



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2007, IN CHILTERNES CONSERVATION BOARD OFFICES, CHINNOR, COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.18 PM.

Present:

Richard Brown	Hertfordshire County Council
John Griffin	Board Member
Sir John Johnson	Board Member
Shirley Judges	Board Member
Kevin Mayne	Board Member
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Mike Woods	Buckinghamshire County Council

In Attendance:

Maureen Keyworth	BCC and Clerk to the Board
Chris Smith	CCB Financial Adviser

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Richard Pushman, Alan Walters and Bill Storey. Alistair Helliwell also sent apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2006 were agreed subject to the following amendments:

Page 5 Item 10 Report on AONB Management Plan Review

Second paragraph, sixth line, delete 'a' after the word entail.

Fourth paragraph, second line should read '36 AONBs' not 37.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Item 9 Draft Budget 2007/08

Members were informed that Natural England has stated it was unlikely to provide additional grant aid for the review of the Management Plan. Therefore, it has been decided to ask Natural England for a further £15,000, and not £30,000 as previously discussed, for gathering the information needed to review the plan.

Item 12 Renewable Energy Generation

Members noted that the solar pv panels would not be installed until June 2007. Therefore the cost would not be included in this year's budget.

Item 13 Personnel Report

The Chief Officer had contacted Wycombe District Council to ask whether they would provide personnel/HR Services and was awaiting a response. If the District Council is unwilling to provide these services, it was agreed to ask the other participating Local Authorities. Kevin Mayne suggested the possibility of using someone more local, such as firms based in Oxford. Members were asked to pass on any recommendations to Steve Rodrick.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present to ask questions.

6. FINANCE REPORT 2006/07

Members received the Report of the Chief Officer and the Financial Adviser, which gave an update on the finance statement to the end of January 2007.

It was noted that Natural England had not been in contact with regard to the grant application for 2007-08.

Income is expected to improve by approximately £4,500 as a result of investment interest. Funds are placed on the money market through HSBC. It is anticipated there will be a net surplus at year end of approximately £11,000 which will be put into reserves. Further work will be carried out in the new financial year looking at investment of reserves.

With regard to Projects the HLF has awarded a grant to the People & Places project to promote places associated with notable local residents and visitors. The aim was to encourage people to visit the countryside who might not be regular visitors. Examples given were Disraeli and Hughenden and Roald Dahl Museum and Great Missenden. The grant has to be spent by November 2008.

The contribution to the Special Trees and Woods Project will be met from the Woodland Research Programme.

Discussion took place with regard to funding for the production of the Management Review Plan. It was anticipated that Natural England will be publishing supplementary guidance on a 'light touch' approach to production of the Plan. The main cost will be through information gathering for the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. Although work will begin shortly on this, it was anticipated that the May 2008 deadline would not be met.

It was agreed that Steve Rodrick would write to Andrew Wood of Natural England and the Chairman would follow up with a letter to the Chairman of Natural England if the outstanding grant payment for Jan- March had not been received within a few days (*Addedum: the grant was received on 1st March*)

RESOLVED:

The Executive Committee NOTED:

- 1. The current satisfactory financial position**
- 2. The end of year forecast showed a surplus in the order to £11,000**
- 3. And AGREED to seek reassurance from Natural England that its grant payments will be made on time in future.**

7. CHANGES TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

Members received the report of the Financial Adviser the purpose of which was to advise the Board of proposed changes to the scheme. It was noted that no action would be required by the Board at this stage.

The main changes were set out in the report.

With regard to budget implications, the employers contribution rate will affect the 2008/09 budget.

Staff were aware of the changes and Mike Woods agreed to provide the helpline number for AONB staff to obtain further information if they wished. (01296 383755 or email pensions@buckscc.gov.uk)

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Committee NOTED the proposed changes and**
- 2. AGREED to ensure staff were aware of the proposals**
- 8. FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT 2007-2013**

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to seek Executive Committee approval for the funding Memorandum of Agreement for the period 2007-2013.

Although the Committee agreed the draft Agreement last year, the MoA has had to be drawn up again to take account of the changes with the formation of Natural England.

An extra clause has been added to take account of any changes which may come about as a result of local government re-organisation and the need to establish that if the number of local authorities is reduced, the current funding level should be maintained. Confirmation was being sought from Natural England that it would provide up to 80% funding per year. The current bid is 77%. Natural England has given assurance that the core grant offer will be made by the end of the financial year.

The Committee agreed that Members' Allowances should be included under the Financial Arrangements.

RESOLVED

The Committee APPROVED the Memorandum of Agreement on funding for the period 2007-2013.

9. TRAINING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to seek support for provision of additional technical training for Board members.

Members suggested the following:

- Sessions from staff on the work they do in their specialist areas, such as Access.
- The possibility of compulsory core training for board members

- Training sessions could be undertaken on the afternoon of Board meetings, as part of the normal Board business. This would make better use of members' time and could also be used to highlight other events taking place, such as the Chalk Streams Forum in June.
- It was suggested that another induction day be held to facilitate training for existing and new members after the District Council elections in May. This could also include details of what AONB work does not cover, but give details of who does do it.
- Weekend or evening sessions, such as commons visits, or visits to farmers to discuss ELS or HLS.
- Information on the areas where future Board meetings are to be held.

RESOLVED

The Committee AGREED

- 1. A series of courses/visits be organised for Board members**
- 2. Members be contacted to identify subjects on which more training is required.**

10. READABILITY OF CONSERVATION BOARD DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to seek approval to change the Board's default font for documents to a sans serif font.

RESOLVED

The Committee delegated the decision to the Chief Officer in consultation with staff the PR Group.

11. ACCORD WITH CHILTERN WOODLAND PROJECT

Members received the report of the Chief Officer the purpose of which was to seek committee approval for the Accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project.

The Committee agreed there was merit in having a close working relationship with the CWP.

RESOLVED

The Committee approved the Accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project subject to minor changes.

12. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Tuesday 15 May 2007 at 10.30am.

Future meetings are:

Tuesday 19 September 2007 (**please note change of date**)
 Tuesday 11 December 2007

CHAIRMAN