



**Agenda for Board Meeting to be held at 10.00 am on
Wednesday 28 March 2007 in
St. Katharine's, Parmoor, Frieth, Henley on Thames**

Lunch will be provided at approximately 1.00pm. Would members please note that the training session will commence after lunch at 2.00pm.

If a member wishes to present any urgent item for discussion, it should be communicated to the Chairman prior to the day of the meeting.

Agenda Item	Timing	Page No
1. Apologies for absence/changes in membership	10.00	
2. Declarations of Interest To declare any personal and prejudicial interests	10.01	
3. Minutes Of the meeting held on 23 January 2007, to be confirmed.	10.02	1 - 8
4. Matters Arising	10.12	
5. Public Question Time	10.18	
6. Appointments to the Sustainable Development fund Panel	10.20	9 - 10
7. Report from the Executive Committee	10.30	11 - 16
8. Report from the Planning Committee	10.45	17 - 20
9. Report from the Sustainable Development Fund Panel	11.05	21 - 28
10. Hedgerow Survey Report	11.20	29 - 34
11. Proposal to Create a Land Management Fund	11.40	35 - 38
12. Report from the Climate Change Group	12.00	39 - 48
13. Training for Board Members	12.20	49 - 50
14. Date of Next and Future Meetings The next meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday 19 June 2007 at Mid Beds District Council.	12.40	

Future meetings are as follows:

Board (10.00am)

Wednesday 10 October including AGM
Tuesday 22 January 2008

Executive Committee (10.30am)

Tuesday 15 May 2007

Tuesday 18 September 2007
Tuesday 11 December 2007

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| 15. | Items for Information | 12.45 | 51 - 52 |
| 16. | Post Board Meeting Training Session - Climate Change | | |

For further information please contact: Maureen Keyworth at Democratic Services, Buckinghamshire County Council, Room 124, Old County Offices, Aylesbury HP20 1UA. Tel 01296 383603, Fax No 01296 382538, email: mkeyworth@buckscc.gov.uk

TO: MEMBERS OF THE CHILTERNNS CONSERVATION BOARD



CONSERVATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILTERN'S CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 2007, IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM, JUDGES LODGINGS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.30AM AND CONCLUDING AT 1.01PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Member

Appointing Body

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr Chris Brearley	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Brian Golby	Mid Beds District Council
Cllr Susan Howkins	Chiltern District Council
Cllr Marion Mustoe	South Beds District Council
Cllr David Nimmo-Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Richard Pushman	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Chris Richards	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Bill Storey	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Andrew Strange	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Julian Thomson	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Alan Walters	South Bucks District Council

Appointed by Secretary of State

Mike Fox
Sir John Johnson (Chairman)
Kevin Mayne
Dr. Mike Render
John Willson

Elected by Parish Councils

Cllr Mary Goldsmith	Bedfordshire
Cllr John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Cllr Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
Cllr Shirley Judges	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Barbara Wallis	Buckinghamshire
Cllr Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

In attendance

Alistair Helliwell	Natural England
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Officers

Tracy Adams	Chilterns Conservation Board,
Steve Rodrick	Chilterns Conservation Board, Chief Officer
Colin White	Chilterns Conservation Board, Planning Officer
Maureen Keyworth	Buckinghamshire County Council and Clerk to the Board

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from David Barnard, Roger Emmett, Bettina Kirkham and Dr Simon Mortimer.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2006

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2006 were confirmed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Item 4 – Matters Arising – The Chiltern Society

The Chairman informed the Committee he had recently met with the new Chairman of the Chiltern Society, John Taylor. He confirmed that there would be no weakening of relationships between the Society and the Board.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

6. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to advise the Board of the matters considered by the Executive Committee and decisions taken under delegated authority, and to seek confirmation from the Board that Chris Smith be appointed as the Board's Finance Officer

Sir John Johnson was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee for the coming year.

The Committee noted that the financial position as at December 2006 was satisfactory. However, grant payments still were awaited from Natural England.

The Board was asked to endorse Chris Smith as Finance Officer to the Board with effect from 1 April 2007. He will take over from Chris Sweeney (and Mike Collier, his deputy) at Hertfordshire County Council, who is currently the Section 151 Officer.

Progress on the Sustainability Plan was satisfactory. Arrangements were being made to install solar panels at the Board's offices.

Discussion took place with regard to looking at the carbon footprint for the Board as a whole, including members and staff, which would be presented at a future meeting.

The Chief Officer reported that tree planting would take place on 2 March at 10.00am in Common Wood, Penn Street.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Board NOTED the decisions made by the Executive Committee under delegated powers.**

2. The Board AGREED that Chris Smith should be appointed as the Board's Finance Officer with effect from 1 April 2007.

7. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

Members received the Report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to seek the approval of the Board for the Business Plan for 2007/08

The Committee was informed that until Natural England had agreed the core funding and grant payments, the budget could not be confirmed. Ideally the Plan should be a three year rolling plan, but further negotiations would be needed with Natural England and the Local Authorities based on an annual increase of 3% (standstill). Costings for production of the Management Plan also needed to be included and NE was working on providing some guidance in this regard.

It is proposed that the core expenditure for 2007/08 be set at £628,275. A grant of £479,620 was being sought from NE with local authorities being requested to provide a contribution based on a 3% increase from last year.

With regard to the Project Budget, the Chief Officer commented that it will not be easy to obtain funding and it would be a challenging year. However, it was hoped that the Sustainability Fund may be funded, by Natural England, up £100,000.

The Chief Officer referred to the priorities in the Work Programme, which reflected the priorities of the Board and those of Natural England's strategic directions, which included the cross cutting themes:

- Social Inclusion
- Health and Wellbeing
- Lifelong Learning
- Climate Change

The Chief Officer stated that at the last meeting it was agreed that a Lifelong Learning Strategy should be prepared, but further work was needed with regard to the formal education sector.

In discussion, the following was noted:

- It was important that talks and presentations to local groups and organisations be shared among staff, Board members and volunteers in order to accommodate all requests.
- Responses on behalf of the National Association of AONBs were carried out by the Chilterns AONB as a result of receiving comments from other AONBs. The CAONB did not necessarily carry out all the work itself.
- In answer to a request that climate change should be made prominent in the plan, the Chief Officer stated that a specific section on Climate Change could be placed in the body of the text, but that the priorities stated were not in any order of preference.
- The images of people in CCB publications could show a wider range of groups to encourage more participation by groups currently under represented.
- The need to promote sustainability was discussed. Parishes have the power to work on renewable energy which can further support local community.

- With two growth area committees in place, as well as possible changes in local government a member suggested that the Board should investigate whether any sources of funding may be available. The Chief Officer agreed on the need to work with these new committees. For example the Board is a member of the Chalk Arc Steering Group which covers the area of Luton and Dunstable, but had not yet explored the possibility of receiving funding directly.
- It was suggested that reference should be made to input from the Parishes as well as the Local Authorities.
- The survey of land cover change was discussed. Initially this would be carried out on an annual basis in order to establish the baseline.
- With regard to the promotion of alternatives to using the car for visiting the countryside, members noted that over the years the Board had worked with a number of travel companies including Arriva and Chiltern Railways. There were four rail lines and three bus companies operating in the Chilterns and the need to build new and stronger relationships was noted.
- The Planning Forum needed to be included in the Plan
- Under Built Environment, members noted that the planning policy guidelines would be ready by March 2007. It was felt this may be too ambitious to have them completed given the scale of the work programme. It was also noted that the Planning Officer would be involved directly with the south east plan. Members congratulated the Planning Officer on this work.
- A member requested the production of a summary of CCB/AONB planning policies and guidance for parishes as well as the possibility of some training once the local elections had been held in May 2007.
- With regard to planning issues, parishes should be encouraged to work on local design frameworks.
- In answer to a question on whether there was a role for the Board to lobby water authorities in connection with extraction policies and chalk stream flow, it was noted that this was carried out through the Project Steering Group and the Chief Officer agreed to add this to the Plan.
- With regard to the Commons Network, Kath Daly was congratulated on her work on the Commons network database, which would shortly be accessible through the AONB website.
- An item with regard to Local Authorities in the context of the White Paper would be put into the foreword of the Business Plan.

RESOLVED:

1. **The Board APPROVED the Business Plan for 2007-08, including the budget and work programme, subject to the comments received at the meeting.**

The Board AGREED:

2. **To seek an increase of 3% in the core financial contributions from local authorities and Natural England**
3. **To seek up to an additional £15,000 from Natural England and local authorities towards the additional costs of reviewing the AONB Management Plan**

4. **To seek grant aid from Natural England of:**
£479,000 for core costs (76.9%) – including £12,000 for the Management Plan
£121,000 for project costs (47.8%)
£100,000 for the Sustainable Development Fund (100%)

8. REPORT FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members received the Report of the Planning Officer, the purpose of which was to bring the Board's attention to the items considered by the Planning Committee and decisions taken under delegated powers.

Barbara Wallis was elected Chairman of the Planning Committee for the coming year.

As a result of consultation on the Chilterns Roofing Materials (Tile) Technical Note, a good spread of responses had been received. All changes were approved and the revised, adopted Note will be published in March 2007.

The need to increase the use of local building materials and the prominence of the Board and AONB was stressed in the Development Plans responses, all of which were sent under delegated powers.

There was increased attendance at the 4th Annual Planning Conference, and feedback was positive.

With regard to the Buildings Design Guide, information was sought on how to proceed with the adoption of this document as a supplementary planning document. However, it appears that this will not be possible because of government guidelines and recommendations. It was hoped that the revised guidance would be published in 2008.

Discussion took place with regard to the incursion of major housing developments into the AONB particularly with regard to two specific sites in the Wycombe Area. It was noted that in respect of these sites, no dwellings would be built in the AONB, but on sites immediately adjacent.

A member asked the Planning Office to comment regarding windfall sites. The suggestion was that all sites, including windfall sites should be included to meet the proposed housing figures. In rural areas a disproportionate number of new dwellings tend to be on windfall sites. Recent government guidance indicated that windfall sites could no longer be included in meeting housing allocation targets. This may result in local planning authorities having to identify more housing sites in rural areas within the Local Development Framework.

RESOLVED:

The Board NOTED:

1. **The progress made in connection with the drafting of the Chilterns Roofing Materials Supplementary Technical Note;**
2. **The responses made on Development Plans and also NOTED the progress on the Building Design Guide review;**
3. **The current situation regarding responses on planning applications.**

9. PRESENTATION BY NATURAL ENGLAND

Members received a presentation by Alistair Helliwell, Team Leader Chilterns and North Wessex Downs. A copy of the presentation is available on request.

Mr Helliwell commented that he had been working with the Chairman and Chief Officer over the last few weeks to help deliver the AONB objectives.

In discussion, the following was noted:

- Entry Level Stewardship, managed by Natural England, does not include bio fuels, for which DEFRA has other grant schemes
- It was noted that Alistair Helliwell will be the primary contact for NE for all the Chilterns including Herts and Beds. NE teams in the east of England will deal directly with management of the environmental stewardship schemes. It was agreed that a future joint meeting with both teams of NE and the CCB would be useful.
- NE would like to be more involved in providing advice and support on Stewardship but it was difficult due to the scale of the operation.
- The issue of increasing fragmentation of land ownership was discussed. It was recognised that this would make it more difficult to apply for environmental stewardship grants. The Board's Land Owners pack was intended to provide information to new owners of land.
- Concern was expressed with regard to hedge management and in particular the increasing trend to allow roadside hedges to grow up obscuring views of adjacent countryside. NE does encourage rotational cutting
- With regard to historic environment, Mr Helliwell confirmed that the team member for this area was currently on maternity leave and it would be difficult to attend all task group meetings. However, if there were particular issues being discussed he agreed that NE would like to be involved. The Chief Officer stated that this type of input would be invaluable to the Task Group.
- With regard to the Rural Development Programme for England a member expressed concern about how the Chilterns as a whole could be covered if the stewardship schemes are regionalised. Mr Helliwell stated that not much power is given to regional areas. However, the Chilterns AONB was in an excellent position to be at the forefront of joint character area proposals. NE valued joint character area proposals and when writing targeting statements with character areas with cross boundaries, it was possible that the Chilterns AONB could take a lead. He hoped that further funding would be generated into the Chilterns.

10. REPORT AND PRESENTATION ON THE LAND USE SURVEY

Members received a report and presentation from the Farming and Land use Officer, the purpose of which was:

- To inform the Board about progress on the landscape survey carried out in 2006, and to present preliminary results on patterns of land use and land use change.
- To promote discussion about plans for developing the survey work to provide information on the drivers of change in land use, land cover and other attributes of landscape appearance.

A copy of the presentation is available on request.

RESOLVED:

The Board

1. **Noted the findings of the 2005 and 2006 surveys**
2. **AGREED to repeat the survey annually using the same approach**
3. **AGREED to investigate ways of using volunteers to enrich the survey data through verification of findings and gathering of information on drivers of change.**

11. PRESENTATION ON AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEME UPDATE

Members received a report and presentation from the Farming and Land Use Officer, the purpose of which was to advise on the current level of uptake of grants, highlight the issue of low numbers of applications to the HLS in the Chilterns and to identify ways of enhancing the area of farmland covered by the agri-environment grant schemes in general. A copy of the presentation is available on request.

RESOLVED:

The Board AGREED

1. **to actively promote both the Entry Level Scheme and particularly the Higher Level Scheme**
2. **To lobby DEFRA to reduce the thresholds for entry to the Higher Level Scheme**
3. **That the Board's Farming and Land Use Officer spends more of her time assisting farmers prepare applications to the HLS.**
4. **That countryside management services should be encouraged to give priority to encouraging applications to the agri-environment schemes and assist with applications.**

12. REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

Members received the report of the Chief Officer on the review of the AONB Management Plan, the purpose of which was to inform the Board of the need to review the plan and the process advised by Natural England. A timetable was put forward for consideration.

RESOLVED:

The Board

1. **NOTED the process and resource implication of reviewing the Management Plan.**
2. **AGREED to seek agreement from Natural England on means by which the review process can be lightened to reduce the financial and staff costs.**

13. DATE OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 28 March 2007 at 10.00am venue to be confirmed

Dates of future Board meetings are as follows:

Tuesday 19 June 2007, Mid Beds District Council

Wednesday 10 October 2007 (to include the AGM) (venue to be confirmed)

14. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP (for information)

Members received the report of the Chief Officer the purpose of which was to confirm that a sub-group has been formed and to inform the Board of its Terms or Reference and work programme.

The Board NOTED the Report

15. UPDATE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (for information)

Members received the report of the Countryside Officer, the purpose of which was to update members on the current position.

The Board NOTED the Report

16. REPORT ON 40TH ANNIVERSARY PARISH FUND

Members received the report of the Information and Interpretation Officer, the purpose of which was to inform members of the success of the scheme and how grants were allocated.

The Board NOTED the Report

Chairman

Appointments to the Sustainable Development Fund Panel

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: The Board should appoint 5 members to the Sustainable Development Fund Panel for the period 1st April 2007 – 31st March 2008. Natural England has not confirmed its grant for 2007-08 but it is expected the panel will have a budget of up to £100,000

Purpose of Report: To appoint members to the Sustainable Development Fund Panel.

Background

1. The Board decided at its AGM in October 2006 that it would make appointments to the Sustainable Development Fund panel to coincide with the financial year. As such, appointments would be made at the last Board meeting in each financial year for the period 1st April to 31st March.
2. The Board should make 5 appointments which broadly reflect the composition of the Board itself. It is proposed that the appointments should be based on 2 local authority appointed members, 2 Secretary of State appointed members and 1 parish council elected member.
3. The chairman of the Panel would be elected from the membership of the Panel at its first meeting.
4. Each member of the panel is entitled to claim an allowance of £500. The chairman of the panel will receive a special responsibility allowance of £500. Members are also entitled to claim mileage expenses.
5. In the past the panel has tended to meet every month (but not necessarily at a one month interval) at the Board's offices in Chinnor. The panel is likely to meet up to 10 times in the year including a tour of sites. There may be occasional site visits in addition. Each meeting typically lasts for two hours.

Recommendation

1. **The Board appoints five members to the Sustainable Development Fund Panel for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 including:**
 - 2 **Local authority appointed members**
 - 2 **Secretary of state appointed members**
 - 1 **Parish council appointed member**

Report from the Executive Committee

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: The Executive Committee met on 27th February. The main items considered were a report on the satisfactory financial position, an accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project and proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Purpose of Report: To report decisions made under delegated authority.

Finance Position to end of January 2007

1. The Committee received a report on the financial position to the end of January. The position was satisfactory and a small surplus was anticipated on the core budget at the year end due to lower than expected expenditure especially on corporate services and higher than expected income, primarily bank interest, sales of merchandise and income from events. There was concern over late payment of grant from Natural England (since received).

Audit of Accounts for 2005-06

2. The Board approved its statement of accounts for 2005-06 at its meeting in June 2006, as required by the Accounting and Audit Regulations 2006. The Audit Commission was supposed to have conducted its audit and published its opinion by 31 December 2006. At the time of writing the Audit Commission had not begun its work.

Changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme

3. The Committee received a report on the proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The overall cost to the Board in the short to medium term is unlikely to change significantly. Employee contribution rates will change depending upon salary but in general are likely to rise for Board staff by up to 1%.
4. At a previous Board meeting it was decided not to make changes to the Pension Scheme or address the issue of the Pension Fund deficit until the scheme re-valuation is published, which is expected to be in December 2007.
5. All staff have been notified of the planned changes.

Agreement of an Accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project

6. The Committee had previously requested a paper clarifying the relationship of the Board with the Chiltern Woodland Project. The two organisations have a very close working relationship. At present the Board provides office accommodation and contributes to its work depending upon availability of project finances. An accord was presented and approved. (Appendix 1).

Recommendations

- 1. To note the items considered at the Executive Committee.**
- 2. To endorse the Accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project.**



Chiltern Woodlands Project

An Accord between the Chilterns Conservation Board and Chiltern Woodlands Project

The Purpose of this accord is to describe how the Chilterns Conservation Board and Chiltern Woodlands Project will work together to meet shared objectives

The Chiltern Conservation Board was established by Parliamentary Order on December 14th 2004. Its statutory aims are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns
- To promote understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB
- In do so far as it is compatible with the first two aims, the Board will seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.

The Chiltern Woodlands Project is a registered charitable trust (no. 1002512) company limited by guarantee (not for profit) founded in 1989. Its aims are:

- To promote and encourage the sustainable management of woodlands in the Chiltern Hills.
- To protect and enhance the landscape
- To maintain and enhance the biodiversity
- To promote a sustainable woodland economy
- To increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Chiltern woods.

The Chilterns Conservation Board and Chiltern Woodlands Project have identified their shared priorities as:

- Securing an attractive and sustainable landscape.
- Protection of existing woodlands.
- Promoting the long term sustainable management of woodlands.
- Promoting public enjoyment and understanding of woodlands and woodland heritage.
- Encouraging appropriate economic activity which supports the management of woodlands.
- Securing the protection of the special woodland heritage of woodlands.

The Conservation Board and Woodlands Project will work together in partnership to deliver these shared priorities.

We will do this by working closely and collaboratively at all levels.

- The CCB and CWP will agree an annual joint work programme.
- The CWP will assist the CCB with the preparation and implementation of the Management Plan for the Chilterns AONB.
- The CWP Board has given the Conservation Board the right to appoint a trustee of the CWP.
- The CCB Chief Officer and CWP manager will hold regular liaison meetings.
- The CCB staff and CWP staff will liaise directly on all relevant matters.
- Staff will respond positively to request to attend Board meeting of each organisation and to provide information useful to each organisation.
- The CCB and CWP will invite the other organisation to be represented on any relevant work groups.
- The Conservation Board will provide office accommodation for the CWP which will be occupied on a Tenancy at Will lease.
- The Conservation Board will re-charge direct costs on an annual basis and will consider requires to waive other charges such as rent and rates depending upon the financial position of both organisations.
- The Conservation Board will make available to the CWP meeting room facilities and general use of office equipment.
- The CCB will make available general IT support. Direct IT support will be charged directly.
- The CWP manager/staff will provide, on a no cost basis, the Conservation Board and its staff general support and information on woodland issues.
- The Conservation Board will assist the CWP with its fund raising efforts to enable it to function effectively and employ a manager.
- CWP and CCB will jointly develop a promotion and events programme.
- CCB and CWP will jointly identify priorities for future woodland work in the new Chilterns AONB Management Plan, these might include for example:-
 - Woodfuel
 - Climate Change and wood

- Pest management
- Woodland heritage
- Run the Special Trees and Woods project (until June 2009) with funded agreed by Heritage Lottery Fund and Chilterns Conservation Board. Working with volunteers and community groups to record the tree and woodland heritage of the Natural Area. Results are shown on the Chilterns AONB website.

Signed on Behalf of the:

Chilterns Conservation Board

Chiltern Woodlands Project

Report from the Planning Committee

Authors: Cllr Barbara Wallis Board Member
Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 21st February. The following items were discussed: updates for the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide review and the Chilterns Roofing Materials Technical Note; the Annual Planning Forum; the AONB Management Plan review; responses to DCLG consultations on Draft PPS 'Planning and Climate Change' and 'Building a Greener Future'; response to the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the East of England Plan; Development Plans responses, and an update on responses to planning applications.

Purpose of Report: To bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee and decisions taken under delegated powers.

Updates – Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Chilterns Roofing Materials Technical Note

1. The issue of how planning authorities can adopt the Guide and Technical Notes as Supplementary Planning Documents had not been resolved and advice has been sought from the Government Offices, the Regional Assemblies, Planning Inspectorate and DCLG. The Roofing Note was being printed and would be launched in Chesham and at Matthews' Brickyard in Bellingdon on 29 March 2007.

Annual Planning Forum

2. It was resolved that the Forum should be cancelled due to declining attendance and other methods of involving council officers should be investigated. The Planning Officer continued to give lunchtime seminars to officers at Local Authorities and talks to Council Committees as well as Parish Councils and other groups.

AONB Management Plan Review

3. The review of the AONB Management Plan was discussed and will feature as a standing item on the Planning Committee's agenda for the time being. There was discussion about indicators and the need for these to be properly addressed so that these could be fed into the Local Development Frameworks (LDF) which Local Authorities are preparing. The Management Plan review will need direct input from the local authority planning officers who are being advised of the current review programme.

DCLG Consultations – Draft PPS ‘Planning and Climate Change’ and ‘Building a Greener Future – Towards Zero Carbon Development’

4. Two DCLG consultations were discussed – the supplement to PPS1 dealing with Planning and Climate Change and the ‘Building a Greener Future – Towards Zero Carbon Development’ document. Both of these have positive messages about the need to provide more forms of renewable energy generation within major developments and greater use of energy saving technologies. However, the Committee considered that the need for renewable energy generation should be met from all developments, not just large ones, and much greater consideration needs to be given to the energy efficiency of, and water usage within, the existing building stock. Greater use should be made of more sustainable building materials which will lead to economies of scale. The Government is proposing that the Sustainable Homes Code will become mandatory in the future which is supported.

Secretary of State’s proposed changes to the East of England Plan

5. The Secretary of State’s proposed changes to the East of England Plan were also subject to discussion. The two main issues that were commented on relate to: the need for pragmatism with regard to car parking provision associated with new developments in rural areas that are poorly served by public transport (i.e. more parking spaces are needed to avoid the street being clogged by parked cars), and the need to recognise the damaging effects of using certain building materials (concrete for example) and the environmental effects of the embodied energy of new buildings. Greater recognition should also be given to the proximity of the AONB in connection with proposed growth at Hemel Hempstead.

Development Plans Responses

6. All responses had been prepared and sent under delegated powers.

Wycombe DC Pictsmede Non Statutory Brief for redevelopment

7. The site of 5.7 ha. is situated adjacent to Picts Lane and the Railway Station at Princes Risborough and is expected to accommodate at least 75 houses and business units. It is mostly outside, but immediately adjacent to, the AONB. The key issues that need to be addressed are: the site’s proximity to, and partial inclusion within, the Chilterns AONB; the likely effects of development in the immediate locality; design and materials; reference to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide; very careful consideration of high density development (particularly in connection with height and bulk), and decking of the car park would need careful consideration.

Dacorum BC LDF Growth at Hemel Hempstead Issues and Options

8. As part of the production of the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy significant additional growth of several thousand houses at Hemel Hempstead and St. Albans has been proposed in the Secretary of State’s Proposed

Changes (see above). An Issues and Options paper was produced that details various possible sites for growth around Hemel Hempstead.

9. The AONB boundary is some distance away from the potential locations and if they were to be implemented then there would probably be limited visual impacts on the AONB. The edges of two sites would have to be subject to very careful treatment to ensure that the wider landscape is not affected.

Dacorum BC Local Development Scheme 2007/08 to 2009/10

10. The Board supported the Council's approach in seeking to retain (save) all planning policies beyond three years if necessary and in seeking to retain supplementary planning guidance.
11. The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide is detailed as 'Saved Supplementary Guidance' and is given a medium priority for review – this, and reference to the ongoing review, was supported by the Board. The recently produced Roofing Materials supplementary technical note should also be included in the list of documents produced by the Board.
12. The Board has sought inclusion of a policy for the AONB within the Core Strategy, and the Development Control DPD if appropriate. Sustainability issues should also be addressed in the Core Strategy.

Dacorum BC Site Allocations DPD Issues and Options

13. Consultees were asked if any change was required to the existing boundary of Aldbury. The Board would only favour a change if this was to allow for small-scale development that would meet identified local housing needs, and which was designed to the very highest standard.
14. The Board welcomed the fact that the Council would look to discount new sites put forward for development if they would have a detrimental impact on the Chilterns AONB and the approach to prioritising new sites was supported.
15. Gypsy and traveller sites were also considered. Though there was mention of constraints such as Green Belt, the Board could find no mention of the Chilterns AONB and this omission should be addressed. The Board agreed that new sites should have good access to local services and facilities, should avoid local concentrations and should be in previously developed land in preference to greenfield sites.
16. The Miswell Lane employment area at Tring was included in the consultation. This is in very close proximity to the Chilterns AONB and is already considered to have a detrimental impact on the setting of the AONB. The Board would only favour retention of the site at its current extent for employment purposes or its re-designation as a housing site.
17. A possible extension to Tring Station car park was suggested. The Board would not favour this. Decking of the current car park would probably be

appropriate but to extend the car park into the area that had previously been used on a temporary basis would be objected to.

18. The Board considered that the issue of design should be extended to cover the whole Borough (not just concentrate on urban areas) because development still takes place in the rural areas.
19. Further detail on the development plans responses can be found in the Committee report which is available on the AONB website. See the following link:

http://www.chilternsaonb.org/downloads/board_meetings/Planning_agenda_papers_210207.pdf

Planning applications update

20. In the year from 1 April 2006, the Board has been consulted on 163 applications, and has made formal representations on 25. Of these applications 22 have been determined, with 18 being decided in line with the Board's comments (82%). The situation with regard to the proportion of applications determined in line with the Board's comments is being monitored and will be reported on at a later date.

Recommendation

1. **The Board notes the report.**

Report from Sustainable Development Fund Panel

Author: Kath Daly Countryside Officer

Summary: In 2006-07, 28 projects were awarded grants totalling £76,091. This paper provides a summary of the SDF operation in 2006-07 and proposes possible changes for 2007-08. The cost of the scheme in 2006-07 can be met from grant aid from Natural England and will not require a draw on reserves.

Purpose of report: To review the operation of the scheme to date and consider any amendments for 2007-8.

Background

1. The total fund for the current financial year is £80,000, of which up to 10% can be used to cover administration and management costs. The Board has also agreed to the use of up to £20,000 from reserves to support SDF projects if required.
2. There have been 105 expressions of interest, of which 56 have translated into applications seeking grant aid of £275,641.
3. Grant offers have been made to 33 projects and accepted by 31. Of these, 3 will be funded from other Project Grants, leaving a total of 28 SDF projects with a total allocation of £76,091.
4. Table 1 summarises the type of projects and organisations supported.

Table 1

Type of Organisation	No. of projects	% of total grant	Type of Project (primary category)	No. of projects	% of total grant
Local Authority	1	13	Nature Conservation	7	43
National Trust	1	7	Historic Environment	3	4
Registered Charity (excluding National Trust)	14	43	Access	6	21
Community Organisation (including Parish Council)	10	31	Awareness & Enjoyment	11	32
Business	2	6	Built Heritage	1	1

Table 2 compares types of organisation awarded SDF grants in the Chilterns AONB to England-wide figures.

5. The Countryside Agency commissioned consultants to undertake a national review of the SDF. Table 2 provides a comparison with the Chilterns.

Table 2

	Voluntary group/charity		Public body/Local Authority		Private /business	Individual
	National*	Chilterns	National*	Chilterns	National*	Chilterns
Proportion of all projects (by number)	45%	75%	29%	18%	25%	7%

* from Land Use Consultants evaluation of SDF in England 2005-6

Issues 2006- 07

6. Applications were slower to come in than anticipated, despite high levels of interest (as indicated by expressions of interest).The Panel's target of allocating 60% of the fund by July and the rest of the fund by November was not met. Funding was still being allocated in January 2007.
7. Compared to 2005-6 there has been a shift in type of applicant awarded a grant, from the larger organisations to smaller community groups. In 2006-7 there were no grants awarded to County or District Councils, and just one to the National Trust.
8. 19 of the 28 projects have volunteers directly involved in project delivery. 5 involve awareness raising with young people/children, and 2 involve raising public awareness of farming issues. 3 involve practical conservation of BAP priority habitat.
9. The Chilterns scheme to date has been particularly strong on projects focussing on :
- Protecting /enhancing biodiversity or landscape features
 - Community engagement
 - Improving access
 - Improving understanding of the AONBs special qualities
 - Providing opportunities for voluntary participation

Projects have also been supported which:

- Conserve the historic environment
- Build capacity in the community (e.g. Chilterns hedge-laying group)
- Encourage healthier lifestyles (e.g. Henley Food Festival)
- General education (e.g. Trees for All)
- Offer new opportunities for voluntary participation
- Cultural heritage (e.g. Bradenham Woods archaeological surveys)
- Promote local products
- Contribute to farm diversification

- Promote renewable energy (e.g. Matthews Brickyard brick drying scheme)

There have been few if any projects concerned with:

- Minimising pollution
- Water quality
- Waste/ recycling
- Conservation of other natural resources
- Sustainable transport
- Disadvantaged/minority groups
- Encouraging sustainable tourism
- Collaboration between businesses

This is broadly consistent with the national profile of types of projects supported.

10. The vast majority of projects have involved direct works on the ground – e.g. environmental improvements, access improvements or interpretation/ awareness raising. Only one - from the YHA - has involved a feasibility study. Several applications for feasibility studies were turned down, on the grounds that they did not demonstrate sufficient benefit to the AONB.

Evaluation of the AONB SDF scheme for England (2005-6)

11. As far as can be judged after only one year of operation, the consultants considered the scheme to be broadly meeting its objectives, and commented that

'the SDF has been a positive experience for the large majority of applicants and the beneficiaries of their projects.'

12. Most of the report's recommendations relate to the administration of the fund.

13. One recommendation related to promotion of the fund to excluded communities and suggested that AONBs should identify

'key communities, both inside and outside the AONB, that can be regarded as having been excluded from, or experience barriers to, AONB purposes,'

and use a proportion of the fund (5% is suggested) to work with these communities to develop SDF applications.

Operation of the fund 2007-8

14. The SDF Grants Advisory Panel proposes the following adjustments to the scheme for the coming year:

i) More active encouragement of projects dealing with:

- Renewable energy generation – particularly wood fuel
- Marketing or processing of local products such as venison, thatching spars, wood products etc
- Sustainable tourism
- Support/development of new partnerships e.g. collaboration between local groups

ii) More active encouragement of applications from:

- Businesses
- Groups/communities not traditionally involved in the conservation of the AONB

iii) That the guidelines be amended to make clear that there is a presumption in favour of projects that deliver on the ground as compared to feasibility studies.

Promotion 2007-8

15. The proposal is for promotion of the fund in 2007-8 to be more focussed than in previous years on particular types of groups/ areas of work.

The Panel proposes the following as part of this:

- Themed case studies on the website and available to e-mail to targeted recipients –e.g. via business networks.
- Greater targeting of promotion through relevant networks.
- Greater use of parish / district council newsletters to promote the fund.
- Continued effort to secure press coverage of projects and the scheme in general.

The Panel is also considering:

- a promotional event, targeted at 'excluded communities', amongst others.
- a promotional leaflet available on the website and in hard copy.

It is recognised that there is a need to strike a balance between the time and energy going into promotion and the relatively limited size of the fund. Nonetheless, there would seem to be scope to get information on the fund out to new audiences, to mutual benefit.

Recommendations

- 1. Board members approve the proposed amendments to the operation of the scheme.**
- 2. Board members provide feedback on the proposals for promotion of the scheme in 2007- 08.**

Sustainable Development Fund Projects

Applicant	Location	Project	Total Value £	Allocation £	Grant as % of project value
Lewknor Parish Council	Lewknor, Oxon	Lewknor Visitor Gateway - information, signposting and interpretation based at the local church and Oxford Tube bus stops.	5,974.00	2,682.00	45
Chiltern Archaeology	Walks in Oxon and Bucks, volunteer scheme AONB -wide	Chiltern Trails - development of 4 leaflets interpreting the geology, archaeology and ecology of the Chilterns - based on existing promoted routes, will be available via the AONB website. Also training of volunteers in site assessment and leading walks.	8,800.00	3,880.00	44
The Anne Carpmael Charitable Trust	Goring, Oxon	New Board Walk at Withymead Nature Reserve - allowing improved visitor access to view the Lodden lillies.	2,508.00	1,700.00	68
Chesham Town Council	Chesham, Bucks	Meades Water Garden - restoration of chalk stream habitat, and improved access and interpretation.	51,000.00	10,000.00	20
Hampden Bottom Farm	Great Missenden, Bucks	Leaf Demonstration Farm Leaflet - supporting the farmer to raise public awareness of farming and food, and promote environmentally friendly farming	1,500.00	500.00	33
Piddington & Wheeler End Parsih Council	Wheeler End,Bucks	Renovation of wooden war memorial	1,627.00	500.00	31
Woodland Trust	Common Wood, Hazelmere, Bucks	Tree for All -environmental education and tree planting with school children (400) and scouts.	7,430.00	3,000.00	40
BCNP wildlife trust	Luton/Dunst able, Beds	Blows Down Community Challenge - new fencing/water supply to enable improved grazing regime on this urban fringe chalk grassland SSSI, alongside community action to engage more positively with local people in the management of the reserve.	25,718.00	5,000.00	19
A J Walker (farm) Ltd	Bledlow, Bucks	Field Classroom and education facilities through conversion of farm building.	11,212.00	4,050.00	36

Sustainable Development Fund Projects

Applicant	Location	Project	Total Value £	Allocation £	Grant as % of project value
FWAG	Bucks & Oxon	Managing Set aside - workshop and technical information sheets for farmers on management of set aside for biodiversity	1,800.00	1,345.00	75
The British Horse Society	Beds	Bedfordshire and The Chilterns on Horseback - a guide for visitors and locals	6,680.00	1,200.00	18
National Trust	Oxon	Watlington Hill -Access for all track improvements	15,225.00	5,500.00	36
Herts & Middlesex WT	Herts	Restoring Chalk Grasslands for Wildflowers, Butterflies and People - Aldbury Nowers and Alpine Meadow	44,050.00	8,375.00	19
Tring Environmental Forum	Herts	Tring's Own Apple Fayre - activities and events to celebrate Apple Day	3,500.00	500.00	14
Chilterns Open Air Musuem	Bucks	Threshing Machine Restoration	4,916.00	1,680.50	34
Hughenden District Guides	Bucks	Camping equipment	2,757.00	785.00	28
Penn Street School Field Hedge	Bucks	Penn Street School Field Hedge -removal of overgrown sycamores and planting new hedge	4,110.00	2,500.00	61
Chiltern Society	Ewelme, Oxon	Ewelme Watercress Beds LNR display equipment for interpretative materials on the heritage and biodiversity of the site.	1,425.00	1,031.00	72
The YHA	AONB -wide	Chilterns Choices - research to identify potential location/s for a new Youth Hostel in the Chilterns.	10,000.00	5,000.00	50
The Faith Works Trust	Herts	The Cactus Project - education materials on water resource issues (Key stage 2)	13,300.00	1,200.00	9
Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council	Oxon	Hedgelaying at Carling Orchard	1,170.00	878.00	75
Chris Howell	Bucks	Chartridge Village Pond restoration project	7,804.00	4,700.00	60
Zoological Society of London	Beds	Wild about Woods at Whipsnade - new interpretation displays on native woodland species	3,027.00	1,500.00	50
Little Gaddesden Parish Council	Herts	Playing Field Path Project - village facility reducing traffic and encouraging walking	4,450.00	2,225.00	50
Chilterns Open Air Musuem	Bucks	1940s Farm Clothes	1,753.00	1,003.00	57

Sustainable Development Fund Projects

Applicant	Location	Project	Total Value £	Allocation £	Grant as % of project value
Chilterns Open Air Musuem	Bucks	Prefab Oral History	456.00	356.00	78
Risborough Area Community Action	Bucks	Putting Princes Risborough back on the map - visitor information boards to promote use of the town's facilities, walking cycling routes and places to visit.	37,100.00	5,000.00	13
Chiltern Society	Oxon	Path Maintenance Volunteers - Equipment Purchase (pole pruner and hedge cutter)	1,793.00	503.00	28
		TOTAL		76,593.50	

Hedgerow Survey Report

Author: Tracy Adams Farming and Land Use Officer
Simon Mortimer CCB Member

Summary: During the summer/autumn of 2006, a hedgerow condition survey was carried out using grant aid from DEFRA. Preliminary results and conclusions are presented in this report. In general the hedgerows surveyed were in good condition. The complementary land use survey suggested that hedges were not in such condition. The disparity is being investigated

Background

1. In June 2006, the Board was awarded a grant of £4,955 by Defra to carry out a hedgerow survey across the AONB. The aim of the survey was to gather information on hedgerow characteristics and condition. This survey was complementary to the Land Use Survey on which a report was given at the last Board meeting.
2. The fieldwork was carried out between August and October by field surveyors. They collected the following information for hedgerow:
 - Length, width and height of each section
 - Continuity of hedgerows
 - Adjacent land use
 - Number of connecting hedgerows
 - Associated features (i.e. fence, bank, verge, ditch)
 - Hedgerow management (trimmed, untrimmed, tall, laid)
 - Number and identity of woody species
 - Number and species of hedgerow trees.
 - Nutrient enrichment indicators (dock, cleaver, nettle)
 - Species in the associated ground flora
4. Landowner permission was required for all hedges included in the survey.

Initial Findings

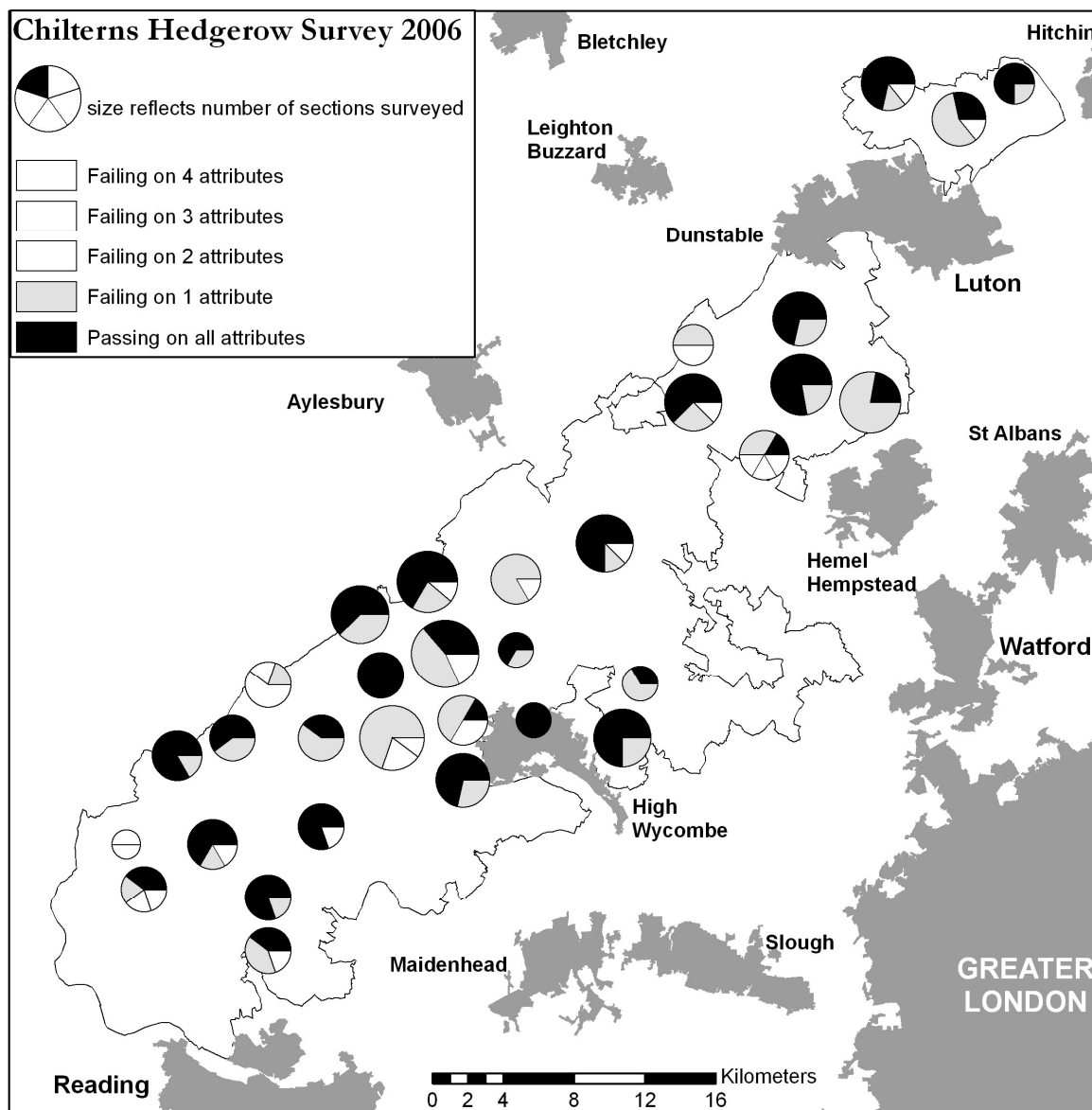
5. One hundred and ninety seven hedgerow sections were surveyed in 33 one kilometre squares. One outcome of the survey was an assessment of hedgerow condition using five attributes. Table 1 below shows the number and percentage of hedgerow sections reaching favourable condition against each attribute

Table 1

Attribute	Definition of favourable condition	Conservation Issue	Sections achieving this attribute	
			By number	%
Size	Cross-sectional area of at least 3m ² , and Hedge at least 1m high x 1.5m wide	Loss of shelter for fauna and in particular, unsuitable nesting habitat for most birds.	177	90%
Integrity/ Continuity	Less than 10% gaps and gaps not exceeding 5m wide	Reduction in habitat continuity.	168	85%
Height of base of canopy	Average height of lowest leafy growth no more than 0.5m from the ground.	Gaps at the base of the hedgerow mean that shelter for invertebrates, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles is lost.	153	78%
Width of undisturbed ground and herbaceous vegetation cover	At least 2m undisturbed ground from centre of hedgerow to edge of ploughed or cultivated land, and At least 1m perennial herbaceous vegetation cover from centre of hedgerow to disturbed bare ground or cultivated crops.	Relates to management close to the hedgerow which is likely to damage woody species, e.g. by harming their roots. Herbaceous vegetation is an important part of the hedgerow habitat as many animals rely on it for shelter, foraging and nesting.	154	78%
Recently introduced, non-native shrubs	Less than 10% cover of recently introduced species in the hedgerow woody component.	Can be seriously detrimental to the structure, diversity and ecological value of a hedgerow.	195	99%

7. 100 sections (51%) passed all condition assessment criteria (5 attributes) and can therefore be said to be in good condition.

- 68 (35%) failed on only one out of 5 attributes
- 19 (10%) failed on 2 out of 5 attributes
- 8 (4%) failed on 3 out of 5 attributes
- 2 (1%) failed on 4 out of 5 attributes



8. Reasons for failure

1. The most common reason for failure was that the base the hedge was thin and leggy. Reasons for this could be stock grazing or that the hedge has been allowed to grow tall.
2. The second most common reason (almost equal numbers of hedges) was that there was no strip of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation next to the hedge – possibly due to farmers cultivating too close to the hedge, or spraying herbicide too close.
1. The third most common reason for failure was ‘gappiness’ – i.e. neglect making the hedge not stock proof (maybe gaps filled with fences). Gappiness can be caused by livestock but also over management where annual flailing eventually causes a number of plants along the

hedge to die. Over management will also be responsible for short narrow hedgerows which also fail the condition criteria.

2. The fourth most common reason was hedge size (too short, or too narrow, or both).
9. There is anecdotal evidence not recorded in this survey that road side hedges are being allowed to grow tall. This changes the characteristics of the hedge and restricts views from the road over adjacent countryside.

Conclusions

10. The fact that half the hedges surveyed (51%) passed all 5 attributes in Defra's condition assessment is encouraging. However this result has to be treated with a degree of caution as the sample selection may exhibit bias. It was a condition of DEFRA that all landowners gave consent for the survey work - no hedges were surveyed from public rights of way without the landowners consent. Consequently, the majority of landowners contacted were known to the Board and it is likely that many of them carry out sympathetic land management already. Inevitably some parts of the AONB were not surveyed as intensively as might have been hoped for.
11. Non-agricultural holdings were under-represented in the survey, and it may be that hedges on such holdings are at particular risk of degradation in future years. This is an area where further research is needed, including continuing the work of building the Board's contacts with non-traditional landowners, and awareness - raising about the importance of good hedge management.
12. It is unclear why so many sections were found to have disturbed ground next to the hedge. One contributory factor may be that the requirements farmers have to adhere to in order to receive their Single Farm Payments (agricultural subsidy) are less exacting in this regard than the criteria (provided by Defra) used for this survey.
13. Over the few years it is likely that there will be benefits to hedge condition through the support provided by the Environmental Stewardship Schemes – in particular the Entry Level Scheme. Under the Entry Level Scheme (ELS) farmers can readily receive support for managing their hedgerows sympathetically.
14. Up until December 2006 there were 190 ELS agreements within the AONB. Hedgerow options are very popular with farmers as many were already carrying out such management before introduction of the ELS. However, we do not have details of which ELS options have been chosen and their location as these are not mapped by NE.
15. ELS does not provide any capital payments for coppicing, laying or planting. These are covered in Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) along with another HLS option 'Maintenance of hedgerows of very high environmental value' (£27/100m). This includes hedges supporting target species of farmland

birds, insects or mammals, or which make a local landscape character and/or historically important boundaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:

- 1. Develops an action programme to improve the condition of hedges.**
- 2. Continues to encourage farmers to take up hedgerow management options within Stewardship schemes.**
- 3. Continues to seek to engage with non-farming landowners to encourage sensitive management of hedges.**
- 4. Investigates whether local groups could be involved in future surveys.**
- 5. Incorporates the hedgerow survey within the land use survey.**

Proposal to Create a Chilterns Land Management Fund

Authors: Dr. Simon Mortimer Board Member
Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: It is proposed that the Board creates a land management fund of up to £30,000, drawn from reserves, to support land management which contributes directly to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape.

Purpose of Paper: To seek Board support for the creation of a Chilterns Land Management Fund

Background

1. Many of the features considered to be characteristic of the Chilterns were created by viable economic farming and forestry such as chalk downland, hedgerows, beech woodland and farm ponds. They have all long since ceased to form part of a commercial enterprise and their management has increasingly relied on public grants, ownership by public and voluntary bodies and cross subsidy by private owners from the profitable parts of their business.
2. The public sector support has primarily been given in the form of Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS) grants operated by Natural England, Woodland Management and Planting Grants offered by the Forestry Commission and Wildlife Enhancement Scheme grants for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, operated by Natural England. Those grants are under financial pressure and can no longer be expected to cover as significant an area of land as might have been hoped for when they were introduced.
3. The exception is the Entry Level Scheme of the ESS but that only provides a basic grant to encourage good management and does not provide financial support for special measures. As previously reported to the Board the funds available for the Higher Level Scheme are severely constrained and it is unlikely that even 0.5% of the Chilterns farmland will newly qualify each year.
4. The grant schemes operate a selection process often based, for example, on a range of features or on achievement of a series of management objectives which tends to favour larger areas.
5. It is therefore proposed that the Board creates a fund to support small scale but high impact land management. Applicants would have to demonstrate how it helps conserve and enhance the Chilterns AONB and why they are not able to qualify for other grant schemes or why they are not appropriate. Such projects have occasionally been supported by the Sustainable Development Fund, but that scheme is over subscribed and the Land Management Scheme would enable the SDF to target resources to other types of project as discussed in Item 9.

6. The fund would have a total of up to £30,000 to award in grants. The scheme should operate in a flexible way in order to encourage applicants and to achieve the maximum overall benefit to the landscape. Preference would be given to supporting land management rather than preparation of plans, surveys etc.
7. In order to support a number of schemes the individual grants are unlikely to exceed £2,000 per site. As with the SDF grant, awards would not normally exceed 50% of the costs, but grant aid may be up to 75% for small scale community based projects. Consideration would also be given to accepting volunteer time or contributions in kind as matched funding. Applicants would have to undertake to maintain the site to the Board's satisfaction for a period of at least five years.
8. A pre-condition is that an appropriate management plan is drawn up for the site. In exceptional circumstances the grant could be used to seek expert technical advice if it is included in a proposal for active subsequent management. The grant would not be paid if there was no actual follow up action.
9. The scheme would be managed by the Board's staff. Up to 5% of the fund may need to be used to secure technical advice on applications. Where the scheme is contentious for any reason it may be referred to the SDF Panel for a decision. The decision to refer the application would rest with the Chief Officer.
10. Any proposal would be assessed against:
 - The AONB Management Plan
 - Biodiversity Action Plans
 - Landscape Character Assessments
 - Historic Landscape Characterisation
11. All management would have to accord with good practice, as promoted for example by Natural England and the Forestry Commission.
12. This proposal has been discussed with Natural England which is supportive. The Board has already applied for grant aid to Natural England to promote the management of Chalk Grassland, Common land, Chalk Streams and Small Woodlands (under 20 ha.). In most cases the funds, if approved, can be used to support land management but they will also need to be used for surveys, promotion, events and training.
13. The funds for the Land Management Scheme would be limited and, at this stage, should not be considered as an annual grant scheme. Ideally the scheme should be incorporated within the Board's overall annual grant application to Natural England. They have stated they do not have any funds available this forthcoming financial year to support such a scheme. The first few months of the land management scheme should be considered as a demonstration project to support a bid to NE for 2008-09. It is also hoped that

government funding for the Environmental Stewardship Schemes, especially the Higher Level Scheme, will improve thus supporting more land management than at current rates.

14. Whilst the scheme should be flexible and all type of land management scheme proposals be considered, the following type of proposals should be favoured:
 - Hedgerow restoration, enhancement and new planting.
 - Planting of hedgerow trees.
 - Planting of in-field trees.
 - Linking woodlands of known landscape and biodiversity value.
 - Conservation of landscape features (e.g. avenues).
 - Grassland management for conservation.
 - Pond management.
 - Scrub management and removal.
 - Management of small woodlands.
 - Management of sites important for the historic environment.
15. Grant will be directed to one off or capital works rather than recurring annual management and maintenance. Applications will be favoured from private landowners, community and voluntary groups. It is also suggested that applications will be favoured from locally based voluntary groups rather than national organisations.
16. It is not proposed to set specific targets for the Fund. At this stage the fund should be used in a flexible way to support the type of land management identified in paragraph 14. All proposals must be assessed and help to deliver the AONB Management Plan and other priorities identified, for example, in biodiversity action plans.
17. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme was introduced by the Countryside Commission in the early 1990s to promote these forms of land management to complement those supported via the agri-environment schemes. As the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme has been introduced the Countryside Stewardship Scheme will be phased out by 2013. These members have been undertaking sensitive land management for many years but are unlikely to gain entry to the Higher Level Scheme. These are the type of land owners the new scheme should appeal to for one-off works.
18. The possibility of creating this fund has been discussed with a number of organisations. The advice from them is that there is a need for such a scheme to encourage the management of those sites unlikely to be successfully entered to the Higher Level Scheme or Forestry Commission Grant Schemes.
19. The Board is able to afford to allocate £30,000 from reserves, which are neither restricted nor already earmarked for other projects, which are likely to be in the order of £260,000 as at 1 April 2007.

20. The future of the fund would be considered by the Board later in the year and reviewed in light of early progress, the likelihood of future funding from Natural England and enhanced provision of grant aid via the Environmental Stewardship scheme.

Recommendations

1. **A Chilterns Land Management Fund is created with an initial fund of £30,000.**
2. **Progress reports are presented to each Board meeting in 2007-08.**
3. **Authority to award grants of up to £2,000 is given to the Chief Officer.**
4. **The Chief Officer be authorised to refer what may regarded as contentious cases to the Sustainable Development Panel.**

Report from the Climate Change Group

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: A sub group has been formed to consider the implications of climate change in the Chilterns. It has considered the potential impacts on main landscape types and undertaken an initial assessment of renewable energy technologies and potential impacts on the Chilterns. This approach needs to be refined and an action plan devised for both the AONB and Conservation Board.

Purpose of Report: To report the progress of the Climate Change Group and to seek feedback on its initial assessment.

Background

1. The Climate Change Group has prepared a table based on potential impacts on the landscape types of the Chilterns with an assessment of the possible mitigation and adaptation options. (Appendix 1).
2. In summary, based on current available evidence, changes are likely to be gradual and complicated by other factors.
3. The outputs from this work should be:
 - A climate change action plan for the Chilterns AONB.
 - A climate change action plan for the Conservation Board.
 - A reference work to be used in the review of the AONB Management Plan.
 - A policy statement on renewable energy options.
4. The group has also undertaken an initial assessment of renewable energy options and their potential impact on the Chilterns (appendix 2). In general terms solar and ground source heat pumps have the least landscape impact whilst wood fuel offers the most direct benefits as it will encourage the management of woodlands. The Board has already supported a number of events to promote the use of wood fuel.
5. The appearance of wind turbines, particularly along the scarp ridge would be the most contentious renewable energy scenario. In general large scale off-shore wind farms seem to be preferred by the industry as gaining planning consent inland in the south of England is difficult. There also doubts about the viability of small scale wind turbines. It would almost certainly be unacceptable to the planning authorities to construct large turbines in such a prominent location at the ridge. It is more likely that there will be applications for medium sized turbines (12- 20 metres) in other locations. The Board could usefully develop a special policy as there may be a few locations where that scale of turbine could be sited without being unacceptably intrusive.

6. A major factor affecting the possible take up rate and therefore impact of renewable energy technologies is the price of fuels and the availability of grant aid. The solar industry is primarily based on the domestic market and is driven by lifestyle choices and grant schemes. The economics rarely compare well with conventional fuel systems and thus the take up will not yet be driven by the market. The government grants have been changed significantly and in the view of many are under funded thus slowing the industry.
7. Farmers have more choices of biofuel and biomass crops with miscanthus (elephant grass) most often referred to. This can grow up to 12 feet and appear more like a woodland coppice than an agricultural crop. It will probably begin to make an appearance in the Chilterns but probably not on a large scale. The impacts will tend to be localised. Rape seed oil is now a familiar crop and may be grown on an even more extensive basis in future.

Recommendations

1. **Board members provide feedback on the initial assessment of climate change impacts on the AONB.**
2. **The Board members provide feedback on the initial assessment of the impacts of renewable energy technologies.**

Chilterns Conservation Board - March 2007

Initial assessment of potential impacts of climate change on key characteristics of the Chilterns.

Special Features and Qualities of Chilterns AONB	Relevant Aspects of Climate Change	Nature of Impact	Timescale		Response		CCB role
			Short Term	Long Term	Mitigation	Adaptation	
Chalk Grassland	Hotter and drier summers Earlier spring	<p>Changed growing seasons</p> <p>Disrupted ecological relationships.</p> <p>Changed species composition.</p> <p>New species of invertebrate</p> <p>Grass Fires</p> <p>Year round breeding of rabbits – increased grazing pressure</p>	Low	Medium		<p>Provision of water supply to enable grazing.</p> <p>Link sites to facilitate species migration</p>	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>Support for grazing related infrastructure</p> <p>Support for site planning and management</p>
Woodland	<p>Earlier spring</p> <p>Hotter and drier summers</p> <p>Fewer frosts (timing)</p> <p>More frequent gales</p>	<p>Drought stress/soil moisture deficits</p> <p>Windblow</p> <p>Reduced growth rates/crown and root die back</p> <p>More disease/pests</p>	Low	High	Woodland creation	<p>More careful species selection.</p> <p>Promote demand for wood fuel</p> <p>Link woods to</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Monitoring</p> <p>Promote and assist with preparation of long term management plans</p>

		<p>Change in species composition - Reduced suitability for beech in particular</p> <p>Changing associated flora and fauna – both losses and gains</p> <p>Scrub fires</p>				facilitate species migration.	
Chalk Streams	<p>Variable rainfall patterns but probably wetter winters and drier summers</p> <p>Hotter Summers</p>	<p>Erratic Flows.</p> <p>More frequent and unpredictable periods of drought and flood.</p> <p>Longer growing seasons may reduce percolation to the aquifer</p>	High	High		<p>Reduce demand for water</p> <p>Reduce Abstraction</p> <p>Protect Stream Bed</p> <p>Flood Management</p>	<p>Information</p> <p>Lobby for reduced abstraction and demand reduction</p> <p>Help protect channel in times of prolonged drought</p> <p>Promote flood prevention plans</p> <p>Promotion of design of development to reduce run off</p>
Farmland	<p>Hotter Summers</p> <p>Milder Winters</p> <p>Fewer Frosts</p>	<p>Longer growing seasons</p> <p>Variable and unpredictable yields</p> <p>Opportunities to grow new crops including biofuels</p> <p>New pest species and greater abundance of pests</p> <p>Summer drought stress for</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>Reduce use of fertilisers</p> <p>Conserve soil organic matter.</p> <p>Reduce food miles – seek local markets</p> <p>Grow biofuels</p>	<p>New crops</p> <p>Avoid crops requiring irrigation</p> <p>New production methods</p> <p>Different</p>	<p>Monitor changes</p> <p>Support promotion of local markets and procurement policies</p> <p>Provide guidance of growing biofuels</p>

		<p>crops Summer drought stress for livestock</p> <p>Possibility of more insects, which may support more farmland birds.</p> <p>Demand for water to irrigate crops</p> <p>Hedgerows and field trees subject to drought stress.</p> <p>Crop fires (mostly accidental)</p>				breeds of livestock	
Wet Grassland	Hotter and drier summers	<p>Soil moisture deficits</p> <p>Changed species composition</p> <p>Changed hydrology</p>	Medium	High		Safeguard sites in times of drought	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>Advice</p> <p>Site identification</p>
Acid Grassland/Heath	Hotter and drier summers	<p>Associated species may benefit e.g. reptiles</p> <p>Heath fires</p>	Low	Medium		Encourage spread of heath	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>Advice</p> <p>Site identification</p>
Built Environment	<p>Hotter summers</p> <p>Heavy rain</p> <p>Milder winters</p>	<p>Design of new housing needs to reflect climate change.</p> <p>Installation of solar panels and wind turbines</p>	Low	Medium	<p>Enhanced energy efficiency</p> <p>Reduced energy</p>	<p>Change design of houses/all buildings</p> <p>Bigger rainwater</p>	<p>Guidance</p> <p>Lobbying for higher building standards.</p> <p>Promotion of energy efficiency</p>

		<p>Increase in timber boring insects.</p> <p>Drainage capacity/flooding</p> <p>Demand for air conditioning</p> <p>Flooding of roads</p> <p>More pollution events from run off.</p> <p>Road verge fires</p> <p>Storm drains overwhelmed resulting in pollution incidents</p>			<p>demand</p> <p>Installation of renewable energy capacity</p> <p>Use of building materials with low embodied energy.</p> <p>Use of permeable surfacing to reduce run off</p>	<p>goods</p> <p>Rainwater storage</p> <p>Re-design gardens to use less water.</p> <p>Porous surfaces</p> <p>Use of vegetation provide shade/cooling</p> <p>Cutting of road verge vegetation to reduce fire risk</p> <p>Storm drains with bigger capacity</p>	<p>Promotion of local building materials</p> <p>Promotion of water conservation</p>
Historic Environment	<p>Hotter Summers</p> <p>Heavy rain</p>	<p>Erosion of soil covering</p> <p>Windblown trees damaging sites</p>	Low	Low		<p>May need to import soils and divert recreation uses</p>	
Enjoyment and Understanding	<p>Hotter Summers</p> <p>Milder winters</p>	<p>Hot summer weather will deter visits.</p> <p>Mild winter weather may lead to increased number of visits.</p>	High	High	<p>Promote visits without use of car – close to home.</p>	<p>Give greater weight to weather dependency at planning stage of events, e.g.</p>	

		Some sites and routes will be damaged –water logging in winter and erosion in summer				avoid hottest months, provide under cover areas Hold events in and visits to shady woodland	
Economy	Seasonal variability Hotter summers Milder winters	Opportunity to introduce new crops and livestock breeds Expanded demand for wood and other biofuels. More visitors in winter Promotion of local food Promotion of local building materials. Trend for more UK based holidays			Promote local produce. Develop tourism profile as an alternative to long distance destinations Develop wood fuel market Develop markets for new crops/breeds	Give greater weight to uncertainty of weather in business activity	Promotion of the issues

Notes

- (1) Summer rainfall may be as high higher than at present but its effectiveness will be reduced. This will happen because more rainfall will fall in shorter period and run off without recharging the aquifer or even affecting soil moisture deficits.

Renewable Energy	Potential	Impacts	Conclusion
Solar	Medium	Installation of panels on houses and other buildings	To be promoted, with need for control in conservation areas and on listed buildings. Guidance needed to avoid visual intrusion
Wind	Medium	Little potential for large-scale generation. Impact of large turbines in prominent locations would not be acceptable	Small scale turbines may be appropriate in specific locations. Guidance to be prepared
Wood	High – for use of standing timber Low – for fast grown crops. Priority is to use wood fuel to generate heat not electricity	Less than 15% of the sustainable yield from existing woodland is being harvested. Larger areas of woodland would be thinned and felled than recently.	Significant scope to promote timber production from existing woods for wood fuel. Limited scope for short rotation coppice or other fast growing species - soils are not generally suitable
Biofuel	Medium	Large scale growing of miscanthus (Elephant Grass) would not be appropriate and is unlikely as soils are generally not suitable. May be more acceptable where it is grown in large fields currently used for arable crops.	Unlikely to have a major impact but growing of miscanthus needs to be monitored. Guidance should be produced
Hydro	Low	A few sites along the Thames may be suitable. Need to avoid disruption to hydrology and landscape intrusion of new infrastructure. The variable flow along all other streams suggests potential is low.	Could be supported in a small number of locations subject to minimised damaging environmental impacts.

Waste Incineration	Low	Incinerator, storage and residues, transfer of waste	Likely to be few, if any, acceptable sites within the AONB
Ground Source Heat	Medium	None	Can be promoted especially for properties with large gardens and fields

Training for Board Members

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: It is proposed to organise a series of training sessions and field visits on specific topics for interested Board members. The annual cost is estimated to be in the order of £1,200.

Purpose of Report: To support provision of additional technical training for Board members.

Background

1. Currently the provision of training for Board members includes;
 - Occasional post Board meeting sessions.
 - Two Board tours each year and walking tour.
 - Occasional workshops.
2. In general, awareness raising is based on Board papers, presentations at Board meetings and member involvement in task groups.
3. This format doesn't provide many opportunities for more in depth coverage of a specific topic. It is, therefore, proposed to introduce a series of training sessions, many involving field visits, on specific subjects such as:
 1. Vernacular buildings
 2. Woodland management
 3. Farming for Wildlife
 4. Access provision for the less mobile
 5. Field archaeology
 6. Ecology of chalk streams
 7. Working with minority groups
 8. The urban fringe
4. The programme is intended primarily to provide members with technical knowledge of the subject and to enhance awareness of the geography of the Chilterns. They also provide scope to develop themes such as ways of working and exploration of new subjects and issues.
5. The main problem to overcome with any training programme is lack of Board member time. It is proposed to:
 1. Introduce a post Board meeting training session in the afternoon of Board meetings. This is an evolution of the short introduction sessions which have taken place during the last two years.
 2. Hold half day and full day workshops where it is expected that member attendance would be approx 5 - 10. The sessions would be organised and

led by members of staff and members themselves. Colleagues from other organisations might be invited as guest tutors. The full day sessions are likely to be partly based in the field.

6. It is estimated this form of training programme will cost approx £1,500 per annum.
7. More effort will be given to highlighting other events in which members may be interested such as the Chalk Streams Forum, Access Conference, Planning Conference and Woodland Forum.

Recommendations

- 1. A series of training sessions are organised for Board members.**
- 2. Members advise on the subjects they would find most useful to learn more about.**

Items for Information

Code of Conduct

DEFRA has been consulting on the introduction of a new code of conduct specifically from AONB conservation Boards. They have had a last minute change of heart and are now consulting DCLG about amending the new code for Local Authorities to suit Conservation Boards

People and Places

The HLF has awarded the Board a grant of £13,000 to develop a project to highlight public awareness of notable residents and visitors of the Chilterns and the place they are associated with. The aim is to encourage more visits by people who may not be regular walkers but have an interest in the social history of the Chilterns. The profiles will be prepared by volunteers (liaison with The Chiltern Society is underway) and will be posted on the web site. The target is to have 100 profiles by November 2008. Any Board member wishing to research a profile should contact Claire.

Household Newsletter

The first household newsletter has been printed and is in the process of being distributed by the Royal Mail to over 30,000 households in the AONB. The newsletter was sponsored by the Buckinghamshire Building Society which provided funding of £3,500 (85 % of the total cost).

Woodland Web Pages

A part of the Forestry Commission funded Woodland Research Programme (due to end on 31st March 2007) the Board has developed a number of interactive web pages (The Woodland Web) to raise awareness of how local woodlands have changed over time and during the seasons. The total cost will be £10,000. The pages are designed not to date and will be a major part of the education section of the web site for many years.

NAAONB Conference

The National Association of AONBs will be holding its annual conference in Winchester (3 – 5 July). In recent years the Board has booked 5 residential places for staff and members (average cost is £250 per head). This year it will be possible to book a number of day places. Let Steve know if you would like to attend.

Annette Venters (Access Officer) - maternity leave

Annette will be on maternity leave from June until early 2008. It is not proposed to fill her post during this time, which will mean re-allocating the workload for access and recreation projects and generally reducing commitments until Annette returns to work.

Summer Events Programme

The Board has booked space at the following events. Board members help is much appreciated for all or part of a day. If you would like to volunteer please contact Cathy.

Date	Event
Sat 26 th May	Herts Show
Sun 27 th May	Herts Show
Sun 27 th May	Tring Canal Festival
Mon 28 th May	Tring Canal Festival
Thurs 31 st May	River and Rowing Museum, Henley, Fun Day
Sun 8 th July	Pann Mill (High Wycombe) Open Day
Sat 21 st July	Chiltern Show, Gt.Missenden
Sun 22 nd July	Chiltern Show, Gt.Missenden
Sun 22 nd July	Archaeology / History Fun Day Cholesbury
Sun 29 th July	Chilterns Countryside Festival, Ashridge
Fri 3 rd August	Fun Day Hughenden Manor
Thurs 30 th August	Bucks Show
Sat 8 th September	Henley Show
Thurs 20 th September	Thame Show

AONB Management Plan

Further guidance on the review process is expected to be published by Natural England shortly.

All task and project groups have begun their review of relevant sections of the existing plan.

It is proposed that the next Board meeting (19th June) will be a full day meeting with the afternoon dedicated to the plan review.