and the need to provide improved links to the wider countryside without leading to detrimental impacts on that environment. Clearly, the Chilterns AONB should be addressed by a specific policy which seeks to ensure that the natural beauty of the area is conserved and enhanced.

52. 4 b) How can we improve creative design to deliver: more quality within our natural and built environment; more of the community facilities that we need; more sustainable energy sources, increased efficiency and less need for energy? Full account should be taken of the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and the supplementary technical notes on Chilterns building materials (flint, brick and roofing materials) as well as the AONB Management Plan and the Board's recent position statement on development affecting the setting of the AONB.

Central Bedfordshire Council Draft Development Strategy

53. The Board has a comment about Chapter 2 regarding issues and challenges. On pages 9/10 the Board considers that 'landscape' should be addressed as an Issue and Challenge, to a greater extent than is currently identified in the fourth bullet point under paragraph 2.16. The need to ensure conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB should be specifically detailed at this point. This is a particular challenge for the strategy based on other elements that are commented on below.
54. The Vision for Central Bedfordshire is generally welcomed, though the Board would have preferred to see a specific mention of the need to ensure conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB as the AONB is a nationally protected landscape.
55. The Board objects to the lack of a strategic objective which is specifically related to the importance of the Chilterns AONB to the area and the need to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB, this should be addressed by revisions to Table 3.1, and Strategic Objectives 4 and/or 5.
56. The Strategy for Growth details various issues and considers the countryside and rural settlements without any reference at all to the nationally protected Chilterns AONB. This should be addressed by revisions to paragraph 5.10. Any reference should refer to the need to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB.
57. Policy 10 deals with rural economy and tourism. The Board welcomes the reference to the need to consider proposals against the need to protect valuable landscapes. However, this reference should specifically refer to the Chilterns AONB and the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.
58. Policy 13 deals with retail in the rural area. The Board welcomes and supports the policy as drafted, particularly the protection afforded to shops and pubs in villages.

59. Chapter 8 deals with Infrastructure. Paragraph 8.3 mentions the Infrastructure Schedule. The Board welcomes many elements of the schedule, and in particular the identification of the need for funding of about £360m towards the provision of Green Infrastructure. The Board also welcomes the identified improvements to cycling and pedestrian routes and towards a regional cycle route network. However, the Board objects to the inclusion within the schedule of the A6 to A505 road scheme (see TR-90) which has no detail other than a possible delivery date of post 2031. As this is beyond the scope of the current strategy it would more properly be considered as part of a future review.
60. Policy 23 is concerned with public rights of way. This policy is welcomed and supported as drafted.
61. Policy 44 and Paragraph 11.48 deal with high quality development. The Board welcomes the policy and its supporting paragraph 11.48 and particularly supports the reference to the need for development proposals in the AONB to follow the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide. However, this principle is not addressed in Policy 44 as drafted and the Board considers that this should be amended accordingly.
62. Policy 50 and paragraph 12.8 deal with renewable and low carbon energy development. The Board welcomes the stance taken in connection with the provision of renewable energy and the fact that only certain technologies are considered to be suitable to the area (the list does not include wind and this is particularly welcomed). The requirement to have no adverse impact on the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns AONB as detailed in Policy 50 is welcomed and supported as drafted.
63. Paragraph 12.13 to 12.15 deal with water efficiency and are welcomed and supported as drafted.
64. Policy 54 is concerned with biodiversity and geological conservation and is supported as drafted.
65. Policy 55 is concerned with Green Infrastructure and is supported as drafted.

66. Policy 56 and Paragraph 12.67 are concerned with landscape and the Chilterns AONB. Though the inclusion of the policy and text is welcomed the Board does not consider that as drafted they adequately reflect the relevant legislation (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and Government policy in the NPPF. The Board suggests that the final sentence of Paragraph 12.67 should be amended by the addition of 'to and' before 'from' in the penultimate line, such that the text would read: 'include development outside of the AONB boundary which might threaten its unique qualities, for instance by harming views to and from the AONB'. The Board considers that the first paragraph of Policy 56 would benefit from two amendments to enable it to better reflect relevant legislation and the NPPF. In the first instance it is suggested that 'of the natural beauty of the area' is added at the end of the first sentence. Secondly, it is suggested that the harm caused by light pollution should be reflected by adding this at the end of the first paragraph. The amended first paragraph would then read as follows: The Council will ensure that the highest level of protection will be afforded to the landscape of the Chilterns AONB primarily through conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area. Any development which has an unacceptable impact on the Chilterns landscape will be refused. This will, where relevant, include development outside of the AONB which is judged harmful to the AONB, through for example, adverse impacts due to visual intrusion, ~~and~~ noise or light pollution.
67. Policy 57 deals with woodlands, tress and hedgerows and is welcomed and supported as drafted.

68. Policy 59 and Paragraphs 13.31 to 13.46 deal with the north of Luton strategic allocation. Based on the information provided in the Strategy, the Board considers that this proposal will neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB and its setting, particularly as part of the site is within the AONB. The 'limited incursion' referred to in paragraph 13.32 amounts to about 30 hectares which, at a conservative estimate, could accommodate about 750 dwellings. The Board also objects to the lack of recognition of the AONB in the policy as drafted, this is regarded as a serious omission. The Board considers that the proposal would be a major development and would fail to pass the tests for such development as detailed in the NPPF. The Board also notes that the Strategy as drafted conflicts with itself, on the one hand affording the greatest protection to the AONB through Policy 56, and stating that the allocation would adjoin the AONB and that the AONB would form the northern flank (in other words it would not be inside but outside), then on the other hand allowing for major development to take place within the protected landscape. This fails to comply with the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the NPPF. Those parts of the proposed developments that are within the AONB should be removed and those parts immediately adjacent to or within the setting of the AONB should be properly addressed through any future master planning exercise which must deal in detail with siting, massing, layout, design and materials for example, with very careful attention being paid to the nationally designated landscape. The Board expects to be involved in the preparation of such a master plan at a very early stage. The Board considers that the Development Strategy fails to take proper account of the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. The key diagram and Green Belt/allocations maps as detailed in the Strategy are also inconsistent. The Board welcomes a more southerly alignment for the northern bypass as shown on the Green Belt/allocations maps, and therefore objects to the key diagram which shows an alignment that is clearly much further north and mostly within the AONB.

69. The Board considers that the following comments, which will relate to the production of any master plan, are also relevant and should be considered as part of its response on the development strategy. It would be better for any road to be located south of the two small areas of woodland which are just to the east of the overhead powerlines (the removal of these could also be sought). This would help to protect the integrity of the woodlands, which would be put under a lot of pressure if included directly within any development. A more southerly and, particularly, sinuous alignment would also help to alleviate the view of the road from Galley Hill which is due east of the eastern end of the road (as currently proposed on the urban extension plan) with a potential view down much of the road's length. The road should be allowed to follow the contours rather than be on embankments or viaducts. Within cutting or under green bridges would not be a particular problem. The width of the road will need to be treated with great care (extra land should not be allowed for possible dualling in the future), as will any signage and lighting (which should be at the absolute minimum). Access to the housing/employment area should be taken from the existing urban area – this is already mentioned in the text of the Development Strategy and is welcomed. However, this then puts a question mark over what purpose the bypass actually has as it would not sensibly link into the wider strategic road network. The Strategy does not provide any detail about what might happen to the north of any road and what might be proposed. Whatever is proposed should blend seamlessly into the wider, normal and farmed countryside and provide a much softer urban edge than is currently the case around the north and east of Luton. If development is proposed then it should not turn its back on the countryside and it should all be outside the AONB. It would be sensible for the northern extent of the urban extension to be located sufficiently far south of the AONB to allow the setting of the AONB to be properly considered. The two boundaries should not be contiguous. Existing rights of way should remain and be improved with better signage and maintenance (where required). The provision of Green Infrastructure will be vital to ensure that better access to the wider countryside is available – there is currently a lack of routes that run north/south and there are various field margins that could be used and improved for access and wildlife. Use of S106/CIL monies should enable this to happen. Tree planting should take place within field boundaries – there are some remnant trees that will once have been on field edges, these should be protected and linked. The development should follow the contours to lessen landform changes that might be proposed – this will help to keep much of the development away from the skyline when viewed from within the AONB. Design/materials will be of paramount importance, particularly on the northern edge, but also within the development which will be looked down upon from Galley Hill – care will be needed with the layout so as not to lead to a huge area of roofs being visible. This could be broken up by sensible building orientation and tree planting and reference to the Board's Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes on building materials. It is considered likely that much of the employment development would take place at the western end of the site and opposite the employment site west of Sundon Park. The small settlement to the west of Lodge Farm on Sundon Road would be swamped by the Rail Freight Interchange, development area and changes to the highway network. Care will be needed with the design and layout of this part of the site as it potentially extends to within about 500 metres of the AONB at Lower Sundon. The setting of the AONB should be carefully considered. The impact of lighting will need very careful consideration. The

Development Strategy also identifies the eastern end of the urban extension as a possible area for employment development. This area abuts the AONB and account must therefore be taken of the setting of the AONB and any proposal would need to be very carefully designed and be of the highest standard. The impact of lighting will also need very careful consideration here.

70. The Board also considers at this point that it would be appropriate to remind the Council of both the Board's purposes and the duties of the Council. A Conservation Board is a statutory independent corporate body set up by Parliamentary Order under the provisions of Section 86 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Section 87 of the CRoW Act sets out the purposes of a conservation board as: a) the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty, and b) the purpose of increasing the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the area of outstanding natural beauty. But if it appears to the board that there is a conflict between those purposes, they are to attach greater weight to the purpose mentioned in paragraph (a). Furthermore "A conservation board, while having regard to the purposes mentioned in subsection (1) [of Section 87], shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the area of outstanding natural beauty, and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of outstanding natural beauty." Section 85 of the CRoW Act states under "General duty of public bodies etc." "(1) In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty." AONBs are recognised as having the highest quality landscape and are protected at the national level through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and NPPF.
71. The Board objects to Policy 61 and the identification of land at Sundon Quarry for a rail freight interchange as it considers that: the need for such a facility is questionable based on the existence of an existing site for the same use at Daventry and the fact that another site may be approved shortly at Radlett near Watford; this is likely to have a detrimental impact on the landscape in the setting of the Chilterns AONB; it is also likely to affect the quiet enjoyment of the AONB in the area around the Sundon Hills Country Park and would lead to very limited employment provision. Based on the proximity of the site to the Chilterns AONB, the Board considers that very careful thought will need to be given to the form, design and use of the site because these are likely to have some degree of impact on the setting of the AONB. Large, bulky buildings with a significant amount of lighting and 24 hour a day use will have impacts over a wide area. The Board considers that such a development would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and its setting and would therefore not comply with the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the NPPF.

Recommendation

- 1. That the Committee notes and approves the responses already made on behalf of the Board in connection with the consultation exercises on the development plan documents detailed above.**

Item 12 Planning Applications Update

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Lead Organisations: Chilterns Conservation Board

Resources: Staff time.

Summary: Representations have been made regarding a number of planning applications and appeals and a number of previous cases have been determined.

Purpose of report: To inform the Committee about the various representations that have been made in connection with planning applications and appeals and to update the Committee on any outcomes.

Background

1. Since the 1st April this year the Board has been consulted on 63 applications and has responded to all of these. There have been 11 formal representations (all objections).
2. The applications that have resulted in formal representations in 2012/13 include:

Objections

- Major development east of Aylesbury (not yet decided)
 - Redevelopment of sheltered housing site at Goring (not yet decided)
 - Stables, barn and hardstanding at Ibstone (refused)
 - Redevelopment of CABI site at Wallingford (not yet decided)
 - 8 floodlights on 6 columns at a school at Great Kingshill (approved)
 - Gates, piers and walls, Heath End near Berkhamsted, (not yet decided)
 - Coachway, new sports and leisure centre, offices, hotel, food store, amenities building, landscaping and open space at Handy Cross, High Wycombe (not yet decided)
 - Redevelopment of Carmel College, Wallingford (not yet decided)
 - Change of use from agriculture to campsite, near Princes Risborough (not yet decided)
 - Creation of new access and stationing of mobile home, Spurlands End Road, Great Kingshill (two applications, neither yet decided)
3. The outstanding formal representations are detailed in Appendix 6, and where decisions have been made by the local planning authorities these are detailed.

Recommendation

1. **That the Committee notes and approves the responses made in connection with the applications listed in Appendix 6.**

APPENDIX 6

Location	LPA	Development	Ref. No.	Status	AONB Planning Officer's Response	Date
Meadhams Farm Brickworks	BCC	Variation of conditions	CH/2011/60006/BCC	Pending	Support - Based on the need to continue to provide good quality local building materials into the future. Development conforms to AONB Management Plan (policies D3 and D4). The Board would be concerned if inappropriate waste was to be deposited in the voids that will be left and trusts that, should permission be granted, this will be adequately conditioned to ensure that it is carefully screened, closely monitored and involves totally inert waste due to the fact that the site is in close proximity to the River Chess and sits on the chalk aquifer.	28.09.11
County Highways Depot, London Road, Amersham	BCC	Waste Transfer Station and associated developments	CH/2011/60005/BCC	Refused – 02.08.12	Object – the proposal would involve a very large building and another smaller building as well as other buildings and structures which would be more visible and have a greater impact on the landscape, the design and materials of the buildings are out of keeping with the AONB and do not accord with the Buildings Design Guide, there would be a significant amount of traffic associated with the site and the depot, the former use of the site is landfill and this may cause problems with construction, the lighting proposed has no detail but would cause a significant increase in light when taken with the neighbouring site, there would be a significant amount of 3m high fencing and acoustic barriers (much associated with a bund up to 2m high), screening appears to want to hide the development, great care is needed in connection with the water environment (River Misbourne and aquifer) and proposal would be contrary to the	18.10.11

					purposes of the AONB and its Management Plan, PPS7 and SE Plan policy C3.	
High Heavens Waste Site, Clay Lane Booker	BCC	New access road	CC12/9002/CM	Pending	Object – development neither conserves nor enhances the natural beauty of the AONB and is contrary to the AONB Management Plan and development plan for the area, the road would be additional to highway improvements already considered as part of an application that is likely to be approved shortly and there is no overriding need and no special circumstances that would require an additional road (applicant refers to the road as an alternative despite the fact that it would be used by HGVs whilst the existing road would be used by cars and other light vehicles).	27.04.12
Caversham Quarry, Sonning Eye	Oxon CC	Quarry extension	MW.0158/1	Pending	Object – although outside the AONB the site is within its setting and is clearly visible from the Thames valley sides. The development would involve mineral extraction and site restoration with inert waste over a considerable period of time. There would be lorry movements on roads that lead into the AONB. The LVIA has not taken proper account of the need to consider the setting of the AONB.	26.01.12
Hampden Fields, between Wendover Road and Aston Clinton Road, Weston Turville	AVDC	Mixed use development including 3,200 dwellings, 120 bed care home, park and ride site, 10ha of employment land, local centre, Green Infrastructure and open space	12/00605/A OP	Pending	Object – lack of building designs means a full assessment of the proposal is difficult, particularly as some elements may be up to 15m high (or higher), the development would lead to the loss of a strategic green gap between Aylesbury and Weston Turville, the proposal is likely to lead to detrimental impacts on the setting of the AONB due to the effects on views of the Vale of Aylesbury from within the AONB and effects on views of the AONB from within and beyond the application site, the proposed development is on previously undeveloped land and is unallocated for	30.04.12

		(amongst other things)			development, whilst recognising that the proposal would have significant effects on views from the AONB these are dismissed, views of the AONB are not considered in any detail, no illustrative material is provided to show how the proposed development would appear, the proposal is not in accordance with the Development Plan and the Chilterns AONB Management Plan, the applicant should be requested to provide sufficient detail to show the visual impact of the development once completed and should permission be granted then conditions should be imposed requiring landscaping to mitigate the adverse impacts and details of building materials to be provided.	
Valley View, Hemel Hempstead Road, Dagnall	CBC	Proposed gypsy site (5 caravans)	CB/11/0380 7/FULL	Pending	Object – very limited amounts of detail in the application, no information about scale and appearance of buildings on the site, development would have materially greater impact on the AONB than any currently approved development, current and proposed hedge includes species not appropriate in the AONB, application is very similar to a recently refused and dismissed on appeal application that would have involved less development on the site and the development would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.	29.11.11
Newland Park, Gorelands Lane, Chalfont St Giles	CDC	Redevelopment of site to provide 326 dwellings, fitness and sports facilities and energy / recycling centre	CH/2010/09 76/FA	Pending	Object – (see copied information sent out for full details) the Board does not object to the principle of the proposal and a redevelopment of parts of the site would bring about enhancement of the AONB if undertaken in the most sensitive manner, using the best designs and most appropriate materials. There are elements of detail the Board objects to including: the design and materials for various buildings (both parkland dwellings and	03.11.10

					<p>apartment blocks), the lack of provision of solar pv and solar hot water, provision of extra lighting (particularly in association with the playing pitches), the lack of provision of affordable housing, lack of facilities such as shops and employment and lack of public transport provision thus leading to significant amounts of car traffic on minor local roads and the likely impacts of large numbers of lorries on the same roads during construction (to bring materials in and take spoil away).</p> <p>Revisions to design – object – the revisions do not address the Board’s concerns, in fact despite the changes to the appearance the buildings are all taller and more bulky, also object to inclusion of basements in some buildings (spoil issue) and other objections remain from previous response.</p>	24.01.12
Kitcheners Field, Berkhamsted	DBC	All-weather hockey pitch, fence and landscaping	4/02338/11/MFA	Refused – 05.07.12	<p>Object – The Council will be aware of the Board’s previous objections made in connection with a recent application. The current application is apparently for the same development as the previous application apart from one element of detail – floodlights. The current application does not detail any floodlights and the Board welcomes this change. However, the Board’s previous objections did not relate solely to floodlights. Therefore, the Chilterns Conservation Board objects to the current planning application for the following reasons:</p> <p>The Board wonders if there are not more appropriate sites, the use of the pitch would result in an increase in traffic on local roads, particularly if community use outside school hours were to be permitted (though this is not detailed). The fencing (which would be 3 or 4 metres high with a close</p>	22.02.12

				<p>mesh appearance) would be a particularly intrusive feature in the landscape and little account, if any, has been taken of the potential impacts. The construction of the fence is likely to have detrimental impacts on wildlife because it will introduce an obstruction into a presently open area.</p> <p>The application proposes landscaping and other planting adjacent to the footpath that runs immediately adjacent to the site. The Board considers that this appears to be a method by which some of the elements of the proposal could be hidden but equally considers that planting alongside the footpath would lead to a greater sense of enclosure and would therefore have a detrimental impact on users of the right of way. The Board objects to the lack of detail and in particular cross-sectional drawings in connection with the area of cut in the north eastern corner of the hockey pitch in particular. Such an operation is likely to lead to the need to remove a significant amount of material as well as the need to provide retaining walls. These operations would have a detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB.</p> <p>The Board also objects to the lack of a landscape and visual impact assessment and notes that the information on the Council's website that purports to be a design and access statement does not appear to cover the issues that we would have expected to be addressed.</p> <p>The Board notes that section 13 of the design and access statement states that a long jump and triple jump track and pit would be provided. No other details of this proposal are provided and this</p>	
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					<p>should be included as a matter of urgency. It is difficult to see how the detrimental impacts of the planning application could be resolved without removing the fencing and engineered cut area completely from the proposal. A lower fence using a more appropriate design and different materials would be more acceptable (wooden post and wire with an associated hedge for example) but it is understood that the purpose of the fence is to keep balls within the playing area. The pitch itself could be relocated to an area that would not require significant amounts of cut (and possibly fill).</p> <p>Based on the information received and knowledge of the site and surroundings the Board considers that the development would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the AONB and that it would not increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to both local and national planning policy and the Board considers that the application should be refused.</p>	
Little Meadows, Horseblock Lane, Heath End	DBC	New front entrance gates, piers and walls	4/00963/12/FHA	Pending	<p>Object – the intrinsic rural character of the lane and its surroundings would be detrimentally affected by the construction of two brick piers, up to 40m of brick wall and the introduction of either large wrought iron ‘feature’ gates or ‘fully boarded timber gates’ (which are both included on the same drawing) which both appear to be of a solid construction of either metal or wood and which would replace a perfectly acceptable 5 bar gate. These elements would introduce, along with a formal entrance arrangement, a series of alien and wholly suburban features into an otherwise rural</p>	22.06.12

				<p>area. These features neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB and the Board considers that they should not be permitted. The plans that have been submitted are confusing and very difficult to read, and therefore very difficult to interpret. It appears that the piers and walls would be sited too close to the stems/trunks of both the hedgerow plants and the trees within it and therefore almost certainly within any root area that would need to be protected from such a construction. Construction of the walls and piers would be likely to lead to the loss of both the hedgerow and the trees within it which is objectionable and which would clearly be to the detriment of the area. Another area of confusion arises in connection with the length of wall that is proposed. The application talks about a section of brick wall to 'run a maximum of 20m either side' of the entrance piers. It appears from the plan that accompanies the application that from the proposed pier to the boundary of the property to the north is no more than about 11m (clearly it would not be possible to construct 20m of wall without consent from a third party). If the proposed wall was constructed up to 20m to the south of the proposed pier then it would stop about a third of the way along the current hedgerow. This would look very odd indeed and therefore be completely out of keeping with the area. The Board would not support a wall running the full length of the property as this would lead to an even greater detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB. These objections would be addressed by the removal of the walls, piers, gates and formal entrance arrangement from the</p>	
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					<p>proposal. However, if, despite this objection, the Council decides that the application should be approved then the Board considers that full account should be taken of the hedgerow regulations. In addition, any approved brick wall should be far enough away from the hedge to ensure that the hedge is not damaged during construction and that its integrity is maintained in perpetuity. A clear gap of at least 1.75m from the back edge of the hedge to the front side of the wall should be required. This is not shown on the plans as currently drafted. These appear to show that the wall would be too close to the hedge. The Board considers that the hedge appears to be affected in part by the amount of tree cover in the vicinity. It would therefore be sensible to introduce shade tolerant hedging species (such as holly) which would help to improve the integrity of the hedge. If the application is approved the Board considers that conditions should be attached which require planting to fill any current gaps and the replacement of any plants within the hedge should they die in the future. The applicant should clearly be happy with such a condition as the application implies protection of the hedge. The Chilterns Conservation Board considers that, as proposed, the application neither conserves nor enhances the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB and as such the application ought to be refused. The Board would be happy to comment on any revised details that may be proposed to address these objections.</p>	
Icknield Road, Goring	SODC	19 affordable housing units	P11/W1724	Pending	<p>Object – The design fails to take account of the fact that the site is within the AONB, various elements of the design should be amended (balconies, small gables, tile hanging, chimneys</p>	29.11.11

					should be functional, lack of detail about fences which should be post and wire with hedge and not close boarded and permitted development rights should be removed and very odd string course details should be amended), development should be more sustainable with renewable energy being included, greater consideration needs to be given to materials and great care is needed with lighting. Comments – revisions made to elevations (removal of balconies and replacement of doors at first floor with windows, removal of small gables [though some elevations still appear to show these] and removal of tile hanging) which are welcomed and remove objections on those issues. However, chimneys should be added to some plots to lessen impact of large expanses of roof. The Board's other concerns would have to be addressed by further changes or carefully worded and monitored conditions.	15.12.11
Betts Farm, Old Reading Road, Crowmarsh Gifford	SODC	Variation of condition 2 (soft and hard landscaping of P11/W0190)	P11/W1965	Pending	Object – the proposal would lead to a huge decrease in both the number of trees and the number of shrubs provided as part of the approved development which in turn would mean that the development would be much more prominent in the landscape to the detriment of the natural beauty of the AONB. The original condition was imposed presumably following discussion and was not appealed against. It should therefore be implemented.	20.01.12
Mulberry House, Peppard Hill, Sonning Common	SODC	Three dwellings	P11/E2556	Refused – 07.08.12	Object – the development would be too dense (3 dwellings compared to 4 previously refused and dismissed at appeal), two of the dwellings are taller than those previously refused, the 3 dwellings occupy a similar footprint to the 4 that were refused, designs fail to take account of the Design	03.04.12

					Guide and the fact that the site is within the setting of the AONB, flint may be proposed but is not properly detailed and if the application were approved the use of flint should be subject to a specific condition.	
Icknield Place, Goring	SODC	Redevelopment of Sheltered Accommodation with Extra Care Apartments	P11/S0098	Pending	Object - The Board considers that the proposal represents a significant over development of the site, the form, scale and massing of the building all fail to take account of the context of the site which sits within the nationally protected Chilterns AONB where development should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, most of the development is significantly taller than that which is on the site at present and appears to be taller than the previous proposed building, though with the lack of a scale this is difficult to measure, there is a large extent of flat roof which appears to have been designed in order to lessen the bulk of the building yet results in a contrived appearance with many half hipped roofs, contrary to the advice in the Board's Roofing Materials supplementary technical note, it would be better to remove one of the three storeys and break up the building form more than at present which would enable the introduction of fully gabled roofs with chimneys in order to lessen the impact of large expanses of roof, the Board considers that the design of the building neither takes account of the context of the site within the AONB nor does it accord with the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide or the Board's supplementary technical notes on Chilterns building materials (particularly the Brick and Roofing Materials notes), some of the proposed materials (concrete roof tiles and render in particular) also fail to take account of this advice,	01.05.12

					the proposal neither conserves nor enhances the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB and as such the application should be refused.	
CABI site, Nosworthy Way, Wallingford	SODC	Redevelopment of site to provide office, care village, key worker housing and leisure facilities	P12/S0436	Pending	Object – the proposal would represent a greater than doubling of the floor area on the site, much of it on undeveloped land including woodland with ecological interest, this impact could be lessened by removing this part of the development or moving it to the east, it is not possible to undertake a thorough LVIA as the proposals lack detail, much of the development could be 4 storeys high and much in close proximity to the bridleway to the west, there is a lack of detail as the application is in outline and the design and access statement does not achieve its purpose for this reason, the site is remote from services and facilities and will lead to a significant increase in traffic, the historic environment will need very careful consideration (Grim's Ditch is within site) and the proposal fails to meet the purposes for which the AONB is designated.	24.05.12
Carmel College, Mongewell Park, Mongewell	SODC	Redevelopment to provide 166 dwellings, refurbishment of listed buildings and provision of restaurant, café and swimming pool	P11/W2357	Pending	Object – proper account is not taken of the NPPF, there is confusion between the many documents that accompany the application (particularly in connection with lost and gained footprint), the application does not include a full design and access statement (what is submitted fails to meet expectations), the design of many of the buildings is inappropriate in the AONB and fails to enhance the natural beauty of the area, the scale and mass of many of the buildings would be greater than the buildings they replace, only previously developed parts of the site should be considered for new buildings (which should only be on the footprint of existing buildings), the transport assessment does	02.08.12

					not take account of the NPPF and fails to deliver a modal shift away from the private car, public transport provision is inadequate, 'upgrading' of rights of way are likely to lead to detrimental impacts on users and their enjoyment, closure of the Ridgeway National Trail (even temporarily) is objected to, the lighting plan is confusing and likely to lead to an increase in light emissions from the site, there will be significant numbers of HGV movements to the detriment of the character of the narrow local roads (spoil generation being one cause), renewable energy generation is not adequately addressed, the proposal does not conform to the Local Plan or emerging Core Strategy and as such should be refused.	
Grange Farm, Widmer End	WDC	Agricultural building to be used as potting shed	07/06948/F UL	Pending	Object - The proposal seeks to construct a very large (30m by 15m and 5.6m high) utilitarian, agricultural, building that will be clearly visible to users of the local rights of way. The principles of the AONB appear not to have been taken on board by the applicants. The development could not be assimilated into the Chilterns AONB. The proposal could create a dangerous precedent. The Board is mindful of the need to facilitate growth in the local economy and the evident importance of the applicant's business, however, it considers that the proposal would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB.	07.09.07
Sanfoin Farm, Riding Lane, Wooburn Moor	WDC	2 static caravans, 2 touring caravans, hardstanding, parking and portable utility	12/05443/F UL	Pending	Object – the development would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, much of the development has already taken place and with other developments in the vicinity has led to the exacerbation of the detrimental impact and an increase in the urbanisation of the area, the development is contrary to various planning	04.04.12

		vehicle			policies and does not accord with Circular 01/06. Enforcement action should be taken.	
OS Parcel 2837, Gray's Road, Ibstone	WDC	Stables, barn, access	12/05731/F UL	Refused – 06.06.12	Object - Though the design and overall appearance of the building would be generally acceptable in the Chilterns AONB, the bulk, mass and volume that have been applied for in this instance are not, the proposed building is to apparently cater for a limited number of horses (three) and what has been proposed is considered to be far in excess of what would be expected to be provided in such situations, the building has the mass, bulk and appearance of a dwelling and with very few alterations could readily be converted to such a use, it is unlikely that an objection would have been raised if the application had been for a small scale building with three stables, hay store and tack room, the creation of an access track across registered common land is not adequately addressed in the details that accompany the application and what is being applied for would require additional consents and would undoubtedly lead to changes in the appearance of the area and a suburbanisation of the common, it is unclear whether the application only relates to land in the applicants ownership because the red line boundary for the application is incomplete, the proposal does not appear to accord with Local Plan Policy RT17 in that there is limited access from the site to off-site bridleways, the development does not accord with Core Strategy Policy CS17 and the Chilterns AONB Management Plan because the development fails to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the area. If, despite the objections that have been made, the	01.05.12

					development is allowed to proceed the Board suggests that the following conditions should be put in place: should the use that is being applied for cease then the building should be removed and the site made good; the number of horses kept on the land should be no more than three; the building and any change in the use of land should be for private use only; adequate and acceptable measures should be put in place to deal with any wastes that arise, and no lighting shall be installed without the prior approval of the Council (to prevent detrimental impacts on the tranquillity of the AONB).	
Pipers Corner School, Pipers Lane, Great Kingshill	WDC	8 x 1kW floodlights on 6 x 8m columns	12/06262/F UL	Permitted – 10.07.12	Object – the use of the proposed floodlights would result in detrimental impacts on the tranquillity of the AONB, the lights would be visible for some distance due to the topography and the impacts felt into the evenings during the autumn and winter months due to lack of leaf cover and use of the courts to 8pm each day, the lights would also produce a sky glow when it is wet or misty, detrimental impacts would be felt by users of the rights of way (in close proximity to the school grounds) and others, a wildlife survey should be undertaken to assess the likely impacts, wider use of the courts is not ruled out and this may lead to impacts on the local roads, the application neither conserves nor enhances the natural beauty of the AONB and the Council is asked to refuse the application. Should the application be approved conditions should be applied to ensure cowls are fitted, the use of the lights is restricted to certain hours (reduced at weekends and public holidays) and a wildlife survey is undertaken.	14.06.12

Wycombe Sports Centre, Marlow Hill, High Wycombe	WDC	Coachway, park and ride, sports and leisure centre, offices, hotel, food store and amenities building	12/06261/R 4OUT	Pending	Object – the application lacks detail about the bulk, mass, design and materials of key elements and the landscape and visual assessment fails to take proper account of the impacts of the development on users of a right of way within the AONB. There is confusion between the landscape and visual assessment and the parameter plan which do not deal with the same proposal (the buildings are taller on the parameter plan and not therefore subject to a proper assessment). The right of way in the AONB is a highly sensitive receptor and any proposals must be considered accordingly. The Board cannot agree with the conclusion that the proposed development will be ‘a significant visual benefit’ in the long term. No detail is provided in connection with the 11 wind turbines that are proposed and which the application claims should be visible from the M40 to allow the provision of advertising. The design and materials are not really detailed and what detail is provided shows that the proposal fails to take account of the context of the site and its proximity to the AONB.	10.07.12
Brimmers Farm, Brimmers Road, Princes Risborough	WDC	Change of use of farmland to campsite and change of use of building to toilet block	12/06341/F UL	Pending	Object – the application lacks detail - visual assessment in particular, as well as plans to show all elements of the development (‘ready pitched luxury tents’), concern about what might ultimately get implemented as this may be different in form with greater potential impacts, semi permanent installations take on a degree of permanence and may remain all year (requires conditions and enforcement), there is no landscaping plan, the site is prominent in various views from local rights of way as it is in a natural bowl, access from one field to the proposed washing facilities would	09.08.12

					require users to cross the main road leading to danger for pedestrians and a desire or need to site toilet and other facilities north of the road leading to further detrimental impacts, the proposal fails to meet the purpose of the AONB designation, economic benefits are likely to be limited and are outweighed by the detrimental impact on the AONB, the proposal is contrary to the AONB Management Plan, NPPF, Local Plan and Core Strategy and should be refused.	
Field Farm, Spurlands End Road, Great Kingshill	WDC	Two applications – creation of access and stationing of mobile home	12/06651/F UL (track) and 12/06652/F UL (mobile home)	Pending	Object – despite assertions in the application the site is within not outside the AONB, the track would be an inappropriate and urbanising feature out of keeping with the area, it would undermine the separation between Great Kingshill and Widmer End, a large gap in the hedgerow increases the visibility of any buildings on the site, the existing access appears to be adequate, the proposal for the mobile home suggests the site is occupied by a number of mobile homes already – this does not appear to be the case as the buildings are agriculture in nature, the development may lead to further similar developments in the future to the detriment of the landscape.	17.08.12