

# AGENDA FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO BE HELD AT 10.30 AM ON TUESDAY 15 MAY 2007 AT CHILTERNS CONSERVATION BOARD OFFICES, THE LODGE, CHINNOR

Agen	da Item	Page No
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To declare any personal and prejudicial interests	
3	MINUTES of the meeting held on 27 February 2007, to be confirmed	1 - 4
4	MATTERS ARISING	
5	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
6	DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2006-07 - TO FOLLOW	
7	FINANCE REPORT 2007-08	5 - 12
8	REVIEW OF THE AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN	13 - 16
9	REPORT ON SUSTAINABILITY PLAN	17 - 32
10	APPLICATION FOR THE LEADER PROGRAMME	33 - 34
11	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
12	DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS  The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday 19 September 2007 at 10.30am.	
	Future meetings are as follows:	
	Tuesday 11 December 2007 at 10.30am	
13	TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEM UNDER PARAGRAPH 3 OF SCHEDULE 12A BECAUSE THE REPORT CONTAINS INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL AFAIRS OF A PARTICULAR PERSON	
14	CONFIDENTIAL REPORT ON MATERNITY LEAVE RELATING TO THE ACCESS OFFICER	35 - 38

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TO: MEMBERS OF THE CHILTERNS CONSERVATION BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2007, IN CHILTERNS 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 tough' 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 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**

# Finance Report 2007-08

Authors: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Chris Smith Finance Officer

**Summary:** No finance report for the year to date has been provided as it

would only cover one month. A grant offer for core costs only has been received from Natural England. The offer is for an increase of 3% on last year which is £12,000 less than applied for. No grant offer has been received for projects or the Sustainable Development Fund but a verbal update has been provided suggesting that an offer will be made amounting to £36,000 compared to the £98,000 applied for. The SDF offer is likely to be £70,000 although bids were invited of £100,000. No cost of living allowance has been paid yet in the absence of a

national agreement with local authorities.

Purpose of Report: To inform members of the current grant offers from Natural

England and to advise that discussions begin with Natural England on improving the grant application process for future years. To agree on changes to the projects budget and work programme for 2007-08. To advise that a cost of living award was not paid to staff with effect from 1 April but that an interim award of 2% should be paid in May pending the outcome of the

national negotiations.

#### **Grant Offers from Natural England**

#### **Core Grant**

- 1. The Board applied for a core grant of £479,620 (76.7% of costs). An offer has been made of £467,620 (74.4% of costs). The difference is accounted for by the additional £12,000 requested, but refused, to help cover some of the costs of reviewing the AONB Management Plan. With the exception of this addition the core budget was increased by 3%. This will require efficiency savings of approx 1.5 -2.0% in view of the real increase in employment and other costs.
- 2. The offer has been provisionally accepted. It is highly unlikely that NE will increase the offer (there is no precedent for re-negotiation of a core grant offer) and an attempted re-negotiation may delay any grant claim and affect cash flow.
- 3. In the absence of a grant offer the Board was unable to submit a quarterly grant claim in advance (for April June). A claim has now been submitted.

# **Project Grants**

4. At the time of writing no formal grant offer has been made for either projects or the Sustainable Development Fund. The Board applied for project funding of £98,930 – the same amount applied for in 2006-07. Alistair Helliwell, NE

team leader for the Chilterns, provided a verbal update on 3 May informing the Board that it will receive a total offer of £34,500 for Chalk Streams, Chalk Downland and Commons projects. The details of the bid and offers are given in Table 1

Project	Total	NE Grant	NE grant
		applied for	awarded
Chalk Streams	44,300	22,000	22,000
Getting Close to Nature	30,000	13,000	0
Making of the Chilterns Landscape	10,000	5,000	0
Access For All	10,000	5,000	0
Chilterns Cycle Network (1)	5,000	3,500	0
Countryside Close to Home	10,000	5,000	0
Visitor Survey	13,000	6,500	0
Commons	5,000	2,500	2,500
Chalk Grassland	20,000	10,000	10,000
Woodland Management	17,110	8,555	0
Ancient Woodland Survey	6,750	3,375	0
Discover the Chilterns Booklet	9,000	4,500	0
People and Places (2)	11,000	5,000	0
Total	£194,160	£98,930	£34,500

# 5. The offer and its timing raises several issues outlined in Table 2.

Project	Notes	Recommendations
Chalk Streams	Chalk Steams Project Officer post can be retained and contract extended to 31 March 2008. Environment Agency still to confirm their contribution but other funding in place	extend contract of project
Getting Close to Nature	In its third year of an HLF grant supported throughout by CA/EN.	programme not supported by HLF grant and use ring fenced reserves from Friend of Red Kites scheme and donations to cover deficit (£6,000)
Making of the Chilterns Landscape	This project has insufficient funding in place to be started	Postpone until 2008-09 at the earliest
Access For All	This is a high priority and part of an ongoing work programme for which the Board has established a good reputation. The Board should seek alternative funds to keep as much of the work going as possible. In any event it would have been reduced in scale due to the access officer's maternity leave.	alternative funding possibly drawing on reserves and the
Chilterns Cycle Network	This is work in development (Chilterns Cycle way and Ashridge Cycle network) which will have to be slowed down and to a great extent delivered by other partners and	commitment, making use of reserves and or SDF where possible. CTC and other

Project	Notes	Recommendations
	volunteers. The CTC volunteers are doing much of the development work for the Chilterns Cycleway	
Countryside Close to Home	This was a development of the access to woodland work undertaken over the last 18 months and would have added a valuable new part to the web site. It was largely a pilot project which will now have to be delayed.	Postpone until 2008-09
Visitor Survey	The survey has begun and was grant aided by CA/NE in 2006-07. The survey is supported by a partnership which has provided the match funding -50%. The survey is being undertaken this year to follow on from the 1997 survey to give a ten year comparison. It is important work which can underpin the review of the Management plan.	planned but the Board's
Commons	Most of the funding, which has not yet been earmarked for specific commons, will be used to support work by local commons groups and the Chilterns commons Network	Proceed as planned
Chalk Grassland	Most of the funding, which has not yet been earmarked for specific sites, will be used to support work by site owners and for training.	Proceed as planned
Woodland Management	This grant would have been used to engage the services of the Chiltern Woodland Project to advise on the management of small woodlands, in particular ancient semi natural woodlands and to provide advice and training on woodland heritage and archaeology. The Woodland Project will be severely affected by the lack of grant aid and the scale of advice offered is likely to cut back and require the Project to levy a near commercial rate for its advice. The Project is likely to have to consider reducing its assistance in general to the Board and possibly even charge for that assistance currently given free.	programme and consider allocating funds from reserves (£5,000)
Ancient Woodland Survey	Surveys in Sussex have shown that up to 40% of ancient semi	

Project	Notes	Recommendations
	natural woodland was not included in the definitive inventory of ancient woodland in 1992. The FC is now encouraging widespread resurveying of ancient woodland as it is a national priority habitat - a significant proportion of the English total lies in the AONBs in the south east. This would have been a small scale pilot project to have established whether a full scale survey was needed.	elsewhere.
Discover the Chilterns Booklet	The first edition was one of the most popular and highly praised of the Board's publications. The stock of 20,000 was exhausted in less than one year when it was expected to last for two. Some of the costs for a second expanded edition could be covered by income from visitor attractions and advertising but not all of it.	Delay and investigate alternative sources of funding
People and Places	This project has taken over a year to develop and secured a grant from the HLF which is time limited. It is a new area of work and will be supported directly The Chiltern Society and volunteers	Proceed as planned with an allocation from reserves (£3,000). Request funding support from The Chiltern Society (£2,000)

6. The possibility of re-allocating the grant aid within the ceiling set by NE has been raised. The Visitor Survey and Getting Close to Nature Projects are high priorities as they are underway. To proceed as recommended will require release of reserves of up to £26,000. The draw on reserves could be reduced by donations (Getting Close to Nature events), SDF for Access and Cycling projects and further downsizing of projects and re-allocation of core budget funds.

# **Re-allocation of the Land Management Scheme Funds**

7. A further possibility is to re-allocate the £30,000 allocated to the Land Management Fund established at the last Board meeting. The scheme has not yet been promoted and no grant offers made. The NE grant offers are directed towards habitat management and the Board will need to reflect on whether its own resources should now be used to provide a more balanced work programme including access projects, than NE has been willing to support. In which case there is a strong argument for using the Land Management funds for other types of project. The fund would not be entirely exhausted by such a re-allocation, especially if other external funds can be

sourced. Instead the Board should use what funds remain on a discretionary basis rather than promoting it as a formal grant scheme.

# Allocation of the core budget to Projects

- 8. There is scope to re-allocate some of the core budget which will be available due to Annette Venters going on maternity leave from late July until spring 2008. (See confidential Item 14).
- 9. It is proposed to employ an access consultant for specific pieces of work as cover for Annette rather than employ an officer on a short term contract. This would release further funding for other uses. As Natural England declined to provide grant aid of £12,000 towards the costs of reviewing the management plan it is proposed to re-allocate up to £12,000 of the core budget for this work leaving a balance of £4,000 which could be used for projects.
- 10. The current position is highly unsatisfactory for several reasons:
  - 1. The core grant offer was made after the beginning of the financial year started, thus delaying confirmation of budgets and quarterly grant claims. It has not been possible to revise the existing Memorandum of Agreement on funding with local authorities and NE because of the delay.
  - 2. The late offer of grant for projects and likely cuts will affect significantly the planned work programme. There is little prospect of covering any deficit in funding created by a short fall in grant from other partners.
  - 3. Projects take considerable time to develop and need to be made ready for submission to NE in the autumn of the previous year. NE has not attempted to discuss or negotiate on any projects in the interim, which are then left in limbo for several months. This makes it very difficult to develop projects with partners and secure commitment from them to provide resources.
  - 4. As it is now apparent that the national AONB project allocation is much lower than previous years, much effort will have been expended on projects which have not received any funding or so little that they will have to be cancelled. This represents a considerable waste of staff time and unnecessarily raised expectations. Only three out of 14 projects submitted have been supported.
  - 5. The projects budgets are spent directly on delivering the work programme often through local groups and land owners. They have very low overheads enhancing the effectiveness of this way of working. Inevitably reputations, including that of the Board, are damaged by cuts of this type.
  - 6. The late and short term offer renders it almost impossible to support projects which last for more than one year or cross financial year ends.

- 7. NE did not provide any guidance on which type of projects it would favour or any indication that it would give weight to local circumstances. The projects have been decided by a national panel with all projects, in effect, in competition with each other. Predicting the chances of success for any particular project is, therefore, problematic, and may lead to significant variations from one year to the next.
- 8. It appears that NE have favoured habitat management and decided not to support any access projects these trends are borne out by settlements in many other AONBs. Neither has the historic environment received any support.
- 9. The delay and cut to the Sustainable Development Fund is equally disappointing. Many believe that the SDF grant allocation was instructed in 2004-05 by Alun Michael, Minister of State at DEFRA, and was in addition to the then Countryside Agency AONB budget. It was simply a response to the allocation of £200,000 awarded to each National Park authority. NE has not treated it as a ring fenced ministerial commitment. (The National Park authorities continue to receive an annual SDF allocation of £200,000).
- 10. Up to 10% of the SDF fund can be used for administrative purposes. This does not, in practice, cover the full staff cost but as the SDF brings such benefits it is an additional overhead worth covering. If grant reduces, the overheads do not reduce proportionately and thus a 10% ceiling on overheads will place further strain on the core budget.
- 12. This is a long list of issues and reflects concerns held by many other AONBs. There is plenty of scope to improve the situation but requires discussion and guidance from Natural England as well as recognition on their part that the current arrangements are unsatisfactory.

#### **Current Financial Position 2007-08**

13. A report based on April 2007 has not been produced. There are no significant items to report other than the advance quarterly payment ((£116,905) for Natural England could not be claimed until early May. Despite this the Board's cash flow remains acceptable because reserves are invested on the money market which can be accessed readily.

#### **Cost of Living Increase**

14. The Board uses the salary grades used by Wycombe DC. These are adjusted annually based on the nationally negotiated pay settlement affecting most local authorities. The employer's current offer is 2% which has been refused by the unions. Those staff who qualified for a salary increment have been paid an increase based on last year's pay scales. The cost of living award must be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April.

15. Despite the delay in agreeing a cost of living award it is not proposed to change the arrangement by which the Board adopts the Wycombe DC pay scales. However, it is proposed that the Board pays an interim cost of living award of 2% in May if no national agreement has been reached by then. Any subsequent settlement would be paid as soon as possible and backdated to 1st April.

#### Recommendations

- 1. The Board accepts the offer of £467,620 core grant from Natural England.
- 2. The Board lobbies Natural England to introduce an improved process for submitting and approving grant awards based on clearer guidance, more timely awards and scope for local negotiation.
- 3. The Board revises the work programme as recommended and releases reserves of up to £26,000, initially by re-allocating funds from the Land Management Scheme and re-allocating up to £4,000 from the core budget.
- 4. The Board notes that cost of living awards have not been made to staff but agrees an interim award of 2% be made in May backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April pending the final outcome of the national negotiations.

# **Review of AONB Management Plan**

**Author**: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

**Summary**: The project plan has been prepared for reviewing the

AONB management plan. It is proposed to engage the services of a consultant to assist the staff team in order to complete the review by May 2008 - the estimated cost is up to £15,000 in 2007-08. Natural England has declined to provide grant aid of £12,000 towards the cost of the review, which will now have to be met from savings on

core costs.

**Purpose of Report:** To advise members of the proposed process of reviewing

the management plan and to seek approval to engage the services of a consultant at an approximate total cost

of £15,000 (£12,000 in 2007-08).

# **Background**

1. The Board has the statutory duty for preparation and review of the AONB Management Plan. The CROW Act 2000 prescribes a process which requires the Chilterns AONB plan to be reviewed by May 2008. EU regulations require the Management Plan to be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to identify how implementation of the plan could potentially affect the significant environmental characteristics of the Chilterns. In addition an Appropriate Assessment has to be carried out on how the reviewed plan could affect the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). In the Chilterns there are five SACs all of which are beech woodlands.

- 2. As previously reported the Countryside Agency published guidance on how the plans should be reviewed. The process will be more complex than the task of preparing the plan in the first place, largely due to the SEA. Natural England intends to publish further guidance to help simplify the process and reduce the significant workload involved.
- 3. The Executive Committee had previously resolved to seek additional grant aid from Natural England to help meet the additional costs. The core budget was increased by £15,000 to help meet the costs, split £12,000 from NE and £3,000 from the local authorities. No local authority objected to contributing their share but NE has declined to provide an additional £12,000.
- 4. The additional workload is significant and there is insufficient capacity within the Board's staff to cope with this task. The workload will fall principally on the Chief Officer, Planning Officer, Countryside Officer and Information and Interpretation Officer. These staff do not posses experience of producing a Strategic Environmental Assessment or Appropriate Assessments. It is therefore proposed to engage the services of an expert in this field.

- 5. Alan Wheeler has been approached. He has considerable experience of management planning and SEAs and was a primary author of both the 1994 and 2002 Chilterns AONB Management Plans. He is available to do the work. Subject to agreement of the Executive Committee it is not proposed to put this work out to tender for the following reasons.
  - 1. It is not possible to be precise about the tasks added work load involved as this is an iterative process.
  - 2. The timetable is tight and the time taken to put this work out to tender will delay the start and will almost certainly mean missing the deadline of May 2008.
  - 3. Alan Wheeler has a unique combination of knowledge of the Chilterns and experience of preparing a management plan for the Chilterns. He is very familiar with the process and well known to staff and partners which will enable him to make progress with limited supervision. He has also confirmed his availability over the next 12 months.
  - 4. The day rate and willingness to limit his fees (based on current knowledge of what is involved) to £15,000, represents good value for money. His involvement would also reduce the need for the Chief Officer to provide supervision.
- 6. It is difficult to be precise about costs because the workload for each stage will only be known as that stage is reached. However the cost of his services is estimated to be up to £15,000. This would be spread over the current and next financial year.
- 7. It is not yet known to what extent the Board will need to pay to secure the necessary information. To a great extent the plan and SEA will need to be based on the best available information and any additional information that the local authorities and agencies such as Natural England, Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency can provide at no cost. However there will be some costs and with the additional costs involved of arranging workshops, printing and consultation it is suggested that a budget of £5,000 will be needed.
- 8. The budget requirement overall will be in the order of £20,000 with £15,000 needed in 2007-08 and £5,000 in 2008-09. The local authorities have agreed to provide £3,000. It is proposed to find most of the balance from savings in the core budget, possibly up to £7,000 (See Item 11). The final balance would have to be found from reserves a further £5,000.

# **Recommendations**

1. To note the proposed process for reviewing the AONB Management Plan.

- 2. To secure the services of Alan Wheeler, an environmental consultant, to support the review process and in particular to prepare the Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 3. To allocate a budget of up to £20,000 for the review (£15,000 in 2007-08 and £5,000 in 2008-09).
- 4. To request that Natural England provide datasets for the review and SEA.

# **Report on Sustainability Plan**

Authors: Annette Venters Access Officer

Roelie Reed Office Manager

**Summary**: Significant progress has been made in implementing the

Sustainability Plan in 2006-07. Notable actions include reducing electricity use, improving the loft insulation and planting trees as an offset measure. It is proposed that the Board aims to achieve

carbon neutrality by 2010/11.

Purpose of Paper: To advise members on progress and to seek endorsement of

proposed actions for 2007-08. To adopt the aim of achieving

carbon neutrality by 2010/11.

# **Background**

- 1. The Board has prepared its first Sustainability Plan for 2006/07. Kevin Mayne was appointed the Board member responsible for this area of work and is being supported by two members of staff. Monitoring progress was complicated by the difficulty of identifying a baseline for electricity and gas use. However, in general significant progress has been made. (Appendix 1)
- 2. In 2007-08 it is posed that the same measures are advanced further to be complemented by installation of PV solar cells (subject to securing the grant) and extending the carbon offset scheme.
- 3. It is further proposed that the Board adopts an aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2010/11 providing the carbon offset scheme is supported. If this is not possible neutrality will be hard to achieve as the existing building is not energy efficient and the costs and logistics of retro fitting all the measures necessary would be prohibitive.

# **Recommendations**

- 1. The Board notes the good progress made in implementing the Sustainability Plan fro 2006/07.
- 2. The Board approves the proposed actions for 2007/08.
- 3. The Board develops the carbon offset scheme with an initial budget of up to £250.
- 4. The Board adopts the aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2010/11, subject to developing the carbon offset scheme.



# Report on the implementation of the Chilterns Conservation Board's 06/07 Sustainability Plan (April 2007)

The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB's) Sustainability Plan was approved by the Board in March 2006. One year on this report monitors progress to date and identifies areas to focus on in 2007/08.

This report contains the following sections:

- Background to the CCB Sustainability Plan
- Summary of progress in 06/07
- CCB's use of energy and resource in 06/07
- Carbon Emissions generated by the CCB in 06/07
- Looking ahead; aims, targets and actions for 2007/08

# **Background to the CCB Sustainability Plan**

- 1. The Chilterns Conservation Board's statutory purposes include conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Chilterns, and promoting awareness and enjoyment of it special qualities. These challenges require the Board to operate to the highest environmental standards and to encourage others to do so as well. To that end the Board has prepared a sustainability plan to highlight how it will meet these standards, using targets against which its performance can be monitored. The aim is to minimise and reduce its environmental impact, particularly use of non sustainable resources. Where possible specific measures and targets are given.
- 2. This plan was approved by the Chilterns Conservation Board on 24 March 2006.
- 3. The plan covers the direct and indirect environmental impacts of the Conservation Board's own operations, including those of Board members and Staff connected to the duties on behalf of the Board, the operation of the Board's offices and implementation of the Board's work programme.
- 4. The plan looks at the following areas:
  - 1. Paper
  - 2. Waste
  - Recycling
  - 4. Water

- 5. Energy Use and Carbon Dioxide Emissions
- 6. Transport
- 7. Purchasing and Contractors
- 8. Local Produce
- 9. Raising Awareness

### Summary of progress in 2006/07

- 5. The main areas of progress are listed below (this is in addition to the many small steps taken to improve the CCB's sustainability which have all had an impact):
  - 1. Advice on reducing energy use, installing renewable sources of energy and other aspects of sustainability was actively sought from a number of organisations including Thames Valley Energy (TVE) and Envirowise.
  - 2. Several steps have been taken to reduce energy use at the Board's offices and to investigate sources of renewable energy:
    - Additional loft insulation has been installed, doubling the total depth.
    - A planning application has been submitted to South Oxfordshire District Council for installing solar photovoltaic (PV) panels at the CCB office, capable of generating 1,600kWh of electricity and saving 680Kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum.
    - The number of fluorescent tubes in the CCB's overhead office lighting has been halved.
  - 3. An additional carbon off-setting initiative has been introduced (in addition to the annual programme of tree planting), with 5% of income from CCB chargeable events now contributing towards the Chilterns Conservation Board's carbon off-set initiative.
  - 4. Provision of grant aid form the Sustainable Development Fund for relevant projects including promoting local produce and creating new walking/cycling routes.

#### Monitoring the CCB's energy and resources use: 06/07 performance

Table 1: CCB consumption of energy and resources

Output	2005/2006	2006/2007
Number of reams of paper per person	13.4	9.4
Waste produced (from bins), excluding recycling per person	78kg	Not measured but from observation this has stayed the same.  It has not proved practical to measure on a regular basis

Output	2005/2006	2006/2007
Weight of waste recycled per person	187 kg	Not measured but from observation this has stayed the same  It has not proved practical to
Water per person	6.84 m <sup>3</sup>	measure on a regular basis 5.92m <sup>3</sup>
vvater per person	per person	0.02111
Gas used	Reliable figures not available.	40,070 kwh
Gas - total carbon emissions	Reliable figures not available.	7,613 kg
Gas -carbon emissions per m <sup>2</sup> of office space	Reliable figures not available.	50.75 kg/m2
Electricity used	Reliable figures not available.	9,606 kwh
Electricity – total carbon emissions	Reliable figures not available.	4,131 kg
Electricity- carbon emissions per m <sup>2</sup> of office space	Reliable figures not available.	27.54 kg/m2
Combined gas/electricity emissions of carbon dioxide	Reliable figures not available.	11,744 kg (78.29 kg/m2)
Total distance travelled per capita by car by CCB staff for work	2,089 miles	2,228 miles (some mileage relates to 2005-06 due to late mileage expenses claim)
Total number of car-share miles travelled by car by CCB for work, per person	n/a	520 miles
Total distance travelled by Board members by car per person for which claims were submitted	403 miles (total 8023 divided by 20 car claims.	700 miles (total 10507 divided by 17 car claims).
Total CCB staff and Board member mileage on CCB business		30,561 miles = 9.17 tonnes of carbon emissions

Table 2: Summary of Total Carbon Emissions in 06/07	
Gas (office)	7,613 kg
Electricity (office)	4,131 kg
Car mileage by staff and Board members associated with CCB work (30,561 miles)	9,200 kg
Total	20,944 kg

Note: kwh carbon emission calculations were made using the Carbon Trust conversion figures. Car miles travelled carbon emission calculations were made using the Carbon Neutral Company calculator.

It is estimated that events organised by CCB generate approx 35,000 miles of journeys which generates carbon dioxide emissions of 10,536 kg.

# **Implementation of aims in 2006/07**

Practical actions for making better use of paper in 2006/07		
Action	Progress	
To reduce paper use to less than 11	9.4 reams per person	
reams per person per year		
To purchase paper that has 100%	Yes	
recycled content, is chlorine-free and		
from manufacturers with an		
environmental management system.	Vaa	
Cancel junk mail and unwanted	Yes	
publications to reduce the amount of waste that has to be thrown away.		
Don't order more copies of publications	Yes, on-going.	
than necessary.	res, on-going.	
Send electronic version to others rather	Yes	
than paper copies.	Hard copies are sent only if	
	requested.	
	Board, Executive and Planning Committee papers are still sent as hard copy and in electronic form. This is done as members need a hard copy at meetings and saves them printing hard copies at home.	
Do not print documents received electronically unless necessary	Yes, on-going.	
Do not print out e-mails unless necessary.	Yes, on-going.	
Send and receive faxes electronically	Yes, on-going.	
Avoid overproduction of marketing and publicity material by reviewing distribution lists and regularly updating databases.	Yes, - improve stock control system in place	

Practical actions for making better use of paper in 2006/07		
Action	Progress	
Ensure that all reports, agendas, letters, publications etc. are produced in double sided format on recycled paper and 2 pages per side when practicable	Yes wherever possible.	
Put reminder posters near printers and photocopiers regarding the above.	Yes, has been done.	
Re-use unused side of paper for scrap	Yes - ongoing	
Recycle all paper.	Yes, on-going.	
Re-use envelopes wherever possible, especially for sending information internally.	Yes, on-going.	

Table 4: Practical actions for redu	ucing waste in 2006/07
Action	Progress
To reduce the amount of waste per person by 5% per year.	Both recycled and general household waste is collected weekly. The waste is kept in 240 litre containers.
	The amount of non-recyclable household waste generated has been very consistent over the last year, the container is generally around a third full. The recycled waste is more erratic, but from observation the CCB generates approximately one very full container every week. The CCB does not have scales large enough to weigh the recycled waste and this would take some time. It is felt that observation is sufficient if the amount of waste generated continues to be consistent.
Choose minimally packaged products or ask suppliers to supply products in less packaging.	In reality it is often not possible to specify this, as most goods are pre-packed as standard.
Avoid purchasing disposable catering products such as individual milk containers, sugar sachets and paper plates.	Yes, on-going. Milk ordered in bottles
Prior to confirming catering arrangements for meetings, confirm the numbers attending to avoid wasting food.	Yes, on-going.

Table 4: Practical actions for reducing waste in 2006/07	
Action	Progress
Make use of local resource centres and charities that re-use computers, furniture and other materials from businesses.	Yes, on-going.
Recycle wherever possible – e.g. paper, printer cartridges	Yes on-going.
Re-cycle everyday waste - South Oxon DC collection service	Yes- ongoing

Table 5: Practical actions for increasing recycling 06/07	
Action	Progress
To recycle over 80% of waste produced.	See note above; the CCB's waste is not weighed regularly, but based on observation it is estimated that between 75-80% of waste is currently recycled.
Buy recycled products wherever possible.	Yes buy recycled toilet paper
Recycle paper, cans, glass, plastic	Most items recycled but there is room for improvement- recyclable items are sometimes spotted in household waste bin. More reminders.
Return toner cartridges for remanufacture	Yes – give to Solutions Centre charity
Buy remanufactured toner cartridges if possible.	Can't use recycled toner cartridges in printer/copier's (invalidates warranty) first year, but investigate for future
Arrange for fluorescent tubes to be recycled or safely disposed of in small quantities.	Yes- take to Bucks recycling

Table 6: Practical actions for redu	ucing water use 06/07
Action	Progress
To use no more than 6 m3 (6000 litres) of water per person per year	In 06/07 the CCB used 5.92m³ per person, a 14% reduction from the previous year and probably reflecting increased staff awareness and a concerted effort to minimise water use during the summer drought. Over the summer washing-up water was recycled to water the Lodge garden during the drought. The CCB has purchased a water butt for the CCB office garden. In addition new taps have been installed in the kitchen with ceramic washers to replace the previous taps which dripped.

Table 6: Practical actions for redu	ucing water use 06/07
Action	Progress
	Several press releases were issued by the Chilterns Conservation Board over the summer with environmental messages regarding saving water, increasing awareness amongst the general public of how they can minimise their water use.
Reminder notice about turning kitchen taps off fully.	New kitchen taps due to be installed, see below.
Fit a water displacement device in toilet cisterns to reduce the amount of water per flush.	•
Don't boil more water than needed for drinks.	Yes -put reminder by kettle

#### **Energy consumption and Carbon Emissions generated by the CCB at its office**

# Aim To produce less than 30 kg/m2/year of CO2 emissions at the CCB's offices

6. The CCB generated the following carbon emissions in 06/07 through office consumption of gas and electricity:

Gas: Annual kwh ÷ Floor area (m2) = Annual figure x 0.19 (CO2 conversion factor) = Emissions per year	
Electricity: Annual kwh ÷ Floor area (m2) = Annual figure x 0.43 (CO2 conversion factor) = Emissions per year	= 27.54 kg/m2/year

- 7. Total carbon emissions generated at the CCB office in 06/07 was 78.29kg/m². This is double the aim of 30 kg/m²/year set for 06/07, however this is the first year that reliable base-line data has been established and it is clear that the aim needs revising for 07/08 to make it realistic (in 05/06 reliable figures were not recorded for gas and energy consumption and this has now been addressed, with regular monthly records now kept so that more accurate trends can be identified). The aim for 07/08 has therefore been revised, to produce less than 80kg of carbon emissions per m².
- 8. The CCB office is in an old building which is not very energy efficient; the building has solid walls (so no opportunity for cavity wall insulation), there are many large windows and, although the boiler is new, the gas central heating system has not been operating efficiently in the last year due to air locks in the system. The building is leased and cannot readily be adapted to make it more energy efficient. That said, the CCB has actively sought specialist

- advice and undertaken a number of steps to reduce the energy consumption of running the office, as shown below.
- 9. Gas consumption is one area to focus on in 07/08, to see if there are ways of reducing consumption and perhaps making the central heating system more efficient; plumbers have been called out several times to sort out air locks and other 'niggles' with the heating, but the whole system needs reviewing. Envirowise has been contacted for advice.

# Steps taken to reduce carbon emissions at the CCB office in 06/07

10. This is the area where the CCB has concentrated its activities and where it is hoped it will have the greatest impact.

### 1. Photovoltaic (PV) panels

- 1.1 The CCB has thoroughly researched the various options for creating renewable energy and sought specialist advice. The possibility of a wind powered turbine was considered but discounted as there is insufficient wind at the CCB office location to make this viable.
- 1.2 PV panels were also investigated and look promising. The CCB has submitted a planning application to South Oxfordshire District Council to install an array of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels at CCB's offices in order to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the use of the building as an office. Visitors to the site will be able to see the installed panels on the roof and an electronic display will be mounted in the office reception area to allow people to see how much energy has been, and is being, generated and how much CO<sub>2</sub> has been saved to date. This would allow the CCB to inform and educate visitors and demonstrate best practice in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The installation should generate approximately 1,600kWh of electricity (equivalent to 17% of current annual usage) and save 680Kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.
- 1.3 The CCB has submitted a grant application for approximately 50% of the costs of the PV panels to the Low Carbon Buildings Programme (administered by the Energy Saving Trust).

#### 2. Insulation

2.1 Additional loft insulation (100mm depth) was installed in March 2007, doubling the depth of the original insulation. The insulation consists of recycled newsprint cellulose supplied by Warmcel.

# 3. Office Lighting

3.1 One of Thames Valley Energy's (TVE) observations following their visit to the CCB premises was that the offices were very strongly lit. The lighting consists of fluorescent lamps (previously 2 fluorescent lamps per lighting strip). TVE suggested removing some of the lamps. The

- CCB has now removed 40% of the lamps without any detrimental impact on the working environment. This has proved a very simple way of making instant savings in energy use.
- 3.2 In addition, desk lamps are now used as an optional substitute for full-office lighting when only a small amount of additional lighting is required.

# Other activities

11. In addition the CCB must continue to be mindful of the many small steps needed to reduce energy use on a day-to-day basis as set out in table 6. Spot checks will be undertaken as a reminder to CCB staff to switch off computers and screens when they are out of the office or at meetings for more than an hour.

Table 7: Practical actions for reducing	ng energy use 06/07
Action	Progress
Investigate taking all, or a percentage, of energy from renewable sources or 'green tariffs'.	Currently on 2 year contract but investigate when this has finished (May 2007). Investigating opportunity for some photovoltaic panels.
Turn down radiator thermostats	Usually
Make sure windows and doors are closed when heating is on.	Mostly. III fitting windows in kitchen and computer room have been repaired.
Check that insulation (walls, roof and pipes) and draught-proofing is adequate to prevent unreasonable heat loss.	Solid walls preclude cavity wall insulation.  Loft insulation has been improved
Ensure appliances such as fridges have a European Union Energy Rating of A or B.	Yes - fridge has A rate
Replace tungsten bulbs with energy- efficient, compact fluorescent lamps and slimline tubes. They typically make immediate savings of 50% and last up to ten times longer.	Yes
Use natural light wherever possible. Keep windows clean and encourage the staff to open the blinds rather than turn on the lights.	Yes
Turn lights off when not needed. It is always cheaper to switch off lights, however short the time period.	Mostly but room for improvement - staff reminders have gone up to switch off kitchen lights when kitchen not in use, and to switch off hall lights unless necessary.
Purchase equipment with 'power save' feature and make sure it is activated; machines are often set up with it disabled.	Yes

Table 7: Practical actions for reducing energy use 06/07	
Action	Progress
Screen savers do not save energy.	Usually but reminders needed
Enable power down settings and	- staff reminder has been posted next to
encourage staff to switch off at least	photocopier.
their computer monitors (these use	
twice the energy of PCs) when not in	
use, including when they are away	
from their desks for meetings or	
lunch.	

# Annual programme of carbon off-set activities

- 12. The priority for the CCB is to minimise the amount of carbon emissions produced through the running of the office, work programme and activities. A carbon off-set programme has been established, but it must be stressed that this is a 'last resort' activity to off-set carbon emissions that are unavoidable.
- 13. The CCB has set up a scheme to off-set carbon dioxide emissions generated by the Board's own mileage and that for journeys associated with attending events organised by the Board. The CCB's second tree planting event took place in March 2007, with 120 trees planted. (100 in 2006).
- 14. In addition it is proposed that 5% of income from events and conferences should go towards the CCB's carbon off-set initiative. The CCB organises a large number of events and conferences (up to 15 or so a year). Advice from the Government Office for the South West 2005 (Greener Events: a guide to reducing the environmental impacts of conferences and seminars) suggests that wherever possible larger regional conferences and seminars (attracting 50+ delegates) should be arranged as carbon neutral events.

# Board Travel – Aim to reduce the amount of car travel by CCB staff and members by 5% per annum

- 15. CCB staff car mileage (for work) was an average of 2,089 per head in 2005/06 and 2,228 in 06/07, so there has been a slight increase (7%) and the CCB must be vigilant to ensure this does not creep up (small annual variations are to be expected). Comparison between years depends upon claims being submitted for the year in which they traveled. Around a quarter of CCB car travel consisted of shared car travel. Board members generated an average of 700 car miles per head in 06/07.
- 16. The CCB has to be realistic about car travel, it is often the only way of getting around the Chilterns and the nature of the work takes staff and members to different parts of the Chilterns. However the aim should be for a gradual decrease in car travel over time. Staff need to continue adhering to the actions below.

Table 8: Practical actions for reducing travel 06/07:

Action	Progress
Provide facilities for cyclists and walkers.	Facilities are in place and being
Essentials are secure bike storage and a	used by staff and visitors.
shower.	
Promote car sharing	Yes - CCB has special mileage
	rate for car sharing
Meetings to be held in locations to minimise	Yes,
distance travelled by the majority?	
Can meetings be held in locations that are	Usually but venues in towns with
easily accessible by public transport/cycle (or	railway stations are subject to
free transport from nearest railway station	congestion and expensive
provided)?	parking
CCB staff travel policy: change personal car	The scheme has been
mileage allowances to favour smaller cars,	introduced- there is flat rate
public transport and cycling.	payment with allowances for car
Only roll force will be noid for journeys to central	sharing and travel by bike.
Only rail fares will be paid for journeys to central	Yes
London and Birmingham	Voc
Consider rail option even for short journeys	Yes
Public transport or car-share should be used for	Yes
all journeys over 100 miles (unless specific	
reasons this is not possible).	Van Naad ta anaasmana seestee
Provide a CCB foldable bike which can be	Yes. Need to encourage greater
carried on public transport and used to reach	use.
onward destinations.	

<sup>\*</sup>An essential car user allowance of £600 has been introduced, (taxable, but no NI or superannuation applies) and 40 pence per mile (not taxable). A supplement of 2 pence per passenger mile is payable. A new cycling rate of 20 pence and motorcycling rate of 25pence has been introduced.

#### Purchase cleaning products which are less harmful to the environment.

17. Ecover washing up liquid is used and recycled bin bags. There is scope to increase the range of green cleaning materials used, such as Ecover dishwasher tablets, eco-loo cleaners etc. This should be investigated.

Require major suppliers (i.e. annual spend over £10,000) or large tenders (over £5,000) to provide environmental information prior to award of contract (i.e. do they have an environmental management system).

18. The 2007/08 Sustainable Development Fund guidelines will now incorporate a paragraph specifying that SDF grant recipients must work to the CCB's own environmental guidelines (e.g. use of local materials).

# <u>To specify, whenever possible, locally bought and sourced produce for events and meetings.</u>

19. This has been achieved, local suppliers are used wherever possible.

# The CCB to participate in two Green Travel (or similar) events a year, to raise awareness and participation of sustainability amongst staff.

- 20. The CCB celebrated 'Bike to Work' week (a national event to raise awareness of green travel) by organising a bike ride from the CCB offices on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006. This was combined with the launch of 'Cycle, Ride, Walk in the Heart of the Chilterns', encouraging people to explore the quiet lanes and bridleways between Princes Risborough and High Wycombe. Over twenty people attended the event and there was coverage of the event in the local press.
- 21. The Sustainability Plan looks at raising awareness of sustainability amongst staff, but more can be done to promote the aims of the Plan externally. The CCB has now made the Sustainability Plan available on the AONB web site. However much more could be done to promote it (e.g. through Chalk and Trees and other newsletters, press releases etc). In addition the CCB plans to produce a 2-page environmental policy (a summary of the CCB's Sustainability Plan) for public consumption.

# Aims, targets and actions to take forward in 2007/08

22. In 2006/07 the CCB focused much of its activity on reducing energy use at its offices and much positive progress has been made. It is now felt that the CCB has gone as far as it can in this area, given that the CCB does not own the premises and it is not feasible to adapt the building any more. Unlike a newbuild office it is less realistic to become carbon-neutral. That said, the CCB will continue to be vigilant as regards its day-to-day use of energy and other resources and continue to make small-scale improvements wherever possible. In addition the CCB will remain open to new technologies which are developing fast.

# **Carbon Neutrality**

- 23. Looking forward to 2007/08, the CCB must focus on other ways of becoming carbon-neutral in relation to the running of its offices and the implementation of its work programme (the CCB should be aiming to become carbon-neutral over the next 3 years....phased approach as below?).
  - 2007/08 off-set 25% of total gas and electricity carbon emissions
  - 2008/09 off-set 50% of gas and electricity carbon emissions
  - 2010/11 off-set 75% of gas and electricity carbon emissions
  - 2010/11 off-set 100% of gas and electricity emissions

#### **Carbon Offset Fund**

24. To compliment its own efforts the CCB should consider creating its own carbon off-setting fund to help support projects in the Chilterns rather than contributing to national/international carbon off-setting projects. Given that that Board is being successful in reducing its carbon emissions the need to offset, after all other measures have been investigated, is relatively small. In practice the current tree planting scheme achieves this. However there is

scope to support other practical carbon offset measures in the Chilterns. There are a range of options:

- The CCB could provide small grants to fund local sustainability projects (smaller-scale than the Sustainable Development Fund, perhaps run on similar lines to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund).
- The CCB could providing free energy-efficient light bulbs for Community/Parish Halls in the Chilterns.
- 25. In addition to the above there are other areas where the CCB can have an impact:
  - The CCB can play an important role in influencing others, through more awareness-raising and promotional work.
  - The CCB can continue to support other organisations through its Sustainable Development Fund programme in 2007/08 (eg an application has been received for an interesting project, a Hydro-Power Scheme at Goring Weir).

# Targets for 2007/08

1) To continue purchasing paper that has a 100% recycled content, is chlorine-free and from manufacturers with an environmental management system.	
2) To specify paper for publications that has at least 75% recycled content, is chlorine-free from manufacturers with an environmental management system.	
3) To restrict the number of hard copies printed if electronic formats provide a reasonable alternative.	Same as 06/07
	This is less than the 11 reams in 06/07, reflecting lower use achieved.
	Amended from 06/07, not realistic to keep on reducing the amount of waste generated.
6) To recycle over 80% of waste produced.	Same as 06/07
7) To use no more than 6 m3 (6000 litres) of water per person per year	Same as 06/07
8) To produce less than 80 kg/m2/year of CO2 emissions	Revised from 06/07, see page 6.
<ul><li>9) To continue and expand the annual programme of carbon off-set activities:</li><li>tree planting to off-set staff car travel associated with attending events</li></ul>	planting.

<ul> <li>contributing 5% of events income to carbon off-set fund</li> </ul>	
<ul> <li>off-setting 25% of gas and electricity carbon emissions with support for local sustainability projects</li> </ul>	
10) To reduce the amount of car travel by CCB staff by	Sama as last year not
, ,	realistic to increase further
5% per annum	
44) D. who are described and of a bight and have been for	at this stage.
11) Purchase cleaning products which are less harmfu	Same as 06/07
to the environment.	
12) Require major suppliers (i.e. annual spend over	
£10,000) or large tenders (over £5,000) to provide	
environmental information prior to award of contract	
(i.e. do they have an environmental management	
system).	
13) To specify, whenever possible, locally bought and	Same as 06/07
sourced produce for events and meetings.	
14) To promote the CCB Sustainability Plan and raise	Expanded to raise
awareness of sustainability amongst staff, Board	awareness amongst wider
members and people/organisations in the Chilterns:	audience.
- Participate in two Green Travel (or similar) events a	
year, to raise awareness and participation of	
sustainability.	
- Get coverage through the AONB web site	
newsletters, press releases.	
15) Proceed with installation of PV panels subject to	
planning permission and grant contribution.	
planning permission and grant contribution.  16) Produce 2-page summary of the Sustainability Plan	
16) Produce 2-page summary of the Sustainability Plan	
16) Produce 2-page summary of the Sustainability Plan for public consumption and add this to the AONB web	
16) Produce 2-page summary of the Sustainability Plan for public consumption and add this to the AONB web site	
<ul><li>16) Produce 2-page summary of the Sustainability Planfor public consumption and add this to the AONB website</li><li>17) Investigate taking all, or a percentage, of energy</li></ul>	
16) Produce 2-page summary of the Sustainability Plan for public consumption and add this to the AONB web site	

#### **Application for the LEADER Programme**

**Author:** Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

**Summary:** Applications for the LEADER programme, funded by the

Rural Development Plan for England and the EU are being sought to support rural development measures. It is proposed to support bids being developed which cover

any part of the Chilterns.

**Purpose of Report:** To advise members of the opportunity to bid for LEADER

funds

#### **Background**

1. The LEADER programme will be supported by funding from the Rural Development Programme for England using government and EU funding. The LEADER programme supports rural development measures which support economic, social and environmental activity. It is thought that there may be between 6-8 programmes in the south eat of England and similar numbers in other regions. The amount of funding is approx £400,000 per successful area for a period cover 2008 -2011.

- Discussions have been held with SEEDA which is co-ordinating the programme in the south east. AONBs have been encouraged to submit bids, but in the Board's case this is not advised as it would create significant cash flow problems. Those AONBs which are part of the local authority would not face this difficulty.
- 3. The Board has been invited by Bucks CC to form part of a steering group, the outcome of which is that there are likely to be two bids from Buckinghamshire one covering the north of the county and the other the south, but both serviced by a secretariat within Bucks CC.
- SEEDA requires expressions of interest to be submitted by early June, and a full application by mid October. If successful, funds will be available from spring 2008.
- 5. A LEADER fund could provide support to many projects which help deliver the AONB Management Plan, all the more valuable in light of the declining support from Natural England. It is therefore advised that the Board should actively participate in the development of any bids which would help the Chilterns.

# Recommendation

1. To support any bids to the LEADER programme which may benefit the Chilterns and help deliver the AONB Management Plan.

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