



**AGENDA FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO BE HELD AT 10.30 AM ON TUESDAY
11 DECEMBER 2007 AT CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD OFFICES, THE LODGE,
CHINNOR**

| Agenda Item | Page No |
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| 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE | |
| 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To declare any personal and prejudicial interests | |
| 3 MINUTES of the meeting held on 19 September 2007, to be confirmed | 1 - 6 |
| 4 MATTERS ARISING | |
| 5 FINANCE REPORT 2007-08 | 7 - 16 |
| 6 DRAFT BUDGET 2008-09 | 17 - 40 |
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| 10 PROGRESS REPORT ON ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRALITY | 79 - 80 |
| 11 WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS | 81 - 82 |
| 12 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SUBMISSION OF A BID FOR THE CHILTERN TO LEADER PROGRAMME | 83 - 86 |
| 13 PROGRESS ON REVIEWING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN | 87 - 88 |
| 14 DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday 27 February 2008 at 10.30am. Dates of future meetings are as follows: | |
| 2008 | |
| 21 May | |
| 17 September | |
| 10 December | |

For further information please contact: Maureen Keyworth, Clerk to the Executive Committee, on 01296 383603, Fax No 01296 382538, email: mkeyworth@buckscc.gov.uk

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE CHILTERNNS CONSERVATION BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2007, IN CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD OFFICES, THE LODGE, CHINNOR, COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.24 PM.

Present:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Cllr Rhys Goodwin | Board Member |
| Sir John Johnson | Board Member |
| Cllr Marion Mustoe | Board Member |
| Richard Pushman | Board Member |
| Steve Rodrick | CCB Chief Officer |
| Chris Smith | CCB Finance Officer |
| Cllr Bill Storey | Board Member |
| Cllr Alan Walters | Board Member |
| Mike Woods | Buckinghamshire County Council |

In Attendance:

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Maureen Keyworth | BCC and Clerk to the Board |
|------------------|----------------------------|

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Shirley Judges, Richard Brown and Kevin Mayne.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May were agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Item 4: Matters Arising

The Chief Officer confirmed that planning permission had been granted for the solar panels and they were now installed. Boris Johnson MP will be visiting the Offices on 23 November from 11.30 to 12.15pm for the official 'switching on' of the panels.

Item 7: Finance Report 2007-08

A press release had been published regarding the Board's concerns over funding, and as a result the CAONB had received local publicity. Members noted that there were no longer any delays in payment of quarterly grant payments by Natural England.

No further information had been received regarding cost of living awards. The Committee resolved to review the situation following a national settlement.

Item 8 Review of the AONB Management Plan

The Committee noted that the services of Alan Wheeler had now been secured. Alan was making progress with preparation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

6. AUDIT COMMISSION RETURN FOR 2006-07

Members received the report of the Finance Officer, the purpose of which was to present the Annual Return, based on the accounts for 2006-07, for approval and for submission to the Audit Commission.

The Committee noted that the 'light touch' audit, had replaced the visit by the Audit Commission.

The Internal Auditor was in agreement with the Annual Return.

The Committee APPROVED the Annual Return for 2006-07 and authorised the Chairman and Chief Officer to sign it prior to submission to the Audit Commission. This was duly done.

7. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members received the report of the Finance Officer, the purpose of which was to advise the Committee of amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Instructions to reflect both administrative changes and developing practices in financial governance.

The Committee noted from the report that additional sections had been included which had been previously requested. The Regulations were now in line with best practice. It was also noted that amendments to the Standing Orders as to Contracts were not required.

Discussion took place with regard to Reserves and whether there was guidance on the percentage required. The Board's reserves were currently approximately 40%. However, as the Board was not a precepting Authority, the Committee considered that it needed reserves to provide the necessary financial security. The Finance Officer stated that once he had drawn up a three year plan, further discussion could take place on the amount of reserves needed. Identifying reserves for specific purposes would be informative.

The Chief Officer confirmed that the Charities Commission guidelines were used which suggested three to four months running costs. The current reserves had seen the Board through the initial months prior to Natural England's funding having been received, without the need to have an overdraft.

The Committee AGREED to advise the Board to adopt the updated Financial Regulations and Financial Instructions and NOTED that the existing set of Standing Orders as to Contracts will remain unchanged.

8. FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to advise the Board on the need to adopt a Flexible Retirement Policy as soon as possible.

The Chief Officer suggested that the Buckinghamshire County Council policy be used as a model, subject to some changes in the wording to suit the CCB.

The Policy would be reviewed once further HR support had been recruited. In this connection, members noted that advertisements had been placed as well as contact being made with local companies. Interviews would be taking place on 19 October.

The Committee AGREED to advise the Board that it adopts the Flexible Retirement Policy based on the model version produced by Buckinghamshire County Council.

The Committee also AGREED that the policy should be reviewed when the Board has been able to engage specialist HR support and a report presented to the Executive Committee within the next year.

9. REPORT ON ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRALITY

Members received the Report of the Chief Officer and Planning Officer, the purpose of which was to advise the Board on how carbon neutrality might be achieved by 2011.

The Committee noted that the current carbon generation was 31.4 tonnes per annum broken down as follows:

20.9 tonnes (office, staff and members)

10.5 tonnes (emissions generated by delegates attending CCB events)

The aim was for carbon neutrality within three years, which will include the adoption of a green tariff for energy once the current contract expires in 2008.

The options to achieve carbon neutrality are limited and therefore the Board will need to look to carbon offsetting. However, because of the uncertainties and poor media coverage of some offset schemes, the Chief Officer proposed that the Board should have its own carbon offsetting scheme through distribution of low energy light bulbs to community facilities and planting of trees. A proportion of delegate fees for conferences will be put towards the costs, as well as the savings through reduced operating costs. It was hoped that through these measures the Board could achieve a zero net carbon footprint by 2011.

1. The Committee NOTED the current measures to reduce carbon emissions.

The Committee AGREED

2. That the Board should create its own Carbon Emissions Offsetting Scheme.

3. That the Offsetting Scheme should be based, in 2007-08, on planting 100 native trees and giving away 150 low energy light bulbs.

4. The Board should switch to green tariff for its energy supply from September 2008 onwards – subject to agreement that the renewable energy is being generated in ways acceptable to the Board.

5. That a Budget of £2,000 be created, based on £500 savings on energy and mileage costs, £1,000 raised from delegates fees for events the Board organises and £500 allocated from the core budget.

10. PROGRESS ON REVIEWING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Members received the report of the Chief Officer and Consultant with regard to progress on reviewing the AONB Management Plan.

The Committee noted that progress on the Strategic Environmental Assessment is slower than anticipated because of the amount of data that is required. Much of the Assessment will be based on the best available information rather than Chilterns specific information.

Workshops will be held in the next few months and it is also proposed that in depth discussions will be held on the afternoon of the next Board meeting and at the Annual Forum.

Members noted that Alan Wheeler has made a positive contribution to progress of the work.

The Committee NOTED that the process of reviewing the Plan had begun.

11. REPORT ON EU FUNDED PROGRAMMES (LEADER AND INTERREG IVB)

Members received the Report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to advise members of current involvement in bidding for EU funds and to report that SEEDA has invited a full bid from the Chilterns to the LEADER Fund.

The LEADER programme deals with funds from the Rural Development Programme for England. The Board prepared an expression of interest for the Chilterns. The deadline for first round bids is 19 January 2008. Business Link will be co-ordinating the preparation of the bid.

The Chief Officer informed members that SEEDA has indicated there will not be enough money for all bids and is placing emphasis on work connected to farming and forestry. Decisions on successful bids will be made by May/June 2008. Members were also informed that the Chiltern Bid does not have to be split into two parts.

With regard to the Interreg IVb, bidders must have European partners. Work is currently being undertaken with partners in developing links between the countryside and urban areas around Paris and London. Matched funding will be through the Sustainable Development Fund. Kent County Council is doing most of the preparatory work.

Alan Walters informed members that South Bucks District Council is also interested in the Leader Programme. Currently there are three bids in for Buckinghamshire, one of which is in the Colne Valley.

It was agreed that the Chief Officer would write a briefing note on the LEADER programme to all members.

The Committee

- 1. Noted the Board's involvement with bids to the LEADER and Interreg IVb Programmes and endorsed continuing staff involvement with the preparation of both bids.**
- 2. AGREED to encourage Board members to become involved with the LEADER Local Action Groups.**
- 3. AGREED in principle to employ a LEADER programme manager, providing the costs are fully covered by the LEADER programme.**

12. ANNUAL FORUM (9TH NOVEMBER)

Members received the Report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's approval of the planned arrangements for the Annual Forum 2007.

The Committee APPROVED the programme for the Annual Forum.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Tuesday 11 December 2007 at 10.30am.

Future Dates

| Board Meeting 2008 | Executive Committee 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 22 January | 27 February |
| 26 March | 21 May |
| 18 June | 17 September |
| 15 October | 10 December |
| 21 January (2009) | |

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded for the following item which is exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

16. FINANCE REPORT 2007-08

Members received the report of the Chief Officer and Finance Officer, the purpose of which was to advise members of the Board; of the financial position to the end of August and likely position at the end of the financial year.

The Committee noted that income was on target. Arrangements are now in place with Natural England whereby future quarterly grant payments will be received promptly. Expenditure was 17% below profile but this is expected to change as the year progresses.

One virement of £4,864 is proposed between Countryside Management and the Project Support Budget.

Because project budgets span more than one year, work is currently being undertaken to produce a document giving an overview of projects as a whole.

Higher interest rates have made a positive impact on the budget.

The Committee

- 1. NOTED the current financial position**
- 2. NOTED progress on other finance related activity**
- 3. APPROVED the virement of £4,864 from Countryside Management to Project Support.**

17. PERSONNEL REPORT

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to ask the Committee to agree to the Board taking out a policy to provide financial support for employees in the event of them requiring health care (Health Cash Plan) and to note the other items presented.

Health Cash Plan for Employees

Members were asked to consider the introduction of a Health Cash Plan through HSBC, which would provide a level of assistance for a range of medical care, as noted in the Report.

The Committee AGREED that the Health Cash Plan be taken out at Level 1 for all existing staff, and that all new staff become eligible once they have completed their probationary period.

CHAIRMAN

Finance Report

Author: Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary To the end of October 2007 the expenditure against the core budget was 18.5% below profile and income 0.3% above profile. The end of year outturn is likely to be underspent against the original budget, with the surplus of some £18,000 transferred to the Project Support budget.

Purpose of Report: To advise members of the Board's financial position to the end of October and likely position at the end of the financial year.

Background

1. The current financial position is satisfactory with no significant problems to report.
2. The original budget for 2007-08 was re-worked to reflect the lack of contribution from Natural England towards the review of the Management Plan. That revision to the budget was approved by the Committee in May 2007 and is now shown as the Annual Budget in column 1 of the attached monitoring document.
3. The income achieved to date is in line with the profiled budget, with no major variances. Arrangements have been confirmed with Natural England to ensure that future quarterly grant payments are received promptly.
4. Expenditure is below the profile. A pay award for staff of 2.475% has been settled nationally as opposed to the 3% included in the original budget. Other underspends have been identified in a number of areas as shown in column 5 of the attached monitoring document.
5. The total of £18,470 has been transferred to the Project Support budget.

Project Budgets

6. Project activity is proceeding in line with the budgets set previously.

Recommendations:

1. **To note the current financial position.**
2. **To approve the virement of £ 18,470 from various core budgets to Project Support.**

BUDGET v ACTUAL YEAR TO DATE 2007/08

MONTH 7: OCTOBER 2007

| Description | Annual Budget | Profiled Budget to date | Actual to date | Variance | Projected Outturn | Notes |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | |
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Department 100: | | | | | | |
| Promotion and Awareness | | | | | | |
| Information Officer & RK Officer | (77,534) | (45,228) | (44,708) | 520 | (77,207) | |
| Travel & subsistence | (2,000) | (1,167) | (342) | 825 | (2,000) | |
| Publications (bought in) | (500) | (292) | (165) | 127 | (500) | |
| Web site | (9,000) | (5,250) | (3,239) | 2,011 | (9,000) | |
| CCB Literature (C&T etc.) | (26,000) | (14,125) | (8,461) | 5,664 | (26,000) | |
| Displays | (600) | (350) | - | 350 | (600) | |
| Events | (3,500) | (2,042) | (51) | 1,991 | (3,500) | |
| Environmental education | (2,500) | (1,458) | - | 1,458 | (2,500) | |
| Miscellaneous | (1,000) | (583) | (1,270) | (687) | (1,000) | |
| Sub total | (122,634) | (70,495) | (58,236) | 12,259 | (122,307) | |

| Description | Annual Budget £ | Profiled Budget to date £ | Actual to date £ | Variance £ | Projected Outturn £ | Notes |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|---|
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Department 200: Countryside Management | | | | | | |
| Countryside &FLU Officer | (74,004) | (43,169) | (39,642) | 3,527 | (68,778) | CMO working 4 days per week since Sept. |
| Travel & subsistence | (3,500) | (2,041) | (759) | 1,282 | (3,500) | |
| Award schemes | (800) | (467) | - | 467 | (800) | |
| Research & monitoring | (6,000) | (3,500) | (2,397) | 1,103 | (6,000) | |
| Publications | (500) | (292) | (26) | 266 | (500) | |
| Events | (500) | (292) | - | 292 | (500) | |
| Commons network | (1,000) | (583) | - | 583 | (1,000) | |
| Chalk Grassland managers' group | (1,000) | (583) | - | 583 | (1,000) | |
| Miscellaneous | (500) | (292) | (626) | (334) | (500) | |
| Sub total | (87,804) | (51,219) | (43,450) | 7,769 | (82,578) | |
| | | | | | | |

| Description | Annual Budget £ | Profiled Budget to date £ | Actual to date £ | Variance £ | Projected Outturn £ | Notes |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------|
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Department 300: Planning & Development | | | | | | |
| Planning Officer | (53,478) | (31,196) | (30,815) | 381 | (53,161) | |
| Travel & subsistence | (1,500) | (875) | (666) | 209 | (1,500) | |
| Technical assistance | (2,000) | (1,167) | - | 1,167 | (2,000) | |
| Planning Committee | (1,500) | (875) | (393) | 482 | (1,500) | |
| Design award | (1,500) | (875) | (774) | 101 | (800) | |
| Planning conference | (2,500) | (1,458) | - | 1,458 | (1,300) | |
| Publications | (200) | (117) | - | 117 | (200) | |
| Traffic & transport | (1,000) | (583) | - | 583 | (1,000) | |
| Landscape award | (1,000) | (583) | - | 583 | (200) | |
| Design guidance | (2,000) | (1,167) | - | 1,167 | (2,000) | |
| Historic environment | (1,000) | (583) | - | 583 | (1,000) | |
| AONB Management Plan | (15,000) | (8,750) | (4,018) | 4,732 | (15,000) | |
| Miscellaneous | (500) | (292) | (487) | (195) | (500) | |
| Sub total | (83,178) | (48,521) | (37,153) | 11,368 | (80,161) | |

| Description | Annual Budget £ | Profiled Budget to date £ | Actual to date £ | Variance £ | Projected Outturn £ | Notes |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Department 400: Recreation and Access | | | | | | |
| Access Officer / Consultant | (23,081) | (17,282) | (17,065) | 217 | (21,081) | Less use of consultant than expected |
| Travel & subsistence | (2,000) | (1,166) | (199) | 967 | (200) | Due to maternity leave |
| Access publications | (3,000) | (1,750) | (420) | 1,330 | (3,000) | |
| Fieldwork & research | (2,000) | (1,167) | - | 1,167 | (2,000) | |
| Access conference | (1,500) | (875) | - | 875 | (1,500) | |
| Miscellaneous | (500) | (292) | (49) | 243 | (200) | |
| Sub total | (32,081) | (22,532) | (17,733) | 4,799 | (27,981) | |

| Description | Annual Budget £ | Profiled Budget to date £ | Actual to date £ | Variance £ | Projected Outturn £ | Notes |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------|
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Department 500: Corporate Services | | | | | | |
| Chief Officer / Office Manager / Admin | (113,561) | (66,244) | (65,854) | 390 | (114,236) | |
| Travel & subsistence | (3,000) | (1,750) | (1,101) | 649 | (3,000) | |
| Staff training & insurance | (6,000) | (3,500) | (994) | 2,506 | (3,000) | |
| Premises | (30,000) | (19,636) | (19,817) | (181) | (30,000) | |
| Office costs | (17,700) | (10,596) | (7,425) | 3,171 | (15,700) | |
| Office furniture & equipment | (600) | (350) | (390) | (40) | (600) | |
| IT (incl OS licences) | (24,000) | (12,900) | (14,974) | (2,074) | (24,000) | |
| Meetings & events | (1,500) | (875) | (919) | (44) | (1,500) | |
| Finance | (19,000) | (6,026) | (3,381) | 2,645 | (19,000) | |
| Personnel | (2,000) | (2,000) | (588) | 1,412 | (2,000) | |
| Legal services | (10,000) | (5,833) | (3,280) | 2,553 | (10,000) | |
| Insurance | (9,000) | (6,000) | - | 6,000 | (9,000) | |
| Miscellaneous | (2,000) | (1,167) | (293) | 874 | (1,500) | |
| Sub total | (238,361) | (136,877) | (119,016) | 17,861 | (233,536) | |
| | | | | | | |

| Description | Annual Budget £ | Profiled Budget to date £ | Actual to date £ | Variance £ | Projected Outturn £ | Notes |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------|
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Department 600: Member Services | | | | | | |
| Members' allowances | (36,000) | (21,000) | (19,780) | 1,220 | (36,000) | |
| Board member training | (1,800) | (1,050) | (2,544) | (1,494) | (2,550) | |
| Board meetings | (2,700) | (1,575) | (633) | 942 | (1,500) | |
| Miscellaneous | (1,500) | (875) | - | 875 | (1,500) | |
| Sub total | (42,000) | (24,500) | (22,957) | 1,543 | (41,550) | |
| Contribution to SE Protected Landscapes Co-ordinator | (2,100) | | | | (1,600) | |
| Project budget support | (10,000) | | | | (28,470) | |
| Merchandise purchases | (1,000) | (583) | (320) | 263 | (500) | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | (619,158) | (354,727) | (298,865) | 55,862 | (618,683) | |

| Description | Annual Budget £ | Profiled Budget to date £ | Actual to date £ | Variance £ | Projected Outturn £ | Notes |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| INCOME | | | | | | |
| Natural England | 467,620 | 350,715 | 350,715 | - | 467,620 | |
| Natural England – Management Plan | - | - | - | - | - | Grant bid to NE declined |
| Local Authorities | 121,014 | 121,014 | 121,116 | 102 | 121,014 | |
| Local Authorities – Management Plan | 3,050 | 1,779 | 2,575 | 796 | 2,575 | Part paid 2006/07 |
| Merchandise sales | 5,000 | 2,917 | 2,707 | (210) | 5,000 | |
| Other income | 25,000 | 14,583 | 15,430 | 847 | 25,000 | |
| TOTAL INCOME | 621,684 | 491,008 | 492,543 | 1,535 | 621,209 | |
| NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) | 2,526 | 136,282 | 193,675 | 57,393 | 2,526 | |

PROJECT ACTIVITY YEAR TO DATE 2007/08

MONTH 7: April - October

| PROJECT | Reserves b/forward £ | Budget expenditure 2007-08 (excl in-kind) £ | Actual exp YTD £ | Actual inc YTD £ | Transfer from Gen Reserve 2007-08 £ | Income secured incl reserves £ | Balance to find (-) Balance in hand (+) £ |
|--|----------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------|---|--|---|
| PROMOTION AND AWARENESS | | | | | | | |
| Getting Close to Nature | 14,143 | (8,750) | (9,080) | 305 | | 17,153 | 8,403 |
| Red Kites / Friends of Red Kites | 3,348 | (2,990) | (1,595) | 3,151 | | 6,338 | 3,348 |
| People and Places | 6,600 | (13,880) | (736) | - | | 11,880 | (2,000) |
| TOTAL | 24,101 | (25,620) | 11,410 | 3,456 | | 35,371 | 9,751 |
| COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT | | | | | | | |
| Chalk Streams | 14,886 | (43,400) | (16,760) | 8,700 | | 52,756 | 9,386 |
| Woodland Programme | 32,976 | (15,000) | (713) | - | | 32,976 | 17,976 |
| Commons | 994 | (3,494) | (556) | - | | 3,494 | - |
| Chalk Grassland Programme | 1,973 | (5,250) | (234) | - | | 5,973 | 723 |
| Hedgerow Survey | 1,352 | (3,552) | (1,454) | 1,100 | | 3,552 | - |
| TOTAL | 52,181 | (70,696) | (19,716) | 9,800 | | 98,781 | 28,085 |
| ACCESS AND RECREATION | | | | | | | |
| Visitor Survey | - | (14,000) | (7,050) | 4,000 | | 8,500 | (5,500) |
| Ridgeway Link | - | (1,971) | (1,971) | - | | - | (1,971) |
| Access Publications incl routes & leaflets | 6,191 | (4,500) | (1,934) | 1,000 | | 12,125 | 7,625 |

| PROJECT | Reserves b/forward | Budget expenditure 2007-08 (excl | Actual exp YTD | Actual inc YTD | Transfer from Gen Reserve | Income secured incl | Balance to find (-) Balance in |
|---------|-----------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|---------|-----------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|

| | £ | in-kind £ | £ | £ | 2007-08 £ | reserves £ | hand (+) £ |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Tranquil Traffic Management | - | (20,000) | - | 20,000 | | 20,000 | - |
| Tranquil Cycling | 1,324 | (300) | (122) | - | | 1,324 | 1,024 |
| TOTAL | 7,515 | (40,771) | (11,076) | 25,000 | | 41,949 | 1,178 |
| PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT | - | | - | | | | |
| TOTAL | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sustainable Development Fund | - | (70,000) | (2,136) | - | | 70,000 | |
| Solar Panels | - | (11,000) | (10,941) | - | - | 11,000 | - |
| GRAND TOTAL | 83,797 | (207,087) | (44,339) | 38,256 | - | 246,101 | 39,014 |

Draft Budget 2008-09

Authors: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer
Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary: In view of the uncertainty over grant aid from Natural England for 2008-09, two draft core budgets have been prepared based on varying income levels. It is likely that due to budgetary cut backs by DEFRA the grant aid from Natural England will be reduced. It is likely there will be less grant aid available for special projects and there is doubt that NE will provide the same level of, if any, grant aid for the Sustainable Development Fund. To maintain the work programme the Board will have to consider ways of accommodating some project costs within the core budget and consider release from reserves for specific projects. It is proposed to request the same level of grant aid from NE and the local authorities as 2007-08, adjusted for inflation.

Purpose of Report: To advise the Committee to approve both draft budgets in order to assist with financial and operational planning for 2008-09. A final budget will be produced following an award of grant from Natural England.

Background

1. The funding environment for 2008-09 is uncertain and, therefore, two draft budgets have been prepared based on different assumptions.
2. Last year the budget setting was confused as there was no agreement on which inflation index to use. This year an attempt has been made to assess the Board's own rate of inflation. Where this has not been possible for specific items, the CPI has been used. (CPI is the consumer prices index. It is the measure adopted by the Government for its UK inflation target. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee is required to achieve a target of 2 per cent.)
3. The Board should expect to feel the effects of changes in Government expenditure following the Comprehensive Spending Review and, in particular, the cutbacks in the budget of DEFRA. The Department is expected to reduce the grant aid given to its agencies including Natural England. At the time of writing Natural England has not issued any guidance about grant awards, but there have been enough hints for the Board to assume that, at best, the grant aid offered will be, in real terms, the same as last year. It is equally realistic to assume that the grant aid might be cut in real terms.

Budget A

4. Two budgets have been prepared. Budget A is based on the following assumptions:
 1. Natural England and the local authorities will provide an inflation only increase of 2%.
 2. The NE grant aid for projects is frozen at last year's level - £32,000.
 3. NE grant aid to the Sustainable Development Fund is reduced from £70,000 to £50,000. This is equivalent to a 30% cut. Only £5,000 (10%) of can be used to cover administration. Currently this is £7,000 (10% of £70,000)
 4. Other core budget income is maintained in real terms.
5. Through efficiency savings and re-allocation of funds it would be possible to create a project support budget of £37,000.
6. Overall Budget A represents a real increase in expenditure of 0.3%. based on an CPI of 2.3%. As the Board's own inflation rate is slightly higher than the CPI this represents a standstill budget.

Budget B

7. This budget is based on a worst case scenario: The assumptions are:
 5. There is no increase for inflation in grant to the core budget from Natural England, but local authority contributions are increased by 2%. Other forms of income are increased by 2%. This will mean that the core budget is reduced by 1.4% in real terms.
 6. There is no grant aid from NE for projects.
 7. There is no grant aid from NE for the Sustainable Development Fund.

Under this scenario a project support budget of £25,000 can be created.

8. Overall Budget B represents a real decrease in expenditure of 1.1%. As the Board's own inflation rate is slightly higher than the CPI this represents a decrease of approx 1.4%.

Other factors

Staff Costs

9. The Board's primary asset is its staff. In determining the budget for next year it is possible to avoid redundancies. The increase in employment costs will be at its lowest rate since the Board was established. It is likely that the pay settlement for local government workers for 2008-09 will be at or possibly below the inflation level. A figure of 2.25% has been assumed in the draft budgets.
10. Next year three (out of ten) staff will receive a cost of living increase only as they are at the top of their salary scale. (n.b. the Board needs to introduce a grading review process)
11. At the time of writing the employer's pension contribution is not known. It is assumed that it will be unchanged. However due to stronger pension fund performance over the past three year there is a possibility it will decline slightly. The tri-annual revaluation statement of the pension fund is due in December.
12. Annette Venters will return to work in April 2008, following her maternity leave, on a part time basis (3 days per week). Kath Daly is currently in a trial period of working only 4 days per week. A decision on whether to confirm this arrangement will be taken in February. Currently most of the savings are being used to pay for a consultant to provide some cover for Annette and to meet costs of reviewing the AONB Management Plan. The plan is unlikely to be completed until the autumn of next year and will require funding at the level agreed. No additional grant was awarded by Natural England to cover these costs and they are, therefore, being met to date from savings in staff costs and the local authority additional contributions.

Members Allowances

13. Members' allowances were set in January 2005. It decided in January 2006 to freeze them for a three year period backdated to January 2005. That period ends in January 2008 and it is suggested that allowances be adjusted to cover inflation for the period Jan 2005 – March 2008 = 6.9%. Based on the CPI they would, therefore, be increased to £640. All other special responsibility allowances would be increased by the same figure

| Allowance | 2005-08 | 2008-09 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Basic | £600 | £640 |
| Chairman | £2,000 | £2,138 |
| Vice Chairman | £750 | £800 |
| Committee Chairman | £750 | £800 |
| Committee Member | £500 | £534 |

Note: Committees for which allowances are payable:

- Executive Committee
- Planning committee
- Sustainable Development Fund committee

14. If the grant from NE for the SDF is cut entirely the SDF Panel will be disbanded. If the budget is cut the role of the committee will need to be reviewed, including the allowances paid.

Car User Allowance and Mileage Rates

15. The staff car user allowance (£600) has been frozen since April 2006. It is proposed to adjust the allowance to cover inflationary increases (2.3% in 2006 and 2.3% in 2007). This will raise it to £630. The allowance is taxable but not pensionable.
16. The car mileage rate for both staff and members is 40 pence per mile. Payments above this figure are taxable. It is not proposed to change this rate unless the tax threshold is lifted. Currently it is estimated that a member of staff travelling 2000 miles per year on behalf of the Board is paying approximately an additional £16 in petrol costs compared to April 2006.

Alternative Funding Sources

17. The staff are actively exploring other channels to secure funding for the current work programme and potential new initiatives. Continuing the trend, it is proposed to seek additional resources from sponsorship, advertising and charging fees for events.
18. The aim is to at least cover the direct costs of all major events (e.g. Planning and Access Conferences). However it is intended to retain the Annual Forum as a free event. This to encourage as many community groups and local people to attend as possible.
19. The web site has the potential to be attractive to commercial interests. The Committee is invited to provide guidance on whether this would be appropriate for the Board. The inclusion of advertising in Chalk and Trees has generated approx. £2,500 per edition and has not attracted any criticism.
20. The Board is helping to prepare the bid for the LEADER programme which, if successful, may attract between £2m- £3m for rural development (primarily linked to farming, forestry and ancillary land uses) for the period 2008-2013. It is unlikely the Board itself will be able to secure significant funding from this programme, but it is well placed to help others to apply for funding. This may provide an alternative source of funding for projects which previously the Board might have supported directly.

Work Programme

21. The Board is heavily reliant on Natural England grant aid to the core budget for delivery of much of its work programme. It has, in past years, also been reliant on NE (Countryside Agency) grant for special projects. That reliance is now at a much lower level following the major cuts in each of the past two financial years. Only the Chalk Streams Project is now reliant on NE grant aid, which meets nearly 50% of costs, including the cost of the part time project officer. If NE is able to provide any grant aid it is likely to be lower. Of the £32,000 offered in total for grant aid in 2006-07, £21,000 was for the Chalk Streams project - most that needed to support the project officer post.
22. If NE is able to offer any grant aid for projects further consideration is needed on how that grant would be allocated.
23. Members may recall that a three year priority setting exercise was conducted in 2006. In the event the grant shortfall this year curtailed elements of the work programme. As far as possible it is proposed that work programme be continued (Appendix 1). To implement the entire programme will require a combination of funds from the core budget, ring fenced reserves for specific projects and up to £56,000 from the project support budget and reserves. This may reduce by up to £20,000 if grant aid is provided by Natural England or the Environment Agency for the Chalk Streams Project.
24. At that level (£56,000), reserves of up to £30,000 would have to be released in addition to those reserves already ring fenced for specific projects.(this would represent approx 10% of the general reserve).

Conclusions

25. The Board should try to create a project support budget within its core budget. The core budget is less vulnerable to cuts in grant aid than the separate budgets for projects. Budget A would have a project support budget of £37,000 and Budget B of £25,000. Those projects with ring fenced budgets are likely only to go ahead in future if they can secure support from sources other than Natural England. Consideration should be given to releasing reserves to add to this budget.
26. As far as possible the Board should encourage applications for grant to the LEADER programme for projects which meet the aims of the AONB Management Plan. That would help overcome, in part, the impact of possible cutbacks to the Sustainable Development Fund.
27. The Board can continue with its work programme without resorting to making posts redundant. However the future of the Chalk Streams Officer post is dependent upon securing grant aid from Natural England or possibly the Environment Agency (a meeting to discuss funding has been arranged for 6th Dec – a report will be made to the Executive

Committee). If this is not forthcoming the Board will have to decide on whether to re-allocate some of the newly created Project Support budget or use reserves.

28. The Board should seek a more stable financial arrangement with Natural England, ideally based on a rolling three year arrangement. Inevitably there will be annual adjustments but it would be preferable to the yearly uncertainty that current arrangement creates.

Recommendations

1. **The Committee provisionally approves both budgets. A final budget will be prepared in the light of the grant aid offered by Natural England.**
2. **To request a grant increase from Natural England and the local authorities of 2% to cover the Board's inflationary rise in costs.**
3. **Staff Car Allowances are increased to cover inflation since April 2006.**
4. **Members allowances are adjusted to cover inflation increases from January 2005.**
5. **To review the role and members' allowances of the SDF panel in the light of Natural England's grant.**
6. **To recommend to the Board that it agrees, in principle, to use reserves to create a project support budget in case of a shortfall in grant aid for projects.**
7. **To recommend to the Board that, subject to a successful bid for the LEADER programme, the Board encourages and assists directly applications to the LEADER fund for projects previously supported by the SDF.**
8. **To advise on whether to offer space for commercial advertising or sponsorship on the Board's web site.**
9. **To request Natural England and local authorities to agree to a rolling three year funding agreement with effect from 2009.**

CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD - Draft Budgets 2008-09

| Description | Original Budget 2007-08 £ | Revised Budget 2007-08 £ | Budget A 2008-09 £ | Budget B 2008-09 £ | Notes |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Department 100: Promotion and Awareness | | | | | |
| Information Officer & RK Officer | (77,534) | (77,207) | (79,845) | (79,845) | |
| Travel & subsistence | (2,000) | (2,000) | (3,000) | (3,000) | In 07/08 Activities Officer travel costs were met by HLF grant |
| Publications (bought in) | (500) | (500) | (500) | (500) | |
| Web site | (9,000) | (9,000) | (9,000) | (9,000) | |
| CCB Literature (C&T etc.) | (26,000) | (26,000) | (25,750) | (25,750) | |
| Displays | (600) | (600) | (600) | (600) | |
| Events | (3,500) | (3,500) | (3,500) | (3,500) | Includes costs of two parish council fora |
| Annual Forum | - | - | (2,500) | (2,500) | |
| Environmental education | (2,500) | (2,500) | (5,000) | (5,000) | In 07/08 environmental education costs were partly met by HLF grant |
| Miscellaneous | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | |
| Sub total | (122,634) | (122,307) | (130,695) | (130,695) | |
| | | | | | |

| Description | Original Budget 2007-08 £ | Revised Budget 2007-08 £ | Budget A 2008-09 £ | Budget B 2008-09 £ | Notes |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Department 200: Countryside Management | | | | | |
| Countryside & FLU Officer | (74,004) | (68,778) | (65,646) | (68,646) | Countryside Officer now working 4 days per week Budget A - £5,000 re-charged to SDF |
| Travel & subsistence | (3,500) | (3,500) | (3,500) | (3,500) | |
| Award schemes | (800) | (800) | (800) | (800) | |
| Research & monitoring | (6,000) | (6,000) | (4,000) | (4,000) | |
| Publications | (500) | (500) | (500) | (500) | |
| Events | (500) | (500) | (500) | (500) | |
| Commons network | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | |
| Chalk Grassland managers' group | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | |
| Miscellaneous | (500) | (500) | (500) | (500) | |
| Sub total | (87,804) | (82,578) | (77,446) | (80,446) | |
| | | | | | |

| Description | Original Budget 2007-08 £ | Revised Budget 2007-08 £ | Budget A 2008-09 £ | Budget B 2008-09 £ | Notes |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Department 300: Planning & Development | | | | | |
| Planning Officer | (53,478) | (53,161) | (54,326) | (54,326) | |
| Travel & subsistence | (1,500) | (1,500) | (1,500) | (1,500) | |
| Technical assistance | (2,000) | (2,000) | (2,000) | (2,000) | |
| Planning Committee | (1,500) | (1,500) | (800) | (800) | |
| Design award | (1,500) | (800) | (1,000) | (1,000) | |
| Planning conference | (2,500) | (1,300) | (2,500) | (2,500) | |
| Publications | (200) | (200) | (200) | (200) | |
| Traffic & transport | (1,000) | (1,000) | - | - | |
| Landscape award | (1,000) | (200) | (500) | (500) | |
| Design guidance | (2,000) | (2,000) | (2,000) | (2,000) | |
| Historic environment | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | |
| AONB Management Plan | (15,000) | (15,000) | (10,000) | (10,000) | Plan should be published Autumn 2008 |
| Miscellaneous | (500) | (500) | (500) | (500) | |
| Sub total | (83,178) | (80,161) | (76,326) | (76,326) | |
| | | | | | |

| Description | Original Budget 2007-08 £ | Revised Budget 2007-08 £ | Budget A 2008-09 £ | Budget B 2008-09 £ | Notes |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Department 400: Recreation and Access | | | | | |
| Access Officer / Consultant | (23,081) | (21,081) | (24,733) | (24,733) | Access officer returns part time in April 2008 |
| Travel & subsistence | (2,000) | (200) | (1,200) | (1,200) | |
| Access publications | (3,000) | (3,000) | (3,000) | (3,000) | |
| Fieldwork & research | (2,000) | (2,000) | (2,000) | (2,000) | |
| Access conference | (1,500) | (1,500) | (1,500) | (1,500) | |
| Miscellaneous | (500) | (200) | (500) | (500) | |
| Sub total | (32,081) | (27,981) | (32,933) | (32,933) | |
| | | | | | |

| Description | Original Budget 2007-08 £ | Revised Budget 2007-08 £ | Budget A 2008-09 £ | Budget B 2008-09 £ | Notes |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Department 500: Corporate Services | | | | | |
| Chief Officer / Office Manager / Admin | (113,561) | (114,236) | (118,608) | (118,608) | |
| Travel & subsistence | (3,000) | (3,000) | (3,000) | (3,000) | |
| Staff training & insurance | (6,000) | (3,000) | (6,000) | (6,000) | |
| Premises | (30,000) | (30,000) | (31,308) | (31,308) | |
| Office costs | (17,700) | (15,700) | (14,200) | (14,200) | |
| Office furniture & equipment | (600) | (600) | (600) | (600) | |
| IT (incl. OS licences) | (24,000) | (24,000) | (19,700) | (19,700) | Reduced investment in IT replacement |
| Meetings & events | (1,500) | (1,500) | (1,550) | (1,550) | |
| Finance | (19,000) | (19,000) | (19,035) | (19,035) | |
| Personnel | (2,000) | (2,000) | (2,000) | (2,000) | |
| Legal services | (10,000) | (10,000) | (8,000) | (8,000) | |
| Insurance | (9,000) | (9,000) | (7,700) | (7,700) | |
| Miscellaneous | (2,000) | (1,500) | (1,500) | (1,500) | |
| Sub total | (238,361) | (233,536) | (233,201) | (233,201) | |
| | | | | | |

| Description | Original Budget 2007-08 £ | Revised Budget 2007-08 £ | Budget A 2008-09 £ | Budget B 2008-09 £ | Notes |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Department 600: Member Services | | | | | |
| Members' allowances | (36,000) | (36,000) | (40,000) | (40,000) | Increased allowances |
| Board member training | (1,800) | (2,550) | (2,500) | (2,500) | |
| Board meetings | (2,700) | (1,500) | (1,500) | (1,500) | |
| Miscellaneous | (1,500) | (1,500) | (200) | (200) | |
| Sub total | (42,000) | (41,550) | (44,200) | (44,200) | |
| Contribution to SE Protected Landscapes Co-ordinator | (2,100) | (1,600) | (2,000) | (2,000) | |
| Project budget support | (10,000) | (28,470) | (37,000) | (25,000) | |
| Merchandise purchases | (1,000) | (500) | (1,000) | (1,000) | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | (619,158) | (618,683) | (634,801) | (625,801) | |

| Description | Original Budget 2007-08 £ | Revised Budget 2007-08 £ | Budget A 2008-09 £ | Budget B 2008-09 £ | Notes |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| INCOME | | | | | |
| Natural England | 467,620 | 467,620 | 476,975 | 467,620 | |
| Local Authorities | 121,014 | 121,014 | 123,434 | 123,434 | |
| Local Authorities – Management Plan | 3,050 | 2,575 | 3,050 | 3,050 | |
| Merchandise sales | 5,000 | 5,000 | 2,000 | 2,000 | Red Kite booklet sales are falling |
| Other income | 25,000 | 25,000 | 30,000 | 30,000 | Increased delegate fees and sponsorship |
| TOTAL INCOME | 621,684 | 621,209 | 635,459 | 626,104 | |
| NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT) | 2,526 | 2,526 | 658 | 303 | |

Chilterns Conservation Board – Draft Work Programme 2008-2009

| Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the Chilterns | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| No. | Area of Work | Key Actions and Outputs | Budget |
| 1 | AONB Management Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To complete the review of the Mgt Plan • To publish and promote the new Mgt Plan | <p>£10,000</p> <p>£10,000 core budget</p> |
| 2 | Management of Chalk Grassland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for site management • Training programme for site managers • Data gathering – map existing chalk grassland and opportunities for reversion • Events programme | <p>£5,000</p> <p>£1,000 core budget</p> <p>£4,000 Project Support budget</p> |
| 3 | Management of Commons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to programme of conservation works on commons • Organise annual training event • Develop Commons section on web site • Maintenance of data base | <p>£3,000</p> <p>£1,000 core</p> <p>£2000 Project support budget</p> |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 4 | Conserving the Chiltern Woodland Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and training on all aspects of woodland management to owners of small woodlands (target of 50 no. = 200 hectares of woodlands) – via Chiltern Woodlands Project • Advice and provision of resources for management of special trees via Special Trees and Woods Project | £8,000 £8,000 earmarked reserves |
| 5 | Respond to planning consultation opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit response on relevant development control issues • Submit response to consultation on development and mineral plans • Respond to all relevant national and regional planning plans | Staff Time |
| 6 | The Planning System and the Chilterns AONB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Planning Policy Guidelines • Publish a guidance on how the planning system affect the Chilterns • Offer training and advice service, | £500 £500 core budget |
| 7 | Conserving the Chilterns Chalk Streams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River restoration programmes for Misbourne, Chess, Gade, Ver, Bulbourne, Hughenden, Wye • Riparian Management incl. willow pollarding and river corridor landscape enhancement • Implementing Chalk Streams HAP. A | £30,000 Combination of project grant aid, ring fenced reserves and project support budget |

| | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | | <p>priority will be water voles on River Chess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising with Environment Agency and Water Companies to reduce abstraction | |
| 8 | Roads in the Landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Design Guidance • Assess major highways proposals for environmental impact. • Lobby for low noise road surfaces and reduced lighting | <p>£1,500</p> <p>£1,500 Project Support budget</p> |

Promoting Understanding and Enjoyment

| | Area of Work | Key Actions and Output | Budget |
|-----------|--|--|---|
| 9 | Getting Close to Nature programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countryside Festival • Publications • Web Pages • Wildlife CCTV • Workshops • Family Fun Days • School visits • Educational Resources • Wildlife on the Move • Countryside Festival • Recruitment and Training of Volunteers | <p>£10,000</p> <p>£4,000 core budget</p> <p>£6,000 – combination of ring fenced reserves and project support budget. Scope also to raise income through charges</p> |
| 10 | Friend of the Red Kite scheme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends Group established | <p>£300</p> <p>£300 – ring fenced reserves</p> |

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| 11 | People and Places | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop project to include up to 100 profiles • Involve up to 25 volunteers | £10,000 £10,000 HLF grant and project support budget |
| 12 | Schools Programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 School visits • Promotion of Education Packs for Chalk Streams and Red Kites • Production of Teaching Materials | £1,000 £1,000 core budget |
| 13 | Access for All Programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify new routes suitable for wheelchair users • Produce children's quiz sheets for Chilterns Country Routes (10 no.) • Promote health benefits of walking, cycling and horse riding • Undertake annual review of all Chilterns Country Routes • Promote results of 2007 visitor survey • Promote access to the countryside by public transport • Promote walks from home • Develop map based section web site to promote access opportunities close to home | £5,000 £3,000 core budget £2,000 other income |
| 14 | Countryside Close to Home | | £5,000 £1,000 core budget £4,000 project support budget, reserves or other income |

| | | | |
|----|--|--|---|
| 15 | Cycling in the Chilterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Development Plan for the Chilterns Cycleway • Support development of new cycling network at Ashridge. • Develop new web pages and literature to promote cycling opportunities | <p>£2,000</p> <p>£1,000 core budget</p> <p>£1,000 project support budget</p> |
| 16 | Making of the Chilterns Landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of public events and publications • Promote awareness and use of the HLC | <p>£1,000</p> <p>£1,000 Project support budget</p> |
| 17 | Enjoying Woodlands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training courses on woodland archaeology • Publish woodland heritage booklet • Promote visits to woodlands • Promote Woodland Web Site • Walk and Talks Service • Annual Woodland Forum • Identify and promoting Special Trees and Woods | <p>£5,000</p> <p>£5,000 project support budget</p> <p>Scope to cover some costs through booklet sales and sponsorship</p> |
| 18 | Buildings in the Landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete review of Building Design guide. • Promote use of all published guidance | <p>£6,000</p> <p>£6,000 core budget</p> |

| | | | |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| | | and publish revised guidance. | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provision of heritage skills training course. • Organise Building Design Award. • Organise annual <u>Planning Conference</u>. • Implement programme to raise public awareness of farming. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks - 20no • Interpretation Boards on 10 farms • Develop pages on web site. | <p>£500</p> <p>£500 core budget</p> |
| 19 | Raising Awareness of Farming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice service, especially to new owners of land. • Distribute information pack • Publish info on-line • Organise award schemes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Conservation • Woodland Management • Landscape Design | <p>£2,000</p> <p>£2,000 core budget</p> |
| 20 | Promoting good land management practice | | |
| 21 | Chilterns Chalk Streams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and workshops for riparian owners • Hold an Annual Forum • Published Annual Report | <p>£5,000</p> <p>£5,000 project grants, project support budget</p> |

| | | | |
|----|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise Events Programme Comment on all relevant plans Campaign to reduce water abstraction and to conserve water. | |
| 22 | Getting to Know the Chilterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web site developed particularly to provide visitor information. Publish Chalk and Trees - two editions published (15,000 copies) with a separate 'What's On' Publish 'The Chilterns Times' – newsletter delivered to 30,000 households Publish range of information literature Publish Children's Comic Issue 50 press releases Target of 20 radio/TV interviews Published articles - 20no. To have an up to date photo library. Publish on line photo exhibition Attend 10 major events Upgrade Events displays equipment Undertake annual Land Use Survey and publish results. | <p>£35,000</p> <p>£35,000 core budget</p> <p>Target is to attract advertising and sponsorship of £8,000</p> |
| 23 | Working with the media | | Staff Time |
| 24 | Photography | | Staff Time |
| 25 | Events Programme | | £1,000 |
| | | | £1,000 core budget |
| 26 | State of the Environment monitoring | | £6,000 |
| | | | £6,000 core budget |

| | | | |
|-----------|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise annual state of the environment workshop. Up to date mapping and GIS Local Product information on the web site Specifying local produce Supporting and promoting farmers markets | |
| 27 | Promoting local products which contribute to the conservation of natural beauty | | Staff Time |
| 28 | Promoting environmentally sustainable tourism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of tourist attractions Promote appropriate environmental accreditation for attractions Organise annual Green Tourism Business Workshop Provide information on the AONB to tourism businesses Use web site to promote sustainable visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Target 150,000 visits per annum Promote results of 2007 visit survey Organise biannual Chilterns Farmers Forum Attend and actively participate in farming and rural fora Jointly organise annual Woodland Forum | <p>£1,000</p> <p>£500 core budget £500 project support budget Scope to cover some costs through charges</p> |
| 29 | Working with Landowners | | <p>£1,000</p> <p>£1,000 core budget</p> |

| Managing the Chilterns Conservation Board | | | |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 30 | Annual Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish report • 1,000 copies | £1,300 |
| 31 | Board Bulletin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic bulletin • 6 editions per year | Staff Time |
| 32 | Annual Forum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Forum with attendance of 120 representing at least 40 organisations | £2,500 |
| 33 | CCB meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 4 meetings per year • Av 85% attendance | £1,000 |
| 34 | CCB Executive Committee Meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 4 meetings per year • Av 85% attendance | £200 |
| 35 | CCB Planning Committee Meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 4 meetings per year • Av 85% attendance | £300 |
| 36 | Annual General Meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hold an AGM | No additional cost |
| 37 | AONB Tours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two tours held for Board members | £1,500 |
| 38 | Training for members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking tour • A series of training and awareness events for members | £500 |
| 39 | National Association of AONBs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renew membership • Actively participate in National Association • Board member and officer participation in national conference | £500 |
| 40 | Working with Parish Councils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Fora • Grant Scheme • Training and Guidance | £10,000 £10,000 Reserves |

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| 41 | Support Regional (SE) AONB Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer appointed on a 3 year contract (Surrey CC to be employer) | £2,000 |
| 42 | Officer range of Red Kites Merchandise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of products for sale including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book • DVD • Postcards | £1,000 |

Work Programme 2007-08- Progress Report

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: A progress report to November is given. Progress in most areas has been good with no particular field of work behind schedule. A small number of individual projects have been affected by slow progress due to a range of factors including maternity leave, lack of grant aid and weight of the workload.

Purpose of Report: To advise the Committee of progress to date.

See Appendix 1

Recommendation

To note progress

Chilterns Conservation Board – Work Programme 2007 -2008

On Target
 Behind Schedule
 Postponed or no action

| Nature Conservation | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Action | Output/Milestones | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 |
| Chalk Downland Conservation Programme | Support for site management | Ongoing | Organiser of programme | Large no. | £9,000 | Training programme on target – 2 events held, well attended. |
| | Training programme for site managers | | | | | Need to identify more site management works – continued promotion and landowner meeting (late November) should help. |
| | Data gathering – map existing chalk grassland and opportunities for reversion | | | | | Data gathering ongoing – completed for Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire; mapping work ongoing in Bucks. |
| | Events programme | | | | | |
| | Aim | Enhanced levels of conservation management and public access to chalk downland | | | | |
| Management of Commons | Contribute to programme of conservation works on at least 5 commons | Ongoing | Provision of funding and advice. | Commons Groups et al | £5,000 plus volunteer time | On target Successful Commons Day held in Sept. – fully booked with 50 delegates |
| | | July | Organiser | Commons | | |

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| | Organise annual training day Enhance Commons section on web site Maintenance of data base | Ongoing Ongoing | Web Site manager Information Manager | Groups Commons Groups Commons Groups | Memberships of network increasing 2 members events to date with more planned. Practical conservation programme |
| | Aim | Enhanced levels of management of commons, with greater levels of local participation | | | |
| Action | Output/Milestones | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs |
| Produce a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Chilterns | Published BAP • Chalk Grassland • Farmland • Woodland • Chalk Streams | June 2007 | Publisher. | EN, LAs, WTs | £2,000 |
| | Aim | Enhanced capacity to target activity towards priority habitats and species. Enhanced ability to monitor progress with implementing biodiversity actions plans. | | | |
| Land Management Fund | | By March 2008 | Manager | Landowners | Up to £10,000 |
| | Aim | To support management of sites which do not qualify for help from agri-environment schemes (HLS) | | | |
| Create GIS database of main habitats/landcover and BAP priority species | Operational GIS | Ongoing | GIS manager | EN, LAs, Records Centres | £2,000 |
| | Aim | Operational GIS to improve efficiency of staff and level of information given in | | | |
| | | | | | Landcover mapped for landuse survey squares; GIS maps /Database produced for Commonland; Work started on Chalk Grassland layer. |

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| | | response to enquiries. | | | |
| Support Nature Conservation fora | Active participation in fora for Oxon, Bucks, Beds and Herts | Ongoing | Active member | Nature Conservation fora members | n/a |
| | Aim | Enhanced profile of biodiversity issues in the Chilterns. Networking opportunities to maximise targeting off effort in he Chilterns. | | | |
| Conservation Award | Award given Minimum of 10 entries | Award presented at Annual Forum | Organiser | None | £500 |
| | Aim | Acknowledgment of high quality work. Opportunities to raise the profile of nature conservation through the local press. | | | |
| Historic Environment | | | | | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs |
| Making of the Chilterns Landscape | Programme of public events and publications Action Plan produced for Hillforts Bid to HLF | By March 2008 | Co-ordinator and grant applicant | Many incl. LAs, EH, NT, COAM | £500 |
| Historic Landscape Characterisation | Training and promotion | April - Sept 2007 | Promoter Group | Bucks CC, Herts CC, Beds CC, English Heritage, CSoc | £500 |
| | Aim | Enhanced levels of understanding on the character of the historic landscape, which will inform future activity and land use decisions. | | | |
| Built Environment | | | | | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs |
| | | | | | Progress to Nov 2007 |

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|--|--|---------------|--|-------------------|---|
| CCB Planning Committee Meetings | At least 4 meetings per year and 1 tour Av 80% attendance | Quarterly | Organiser. Board member involvement | £2,000 | Meetings held in May and September |
| Aim | Activity which helps to achieve the aims of the designation and maximises the Board's use of the Planning system in doing so. | Ongoing | Consultation responses and advice | n/a | Responses made in a timely fashion on relevant documents |
| Respond to planning consultation opportunities | Submit response on relevant development control issues Submit response to consultation on development and mineral plans Respond to all relevant national and regional planning plans | | | | |
| Aim | Planning decisions which give full weight to the special qualities of the Chilterns. | | | | |
| Promote Chilterns Building Design Guide | Review 1 st edition | By March 2008 | Publisher and distributor | LAs | Drafting commenced, delay due to departure of relevant officers |
| Aim | Increased number of new and extended buildings which accord with the guidance | Ongoing | Publisher | Local Authorities | Distributed widely, more encouragement for electronic copies as stocks running low |
| Promote Technical Notes roofing and on use of flint and brick | Distribute 300 copies | | | | |
| Aim | Increased number of new and extended buildings which accord with the adopted guidance. Greater awareness of the correct techniques in the use of flint, brick and roofing materials. | | | | |

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| Heritage Skills workshops | Workshops on use of flint, local brick and lime mortar | By March 2008 | Promoter. Supporter for organisers of courses | Chiltern Open Air Museum, local brickmakers | u/k | Courses held in October at COAM, liaison continuing |
| | Aim | Enhanced skills levels applied on existing and new local buildings | on use of traditional building materials and techniques to be | | | |
| Publish Planning Policy Guidelines | Published draft guidance | By March 2007 | Publisher | LAs | £1,000 | No specific progress |
| | Aim | Statement of Conservation Board planning policies and guidance | | | | |
| Planning Conference | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 |
| | Conference with at least 70 delegates | September 2007 | Organiser | RTPI | £2,000 | Conference held, 60 delegates |
| Planning Guide for the Chilterns | Aim | To raise awareness of local planning issue and to encourage debate in locally important planning matters | | | | |
| | Publication of guidance on the planning systems and the AONB. Training sessions | By March 2007 | Publisher Training provider | Parish Council and local groups | £300 | Guide being prepared and training sessions organised for Spring 2008 |
| Building Design Awards | Aim | To assist parish councils and community groups to make more informed comment on planning applications and policies | | | | |
| | At least 20 entries. Awards event | June | Organiser | Chiltern Society | £2,000 | Event held, 13 entries. Awards presented in June. |
| | Aim | Recognition given to high quality work. Opportunities to raise the profile of building design in the local and technical press. | | | | |

| Water Environment | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|------------------------------------|--|---------|---|
| Action | Outputs | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 |
| Manage Chalk Streams Project Work Programme | River restoration programmes for Misbourne, Chess, Gade, Ver, Bulbourne, Hughenden Wycombe | Ongoing | Project management and secretariat | EA, NE, Thames Water, Three Valleys Water, Bucks C, WDC, Chiltern DC, Herts CMS, Dacorum BC, Chiltern Society, CWP | £44,300 | R. Chess, Meades Water Gardens project, phase 2, LDC received and tender doc complete. Work to start in Jan R. Bulbourne, Planting work delayed due to water levels. Interpretation to be installed by March Revive the Wye partnership project set up. Working with Chalfont St. Peter Village Appraisal Env. Group on action plan to restore R. Misbourne. £10K Lottery grant awarded to local group. Advice given to landowners on R. Chess and R. Gade R. Bulbourne at St. |
| | Advice and workshops for to riparian owners | Ongoing | | Landowners and BBOWT | | |
| | Willow Pollarding Programme | Ongoing | | | | |

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| | <p>Chalk Streams HAP</p> <p>Hold an Annual Forum attracting at least 50 delegates</p> <p>Published Annual Report</p> <p>Events Programme</p> <p>Naming of River Crossings Programme</p> <p>Comment on all relevant plans</p> <p>Campaigns to reduce water abstraction and to conserve water.</p> <p>Fieldwork & Research</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> | | | <p>John's Well. Also R. Wye at Wooburn Green HAP complete</p> <p>Completed (13th June) 60 delegates attended</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>No specific events programme</p> <p>Design approved and approval in principle received from Bucks CC.</p> <p>Colne catchment CAMS & Bucks CC Waste Development Plan</p> <p>Working with EA on RSA programme. Continue to advocate water efficiency measures in press releases.</p> <p>R. Chess water vole survey completed</p> |
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| | | | | | | | | Invasive weeds survey of R. Chess completed |
| Aim | | Enhanced awareness of the environment of chalk streams. Active management to enhance the environmental quality of chalk streams and other land within the catchments. Enhanced opportunities for a wide range of visitors to appreciate and enjoy the chalk streams. | | | | | | |
| People, Jobs and Services | | | | | | | | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 | | |
| Local products directory | Published directory - Web based version | Ongoing | AONB Web Site | Many | n/a | On target | | |
| Aim | | Enhanced demand for local products. Encouragement for local producers to enhance their local marketing. | | | | | | |
| Promote Tourism Potential | Implement Tourism Strategy | Ongoing | Author of strategy and co-ordinator of programme | TSE, EETB, LAS, SEEDA | n/a | On target | | |
| Aim | | To fulfil the Board's statutory purposes of raising awareness of the AONB's special qualities and fostering the local economy by promoting sustainable tourism. | | | | | | |
| Farming and Forestry | | | | | | | | |
| Action | Output/Milestones | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 | | |
| Raising Awareness of Farming | Implement programme to raise public awareness of farming Walks- 20no. Interpretation Boards | Ongoing | Organiser | NFU, FWAG, CLA | n/a | On Target 17 Farm Walks (309 people attended) 374 interpretation boards distributed to farmers | | |
| Aim | | To raise public awareness of the importance of farming in the Chilterns | | | | | | |
| Farming Groups | Organise biannual | Spring 2007 | Organiser | NFU, CLA, | £500 | On Target | | |

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|---|
| and Rural Fora | Chilterns Farmers Forum | Winter 2007/08 | FWAG, LAS | Next Farmers Forum - Feb 27th 2008 Stokenchurch |
| | Attend and actively participate in farming and rural fora Aim | Ongoing | Participant | |
| Support for new owners of land | Distribute information pack, publish info on-line and provide direct support for new owners of land Aim | Ongoing | Information pack producer | Land Agents, NFU, CLA |
| | | | | n/a |
| Land Use Survey | To map the changes to land use. Compare to previous surveys Aim | By March 2008 | Project Manager | Landowners £4,000 On Target |
| | To assess condition of hedgerows Aim | Survey by Sept 2007 Report by Jan 2008 | Project Manager | DEFRA Landowners £2,500 On Target |
| Countryside Festival | Event with 40 exhibitors and 2,500 visitors.(Ashridge) Aim | Summer 2007 | Organisers and promoters | NT, CWP, £4,000 Successful event attracting over 2,500 visitors. Seeking sponsorship for 2008 event. |
| | | | | Enhanced public understanding of countryside management. Provision of a 'shop window' for small local enterprises |

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| Woodland Management | Advice and training on all aspects of woodland management to owners of small woodlands (target of 50 n.o. = 200 hectares of woodlands) | Ongoing | Support for Chiltern Woodland Project | CWP, FC | £5,000 | CWP has provide advice to over 30 owners |
| | Aim | To promote management of small woodland which are not commercially viable | | | | |
| Survey of Ancient Woodland | Survey of 20 pilot squares to assess accuracy of Ancient Woodland Inventory | Survey by Sept 2007 Report by Dec 2007 | Project Manager – survey undertaken by CWP | CWP, FC, WT | £7,000 | Surveys completed by CWP. Analysis to be finalised and final report produced |
| | Aim | To ensure all ancient woodland is identified | | | | |
| Understanding and Enjoyment of Woodlands | Training courses on woodland archaeology | Ongoing | Support for CWP | Chiltern Woodland Project/FC | £1,000 | Woodland Website live - ongoing promotion |
| | Distribute woodland heritage booklet | | Publisher | | | |
| | Promote visits to woodlands – | | | | | |
| | Promote Woodland Web Site | | | | | |
| | Aim | To enhance public use and awareness of woodlands. To improve the knowledge base of woodlands and their use | | | | |
| Woodland Forum | Organise Woodland Forum for Chiltern woodland interests | Spring 2008 | Co-organiser/ promoter | CWP | £1,000 | Forum planned for January 25th |
| | Aim | To provide a forum to focus attention and activity onto woodlands in the Chilterns | | | | |
| FC Chiltern | Agreed Woodland | Spring | Provide | FC | n/a | FC design plans |

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| Woodlands Design plan | Design Plan in place | /Summer 2007 | comments on FC plan | | | completed with CCB input |
| Special Trees and Woods Project | Aim Support Project and all its aims | Ongoing | Advisor | CWP to lead, FC, LAs, HLF, | £3,000 0 | Ongoing. Targets being met or exceeded |
| | Aim | Secure funds from HLF. Enhanced levels of management of special trees and woods. Enhanced levels of appreciation by the public. | | | | |
| Minerals and Waste | | | | | | |
| Action | Output/Milestones | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 |
| Respond to consultations on Waste Management plans | Positive response to consultation opportunities | ongoing | Planning committee to prepare response on behalf of the Board | Local Authorities | Staff time | Responses made in a timely fashion on relevant documents |
| | Aim | To ensure waste management is undertaken in an environmentally sensitive manner | | | | |
| Recreation and Access | | | | | | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 |
| Promote Interpretation Strategy | To promote consistency in standards and primary messages by all organisations providing interpretation of the Chilterns | Ongoing | Advisor on interpretation of the AONB | Many | n/a | Ongoing |
| | Aim | Raised understanding amongst a wide range of organisations on the special qualities of the Chilterns and ways of improving the environmental interpretation they offer. | | | | |
| Ivinghoe Beacon to Dunstable | Promote route improvements | Spring/Summer 2007 | Project Manager | LAs, NT, NCT | n/a | Ridgeway Link launched in June 2007. Leaflet published |

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| Downs | | | | | | | | | |
| 'Getting Close to Nature' Programme | Events Publications Web Pages Wildlife CCTV Workshops Family Fun Days School visits Educational Resources Wildlife on the Move events Countryside Festival | Ongoing | Organiser | Many | £18,000 | Completed – final instalment from HLF received. 24 Wildlife on the Move events CCTV projects at Stokenchurch, Hughenden Manor and College Lake 12 school visits 8 fun days | | | |
| Red Kites Merchandise | Aim Range of products for sale including: Book DVD Postcards | Public enjoyment of red kites and other Chilterns wildlife | Managers/ Wholesalers | Retailers | £2,000 | Net income £2,300 | | | |
| Friend of the Red Kite scheme | Aim Friends Group established | To raise awareness of red kites and raise funds for red kite work programme | Organiser | New Group | £2,000 Income | On target. Net income £1,675 | | | |
| Education Programme | 20 School visits Promotion of Education Packs for Chalk Streams and Red Kites Recruitment and Training of Volunteers Production of Teaching Materials | To establish a self organising group, through which funds could be raised to invest in Red Kite work | Programme Manager | Schools LAs, Chiltern Society | £2,500 | On target. 12 school visits, 2 Adult Learning sessions (plus 1 planned). 4 volunteers training sessions, plus 'thank you' event. Schools CD of PPT presentations in | | | |

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| | | | | | | | | | production |
| Chalk Streams Events Programme | Aim | To enhance knowledge of Chilterns wildlife amongst school children and teacher. | Ongoing | Organiser | Many | n/a | | | |
| | Aim | Public enjoyment of chalk streams and associated landscape, heritage and habitat issues | | | | | | | |
| Events for those with limited mobility | Aim | Events programme Improved Information | Ongoing | Co-ordinator | National Trust, Bucks CC, Woodland Trust, BBOWT, EM, FC, C Soc | n/a | | | 3 walks organised for Disabled Ramblers |
| | Aim | Enhanced awareness of opportunities to gain access to the countryside. Enhanced knowledge to provide information to those with special needs. | | | | | | | |
| Access for All Programme | Aim | Identify new routes suitable for wheelchairs Plan 10 new routes (to appeal to new audiences) Children's Quiz Sheets for 10 Chilterns Country Routes | By March 2008 | Publisher Co-ordinator | Highway Authorities et al | £5,000 | | | 5 children's quiz sheets developed and promoted 4 new miles without stiles routes on website. Further progress will be difficult due to Access Officer's absence during maternity leave |
| | Aim | Enhanced awareness of opportunities to gain access to the countryside. Enhanced knowledge to provide information to those with special needs. | | | | | | | |
| Promote new Open Access Provision | Aim | Implement an awareness raising campaign | Ongoing | Promoter | Natural England/Local Authorities | n/a | | | No specific progress |
| Ashridge Cycling Strategy | Aim | Map Signs Web Pages | By Spring/Summer 2008 | Advisor | NT, Herts CMS, LAs | £500 | | | On target |

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| Aim | To improve the accessibility to the Ashridge Estate by cycling and to enhance the cycling opportunities on the estate. | | | | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs |
| Chilterns Cycleway | Prepare Development Plan Chilterns Cycleway | By March 2008 | Project Manager | Cycle Touring Club/Highway Authorities | £1,000 |
| Local Access Forums | Aim | To develop a long and series of linked short cycle routes to appeal to the enthusiastic cyclists (long route) and family groups (short routes) | | | |
| | Regular meeting of Access Fora for Beds, Herts, Oxon and Bucks CC | Ongoing | Nominate Board member for membership of each LAF. Provide support for Board nominated member | Highway Authorities | n/a |
| | | | | | Board members still involved with all fora. More work needed to forge closer working relationship |
| Chilterns Country Routes | Aim | Raised awareness of access issues in the Chilterns | | | |
| | Review all routes and prepare an improvement programme Reprint leaflets where necessary | Ongoing | Project Manager | Chiltern Society, Bucks CC, South Oxon DC, Wycombe DC, CA, NCT | £4,000 |
| | Aim | Promote opportunities to visit the countryside to appeal to new walkers and those lacking confidence | | | |
| Chilterns | Promote Centre | Centre opens | Advisor on | Beds CC, NT, | n/a |
| | | | | | Routes regularly reviewed. Leaflets for 5 routes have been re-printed |
| | | | | | Centre opened in June. |

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| Gateway Centre, Dunstable | | in Jan/Feb 2007 | interpretation | South Beds DC | | Board has helped with promotion and interpretation. |
| | Aim | To promote visits to the new visitor centre and to encourage them to explore the surrounding countryside | | | | |
| | Visitor Survey 2007 | Undertake Survey Analyse and promote results | Survey – April-October Publish Survey results by March 2008 | Co-ordinator | LAs, Tourist Boards, NT | £16,000 |
| | Aim | To identify trends in visitor use and expectations | | | | |
| Travel and Transport | | | | | | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 |
| Support Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project | Full programme of works Quiet Lanes Reduced Speed Limits Safer routes to Schools Signing | Ongoing | Member of Steering Group. Promoter | Bucks CC, CDC, Herts CC, NE | u/k | CCB direct involvement is limited to attendance at steering group. Project is making steady progress with village gateway features. |
| Ashridge/Dunstable/Tring Traffic Management Project | Strategy prepared. Data gathered Disseminate results of Deer Mgt trials | Ongoing | Member of Steering Group. | Beds CC, Bucks CC, Herts CC, NT | u/k | Most parts of the work programme are being implemented as planned. Village entry features behind schedule. Deer Collisions conference held in Oct. Over 80 delegates |
| | Aim | Development of proposals supported by all three highway authorities which will result in the creation of Quiet Lane network. Lower speeds and traffic volumes on selected | | | | |

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| | | | roads | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Transport | Provision of information on public transport for events, attractions and promoted routes | Aim | Ongoing | Provider of information | Many | n/a | Ongoing | | | | | |
| Design Guidance for Highways | Publish Design Guidance | Aim | Publish by Oct 2007 | Publisher | Highway authorities | £5,000 | Behind Schedule. Publication now planned for March 2008 | | | | | |
| | | Aim | Guidance and standards on design which are more sympathetic to the Chilterns than standard specification currently in use. | | | | | | | | | |
| Promotion and Publicity | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 | | | | | | |
| Promote Awareness and Implementation of AONB Management Plan | Distribute copies of the full printed plan on request Promote web version | Ongoing | Promoter and Distributor | LAs, Countryside Agency | n/a | Review programme in place. Progress is slightly behind schedule but not a cause for concern. Workshop sessions have been held and public questionnaire posted on web site. | | | | | | |
| | Aim | Enhanced awareness of the Plan in order to enhance its level of influence and effort to implement its aims and specified actions. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Web Site | Web site developed particularly to provide visitor information. Target 42,000 sessions per month. | Ongoing | Management of web site | consultants | £9,000 | Site constantly updated. Web site visit monitoring system has been revised and targets adjusted. Target is now 13,000 | | | | | | |

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| Aim | To report to partners, parish councils and the general public on achievement of the Board during the past year |
| Board Bulletin | Electronic bulletin Up to 6 times per year Producer none 3 editions produced |
| General Information Leaflets | Aim To keep partners up to date with Board and AONB issues Ongoing Distributor None n/a 3,000 distributed via distribution service and events |
| Press Releases | Aim Provision of general information on the Chilterns, its special qualities and main features and places of interest to visitors. To raise the profile of the Chilterns and its AONB designation. Ongoing Issuer of releases Local Press n/a 24 press releases issued |
| Radio/TV Interviews | Aim Greater public interest and support for the work of the Board and its views. Ongoing Interviewees Local, regional and national media n/a 14 radio/TV interviews to date |
| Articles for variety of publications | Aim Greater public interest and support for the work of the Board and its views. Ongoing Authors Publishers n/a 14 articles to date |
| Action | Greater public interest and support for the work of the Board and its views. Raised awareness of specific issues, including those of a technical nature. |
| Photography | Timetable Ongoing CCB role Photographer and cataloguer Partners None Costs n/a Progress to Nov 2007 Good selection but still some gaps and poorer quality images need to be weeded out. |
| Events Programme | Aim Enhanced library of good images suitable for a variety of uses. Increased number of images available for use by partner organisations. All year Exhibition/Display Organiser of events £1,000 7 major events attended |

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| | Aim | To fulfil the functions of the Board in respect of its Planning role and modus operandi in the schemes of delegation and agreed protocols | | |
| Organise an Annual General Meeting | To hold an AGM | October | Organiser | n/a |
| | Aim | To elect and chairman and vice chairman, approve the accounts for preceding year and conducts any other necessary constitutional business. | | |
| AONB Tours | Two tours held for Board members and officers of partner organisations Walking tour | April 20 th tbc | Organise | £1000 |
| | | Sept 27 th tbc | tours | n/a |
| | Aim | June 27 th tbc | Two tours held and walking tour | |
| | Aim | To raise awareness amongst Board members and officers of partner organisations of issues in the field | | |

| Action | Output | Timetable | CCB role | Partners | Costs | Progress to Nov 2007 |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|--------------|--|
| To provide training to members | A series of training and awareness events for members | Ongoing | Organiser and provider of most training | CCB and selected partner bodies | | Ongoing (Tours and each Board meeting) |
| | Aim | To help members reach a higher level of knowledge and understanding in all relevant matters in the operation of the Board, implementing the AONB Management Plan and fulfilling the Board's statutory purposes | | | | |
| National Association of AONBs | Actively participate in National Association | Ongoing | Participant | NAAONB | £300 | CCB remains a member. |
| | Board member and officer participation in national conference | July | Delegates | | | 4 members and Chief Officer attended annual conference in Winchester |
| | Aim | To contribute to the national development of the Association. To contribute to national efforts to raise the profile of the AONB designation. To raise awareness locally of the national importance of the AONB designation. To benefit from the training and | | | | |

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| | networking opportunities provided by the Association. | | |
| Support Regional AONB Officer | Officer appointed on a 3 year contract (Surrey CC to be employer) | Ongoing | Ongoing. Regional Officer performing well. |
| | Aim | To enhance regional level co-operation between AONBs and liaison with regional bodies | |
| Monitoring | | | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | Progress to Nov 2007 |
| Publish State of Environment Report | Published report and web based version. Promote results | October | No specific progress. Data being gathered for Management Plan review. |
| | Aim | To monitor the state of the environment and provide a long term means of assessing the impact of the AONB Management Plan. To be used for the management plan review and Strategic Environment Assessment | |
| Action | Output | Timetable | Progress to Nov 2007 |
| AONB Management Plan | To have begin the review of the Mgt Plan Scoping Report Draft Plan SEA Consultation | By March 2008 | Alan Wheeler, planning consultant appointed. SEA completed. Policy review underway. Public consultation begun. Overall progress is slightly behind schedule but not a matter for concern. |
| | Aim | To undertake the statutory duty placed on the Board - the ultimate outcome of which should be to improve the conservation and enhancement of the AONB, and to increase the levels of understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities – and in so doing to have improved the local economy and social well being of local communities. | |

Appointment of HR Adviser to the Board

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: Sally Charman has been appointed as HR adviser to the Board and is currently reviewing existing HR policies and procedures.

Purpose of Report: To advise the Committee of the appointment of an HR Adviser.

Background

1. From the establishment of the Board until March 2006 Bucks CC provided HR (Human Resources) advice to Board. That agreement was terminated when the Board began to operate its own payroll. Since that time the Board has operated without any professional HR advice. During this period the Chief Officer has managed personnel matters with the advice of Alan Walters. It is a practical arrangement but not ideal.
2. Following Committee approval the recruitment of an HR Adviser began in September. Sally Charman has been appointed to the role of HR Adviser to the Board. Sally is an independent consultant with over 25 years experience, much of it as senior personnel manager with British Waterways Board. A work programme has been agreed with the following priorities
 1. To ensure the Board is complying with all relevant legislation.
 2. To bring all employment policies up to date.
 3. To review and advise on changes to comply with good practice.
3. Sally has identified an urgent need for the Board to adopt its own Health and Safety Policy (Item 9).
4. A full draft of proposed revisions to existing HR policies and procedures will be presented to the next Executive Committee.

Recommendation

1. **To note the appointment of Sally Charman as HR adviser to the Conservation Board.**

HR Strategic Direction and Health and Safety Policy

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer
Sally Charman HR Advisor to the Board

Summary: An introductory statement has been prepared on the Board's strategic direction with regard to human resources. This paper also covers the legal requirement for the Board to have its own Health and Safety Policy. A draft is attached for approval.

Purpose of Report:

1. To approve the draft statement on the HR Strategic direction of the Board.
2. To advise the Committee to adopt the Health and Safety policy with immediate effect.

HR Strategic Statement

1. This statement provides a strategic context for the review and preparation of all policies related to the human resources managed by the Board. That review has begun and a draft set of revised policies will be presented to the Executive Committee at its next meeting. At this stage the Board does not need to take any immediate action related to this statement, as it reflects the approach taken by Wycombe DC and continued by the Board since its establishment. (Appendix 1).
2. There is no immediate financial implication, but attainment of Investors in People status in due course will require investment of funds and time.

Health and Safety Policy

3. The Board needs to prepare and adopt a Health and Safety Policy. The attached policy is based on legal requirements, an approach appropriate for a body of the size and type of the Board and recognised good practice. (Appendix 2).
4. The policy is a concise statement of appropriate policies. A number of small changes and tightening up of procedures will be needed but nothing major, with no significant financial implications.

Recommendations:

1. **To approve the draft HR Strategic Direction statement.**
2. **To investigate achievement of Investor in People status and to report to the next meeting of the Committee.**
3. **To adopt the Health and Safety Policy with immediate effect**
4. **To keep the policy under review and to make a report to the Board no less than biannually.**

HR Strategic Approach (Draft)

1. The Board will operate an organisation that is fit for purpose, accountable and effective with the ability to respond quickly to the changing circumstances to fulfil its statutory duties to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns; promote understanding and awareness of its special qualities; to foster social and economic well being of local communities in partnership with local authorities.
2. The scope and size of the organisation will be realistic, reflecting the need to keep core costs low but using its influence through partnership working to achieve maximum impact to achieve the Conservation Board business plan.
3. The members of the Executive Committee of The Board are responsible for establishing the HR strategic direction and goals. All HR policies will be endorsed by the Committee with the Chief Officer responsible for establishing appropriate procedures and practices
4. Common values and behaviours are essential to fulfil our potential. The Chilterns Conservation Board expects all employees, volunteers and board members to act in accordance with the values and behaviours of The Board's Values;
 - Everyone being treated equally, fairly and with respect
 - Listening to and learning from others
 - Training and developing people to perform their job well
 - People being empowered to realise their full potential
 - Commitment and participation in team working to achieve success
 - Working for the public interest
5. The Board strives to ensure that it operates best employment practices;

Quality Recruitment

- Quality processes
- Always recruit the most suitable
- Consistent Induction – through check lists, handbook

Performance Management

- Objectives and performance expectations for everyone
- Regular reviews
- Targets cascade from the business plan
- Spread best practice e.g. environmental and sustainable development

Reward

- Fair and transparent pay system
- Appropriate Benefits package
- Pension Scheme

Employee Development

- Equip people with necessary skills and competencies

- Encourage to develop new skills
- Committed to grow people so that they can reach their potential
- Seeks to achieve “Investors In People” status (IIP)

Up to date and appropriate HR Policies

- Promote fairness, safety and reflect The Board’s commitment of valuing its people e.g. Diversity, Flexible working etc.

Employee Engagement

- Team meetings
- One to one briefings

The Chilterns Conservation Board Health and Safety Policy

Our policy is to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicably, safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees and volunteers, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

We also accept our responsibilities for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by our activities.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements, which we will make to implement the policy, are included within this document.

To ensure that this policy will be kept up to date, we will review it every three years or sooner at the Chairman's discretion.

Signed

Chief Officer

Date

Written procedures that support this policy are as follows:

1. Health and safety responsibilities
2. Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences
3. First Aid Arrangements
4. Risk Assessment
5. Manual Handling and lifting
6. Lone working
7. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
8. Electrical Equipment
9. General Fire Safety
10. Use of Visual Display Units
11. Smoking
12. Personal Protective Equipment

1. Responsibilities

- 1.1 The Chilterns Conservation Board is responsible for approving the Health and Safety Policy.

- 1.2 The Chief Officer is responsible for establishing the health and safety policy and ensuring compliance across all activities of The Chilterns Conservation Board
- 1.3 The Office Manager has been given the responsibility of monitoring Health and Safety procedures, and for advising the Chief Officer on their effectiveness.
- 1.4 Both the employer and employees have the responsibility to co-operate with fellow employees and the employer to achieve a healthy and safe workplace, and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- 1.5 The approach by The Chilterns Conservation Board in detecting and eliminating risks shall be;
 - By Risk assessment as required within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - By continuous informal monitoring and discussion within the organisation
- 1.6 The number of personnel employed by The Chilterns Conservation Board allows easy written and verbal communication to occur to both recognise and quickly resolve any Health and Safety problems.

2. Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences

- 2.1 All accidents resulting in personal injury, however small, must be reported as soon as possible after the incident and recorded by an authorised person in the Accident Book kept at the Board's office.
- 2.2 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) identifies that the following incidents must be reported directly to them as per the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) (1985)" – deaths, major injuries, accidents resulting in over three day injury, diseases, dangerous occurrences, gas incidents. Verbal notification must be made within three days and written confirmation within ten.

3. First Aid Arrangements

- 3.1 Appropriate employees will receive First Aid training and the designated First Aiders are;
- 3.2 Individual First Aid Kits are provided and it's the employee's responsibility to maintain its contents which can be obtained by the Office Manager.

4 Risk Assessments

- 4.1 An annual assessment will be made of the office to identify any risks to health that might exist. The purpose of the assessment is to identify any hazard with the potential to cause harm, to consider the likelihood that harm from a particular hazard is realised and to take steps to remove or lessen the risk.

- 4.2 The survey will be undertaken by the Office Manager and the results of the survey will be formally recorded. Any required action will be noted, an individual requested to undertake the work and progress will be monitored by the Chief Officer.
- 4.3 In addition, risk assessments will be made whenever major changes to the layout of offices are made or if new hazards enter the work place, if there are significant changes to working practices, following notification of an accident or dangerous incident and if a member of staff becomes pregnant.
- 4.4 In accordance with the Fire Precautions (Welfare) Regulations 1997 the Office Manager will ensure fire risk assessments are carried out, the results recorded, monitored and reviewed. This will take into account any special fire hazards in any specific areas of the workplace. Responsibilities will also include ensuring compliance with fire safety and prevention codes, training for employees in fire prevention practices, reviewing practices and procedures, inspecting and testing of fire fighting equipment, prevention and protection equipment, advising on safe practices and procedures, arranging fire alarm, emergency and evacuation tests.

5. Manual Handling and Lifting

- 5.1 Manual handling operations will be avoided, as far as is reasonably practical, where there is risk of injury. Employees are reminded that they should not be lifting heavy objects and should be aware of the correct handling methods as advised by the HSE.
- 5.2 Details of all accidents will be recorded in the Accident Book located in the general office.

6. Lone working

- 6.1 The nature of the work that we do makes working alone a common occurrence. It is therefore important that employees are aware of the hazards which they may come up against. These guidance notes are designed for all employees and volunteers to take into consideration when working alone. All employees must be familiar with and adhere to these guidance notes.
- 6.2 The Board will ensure that the necessary tools and equipment are made available to all employees and volunteers (i.e. mobile phone, personal alarms). As part of its commitment to personal safety and welfare of employees, sufficient training will be made available so that employees are confident and prepared for lone working.
- 6.3 If an employee does not feel confident in lone working, however much they have been prepared, they should feel comfortable in saying “no” to their manager and making alternative arrangements. Whatever the reasons an employee gives for not wanting to work alone, they should be supported

during the discussions and helped to find ways of combating the issues. Confidentiality should be adhered to in such cases.

- 6.4 This issue relates equally to both men and women and therefore requires commitment from both sexes to adhere to the guidance provided.

Potential Hazards

Violence

- 6.5 The danger of potential violent encounter with a member of the public is recognised. This may be verbal or physical in nature and could occur both at the work place or out on site

Accidents

- 6.6 Anyone who has an accident whilst working alone may be at greater risk due to lack of help. This is likely to be more so for staff working away from the office and especially in remote areas

Precautions

In the Office

- 6.7 Avoid being left alone in the office whenever possible. However, if you find that you have to be left alone:
1. Always make sure that the front door is locked. If someone buzzes the door to be let in, check first who they are and who they have come to see. Only open the door to let them in if you are satisfied with their responses.
 2. Avoid holding meetings with strangers when on your own in the building. Be aware that meetings can go on after normal working hours and you may find yourself unexpectedly alone.
- 6.8 No employee should leave the building leaving a colleague alone without informing them that they are about to leave. If the last person is uncomfortable being left alone they should leave the building using their working hours flexibly to cover their time.

Away from the Office

- 6.9 When working away from the office employees must ensure that their whereabouts are clearly explained in the electronic diary. This should include sufficient detail on where they are going, who they are meeting and when the approximate time for return so that they can be located if necessary. If an employee is going to return later (e.g. over 2 hours) than expected they will advise the office who will record this in the diary.

- 6.10 All employees should have a mobile phone with them and these should be turned on whilst away from the office except during meetings. When using a mobile phone make sure you keep within the legal constraints, the Board will not take responsibility for employees who break the law.
- 6.11 All employees can also request their own personal alarm.
- 6.12 Employees are provided with individual First Aid Kit.
- 6.13 Employees should not be themselves at risk or undertake activities that are dangerous or where there is a possible associated risk.
- 6.14 Employees are reminded that if they are not happy going somewhere alone they should ask a colleague or someone from one of the other partner organisations that may be involved in the project to attend.

Dealing with confrontation

- 6.15 Employees are advised that if they find themselves in a confrontational situation they should walk away, call the office or emergency services immediately and ask for help. They must not disclose any personal details, they should use their personal alarm if necessary, and seek assistance from a passer-by or person from a nearby property.
- 6.16 On return to the office they report the incident to their line manager who will guide and support the individual and ensure that they receive the necessary counselling.

7. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

- 7.1 In order to detect and control the use of potentially hazardous substances, assessments will be carried out in compliance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations by the Office Manager
- 7.2 Completed Audit Forms will be retained (together with suppliers' data sheets) and held in the office for reading/use by employees.
- 7.3 The frequency of audits will be every three years or whenever a new or alternative substance is introduced.

8. Electrical Equipment

- 8.1 Portable electrical equipment will be checked in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.
- 8.2 Each item of equipment shall be uniquely identified and recorded in a Register. This register shall detail checks made, results of checks made and any corrective actions. The Board has determined that there should be an annual check of each appliance.

8.3 Repairs to electrical equipment will be carried out by a suitably qualified contractor

8.4 Fixed electrical systems are also checked by suitable qualified electrician

9. General Fire Safety

9.1 The procedures in use at The Board have been introduced to comply with “the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Amendment Regulations 1999”.

These include;

- Fire Drills will be carried out at least once per annum
- The Fire Alarm system shall be checked every twelve months and maintained as necessary
- Fire Extinguishers shall be located within specific/identified areas

9.2 Information shall be provided to employees and visitors on what action to take in the event of a fire (i.e. contact numbers and assembly area)

9.3 Certain personnel shall be identified responsible for checking by head count that all employees have been evacuated safely

9.4 A review of actions taken will be recorded as a formal risk assessment

10. Visual Display Screens

10.1 Employees will be provided with equipment that complies with the relevant legislation and jobs will, if necessary be structured in such a way as to reduce the risk of strain or stress.

10.2 Checks will be made of VDUs and work stations as required by government regulations. These checks will be recorded and held by the Officer Manager.

10.3 All employees will be encouraged to have a bi-annual eyesight test by an optician of their choice paid for by The Board. Where the test indicates the need for special spectacles in order that the employee can carry out his/her work using the VDU, The Board will subsidise the cost up to a maximum of £50.

11. Smoking

11.1 The Board operates a strict no smoking policy in its office.

12. Personal Protective Equipment

- 12.1 Personal Protective Equipment will be issued to employees and volunteers, if necessary, and according to the requirements of their job or task. Ongoing discussions will ensure that the most suitable types of equipment are provided. It is the responsibility of employees to advise whenever equipment becomes defective/requires replacement.

Progress Report on Achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2011

Author: Colin White Planning Officer
Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: In June 2007 the Board set itself the target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2011. At that meeting it decided to create its own carbon offset scheme to help achieve this target. The scheme is in place and, along with other measures, will be sufficient for the Board to achieve carbon neutrality from April 2008.

Background

1. At its meeting in June, the Board decided to create its own carbon offset scheme based on planting trees and giving away low energy light bulbs. The aim is to offset a net annual carbon emission by the Board of 25 tonnes (taking account of other energy saving measures).
2. The carbon emissions for the Board (including that generated by attendance at Board events and meetings) in 2006-07 were 30.5 tonnes. The planned phased reduction in emissions against the 2006-07 base line was: 25% (total net emissions of 23.0 tonnes) in 2007-08; 50% (total net emissions of 15.2 tonnes) 2008-09; 75% (total net emissions of 7.6 tonnes) 2009-10 and 100% (total emissions 0 tonnes) 2010-11.
3. In practice giving away low energy light bulbs and tree planting on the scale proposed will enable the board to achieve carbon neutrality by the end of March 2008. (Table 1)
4. Calculations are based on low energy light bulbs being used for 800 hours per year (industry calculation of the average is 1700 hours) and having a lifespan of 7.5 years.

Table 1

| Energy Saving Measures | Saving (tonnes of CO₂) per year achieved by end of 2007- 08 |
|---|---|
| Energy efficiency measures in the CCB office | 1.1 |
| Solar pv installation at the office | 0.3 |
| Car mileage reduction (staff and members) | 0.9 |
| Sub Total of energy efficiency | 2.2 tonnes |
| Carbon Offset Scheme | |
| Tree planting (100 a year every year) | 5.0 |
| Giving away low energy light bulbs (100 x 20W and 25 x 16W (every year) | 23.3 |
| Sub Total of carbon offsetting | 28.3 tonnes |
| Total saved and offset by 31.3.07 | 30.5 tonnes |
| Target Reduction | 30.5 tonnes |
| Balance | 0.0 tonnes |

| Measures for 2008-09 | |
|---|--------------------|
| Maintain energy efficiency gains in office | 1.1 |
| Solar PV | 0.7 |
| Maintain car mileage at 2007-08 baseline | 0.9 |
| Sub Total of energy efficiency | 2.7 tonnes |
| Carbon Offset | |
| Giving Away Low energy light bulbs | 23.3 |
| Plant 100 trees and maintain all those planted in previous years) | 5.0 |
| Change to green electricity tariff (from Oct 2008) | 1.5 |
| Sub total of offsetting | 29.8 tonnes |
| Total | 32.5 tonnes |
| Target Reduction | 30.5 tonnes |
| Balance (positive) | 2.0 tonnes |

5. Carbon neutrality can only be sustained by continuing to maintain all the trees planted and giving away low energy light bulbs (or an equivalent) every year.
6. The gross cost in 2007-08 will be £900. The total savings through reduced car mileage claims and energy costs are estimated to be up to £1,300.

Recommendations

1. To note progress and the anticipated achievement of carbon neutrality in 2008.

Working with Parish Councils

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: A sub group of the Board has produced a series of recommendations for working more closely with parish councils. That programme will require funding of £10,000 per annum for holding two major events and a small grants scheme.

Purpose of Report: To seek approval to create a budget for this programme.

Background

1. At the Board meeting in October it was resolved to form a sub group to consider ways to work more closely with parish councils. That sub group has met and produced the following recommendations, some of which require consideration by the Executive Committee as they have financial implications.
2. The sub group recommend the following programme:

1. Production of a directory of services and resources the Board can offer parish councils.

This will be an electronic document and whilst it might require a small amount of graphic designer input can be accommodated within the existing budget.

2. Production of a PowerPoint presentation on the AONB and Board which can be used by staff, board members and others for showing to parish councils. This will be made available on CD or in a downloadable format on the web site.

The costs will be minimal and can be accommodated within existing budgets.

3. Organisation of two forums (north and south) for parish councils. The cost for each event including venue hire and catering will be approx £1,000 each.

The cost has been included in the draft core budget in the Promotion and Awareness/Events.

4. Creation of Parish Councils Small Grants Fund. This would be very similar to that offered during the Board's celebration of the 40th anniversary of the AONB designation. The Board awarded 37 grants totalling just over £8,000 (max of £250 per parish council) for small projects which helped implement the AONB Management Plan.

For 2008-09 it is proposed to create a grant fund of £7,500 and to offer individual grants of up to £250 at 100% of costs, or up to £500 at 75% of costs. It would operate on a first come first served basis until the fund was exhausted. It is estimated that between 25-30 grants will be awarded. Each parish council would be entitled to one grant.

There is no provision within the budget and release of reserves would be needed.

3. The overall cost of the programme would be in the order of £10,000, of which £2,500 can be accommodated within the core budget. The Small Grant Fund will require release of reserves of up to £7,500.

Recommendation

1. **To approve allocation of £10,000 in 2008- 09 for the programme; £2,500 from the core budget and £7,500 to be released from the general reserve.**

Progress Report on the Submission of a bid for the Chilterns to the LEADER Programme 2008-2103

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: Good progress is being made with the preparation of a bid to the LEADER fund for the Chilterns. The sum being sought is £3m for the period 2008 -2013. If successful managers will be need to be employed from next summer. The Board should consider employing the Project Development Officer for the Chilterns LEADER Programme.

Purpose of Report: To seek confirmation of the Board’s willingness to employ the project development officer for the Chilterns LEADER programme.

Background

1. The LEADER Programme is provided with funds from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) which is jointly supported by the EU and UK government. The LEADER programme is a long standing programme which supports rural development. It is a complementary part of the RDPE to the grants for forestry and farming. The programme runs on a six year cycle and bids are being sought for the period 2008- 2013.
2. The amount of funding available in the south east is up to £35m (it is believed there will be 15 bids). The Board prepared and submitted an Expression of Interest on behalf of local organisations to cover the Chilterns, including that part which lies in the East of England. It is a slightly larger area than the AONB but not as large as the Natural Area. (Map 1)
3. The main themes for the Chilterns LEADER would be:
 - Development of forestry and related industries
 - Development and diversification of farming
 - Promotion of heritage skills
 - Promotion of rural tourism
 - Support for community development
 - Managing climate change
4. Preparation of the full bid is being undertaken by Business Link for Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, which will also become the so called responsible body for the Chilterns bid. LEADER funding is provided in arrears which can generate a significant cash flow problem - the Board did not therefore put itself forward for this role.
5. The Board has continued to provide considerable support. The newly formed Local Action Group (LAG) which oversees the development of the bid and, if

successful, disbursement of the funds, is being chaired by Mike Fox. Shirley Judges and Steve Rodrick are also members.

6. Although the Board will not be the responsible body and is unlikely to secure much of the funding for its own projects, it will be able to influence significantly the programme and encourage applications for grant aid.
7. The management structure proposed is that Business Link, as the responsible body for three LEADER bids (Chilterns, Aylesbury Vale and Colne Valley) employs a Programme Manager and administrative staff to cover all three areas. Each of the LEADER areas would have its own Project Development officer. It is proposed the Board employs that person for the Chilterns. The post would be subject to the Board's terms and conditions of employment.
8. The role of Project Development Officer would primarily be to develop projects and help them to the stage of being submitted for grant approval. They would not be overly concerned with administration and financial management which will be the role of the overall Programme Manager.
9. The funding rules allow up to 20% of the grant to be used for administration and other overheads. In theory this is sufficient, but tight. Sharing some overhead costs with other LEADER groups is both desirable and essential. If the Board agrees to this role the grant should be sufficient to meet all costs of employing the Project Development Officer.
10. Bids need to be submitted by 18th January 2008. SEEDA will make a decision in May and, if successful, funding will be available from July 2008. SEEDA and EEDA have provided the necessary re-assurance that the Chilterns proposal will be treated as one bid and will not be divided on a regional basis.
11. The Executive Committee gave an 'in principle' approval for this arrangement at its last meeting in September 2007. Now that the bid is well advanced and will have to be submitted before the Committee meets again, confirmation of that decision is sought.

Recommendation

1. **To confirm the decision to employ the Chilterns LEADER Project Development Officer, subject to all costs being met by the LEADER programme.**

Chilterns LEADER Area

 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Progress Report on Review of the AONB Management Plan

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary Steady progress is being maintained and although the review is slightly behind schedule the revised plan should be published by next October. It is proposed to set up two sub groups of the Board to oversee the final review of policy.

Purpose of Report: To advise the Committee of progress.

Background

1. The Review of the AONB Management is now subject to EU legislation which requires the plan itself to be assessed for its environmental impacts. This requires the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The Scoping Report for that assessment has been prepared and has been issued for public consultation. The closing date for comments is 21st January (A copy will be sent to Committee members prior to the meeting).
2. The SEA itself does not contain policies or actions, but provides a base against which the reviewed policies and actions in the Management Plan will be assessed to determine their impact on the environment. Many of the types of indicator are generic and used in most SEAs.
3. The Board will also be required to undertake what is described as an Appropriate Assessment. This is an assessment of the impact of proposals in the revised Management Plan on the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Map1
4. The process of reviewing the changed context (e.g. land use changes), policy review and identification of strategic activity on which the delivery plan will be based has begun. Useful sessions were held at the last Board meeting and Annual Forum. All task groups have reviewed relevant chapters. The aim is to prepare revised draft chapters with policies for approval at the Board meeting in March. It will be issued from April until July for public comment.
5. It is proposed to set up two sub groups of the Board to oversee the policy review process. They will meet in late February or early March. The two groups will cover the policies relating to the Board's statutory purposes of Conserving and Enhancing Natural Beauty, and Promoting Understanding and Enjoyment of the area's special qualities.

Recommendations

1. To note progress and the issuing of the SEA Scoping Report for public consultation.
2. To set up two sub groups of the Board to oversee the policy review.

Map 1

Special Areas of Conservation

