



**Agenda for Board Meeting to be held at 10.00 am on
Tuesday 19 June 2007 at
Mid-Beds District Council, Chicksands, Bedfordshire**

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 28 March 2007, to be confirmed.	10.02	1 - 10
4. Matters Arising	10.07	
5. Public Question Time	10.12	
6. Approval of Statement of Accounts for 2005-06	10.15	11 - 14
7. Approval of Statement of Accounts for 2006-07	10.25	15 - 22
8. Approval of Statement of Internal Control	10.40	23 - 60
9. Appointment to Executive Committee	10.50	61 - 62
10. Appointment to Planning Committee	11.00	63 - 64
11. Report from the Executive Committee	11.10	65 - 68
12. Report from the Planning Committee	11.20	69 - 74
13. Report on the Planning White Paper	11.35	75 - 84
14. Revised Projects Programme 2007-08	11.50	85 - 88
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17. Assessment of Climate Change	12.40	115 - 126
18. Introduction to Review of AONB Management Plan	12.50	127 - 170

19. Date of Next and Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Wednesday 10 October at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Chesham Town Hall, Chesham.

Future meetings:
10.30am on 22 January 2008

LUNCH

20. AONB Management Plan Review

1.30

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 CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE THE CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 MARCH 2007 IN ST. KATHARINE'S, PARMOOR, FRIETH, HENLEY ON THAMES, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 1.12 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Member

Appointing Body

Appointed by Local Authorities

Cllr Chris Brearley	Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Roger Emmett	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Brian Golby	Mid Beds District Council
Cllr Rhys Goodwin	Bedfordshire County Council
Cllr Susan Howkins	Chiltern District Council
Cllr Marion Mustoe	South Beds District Council
Cllr Richard Pushman	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Chris Richards	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr David Nimmo Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Bill Storey	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Jules Thomson	South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Alan Walters	South Bucks District Council

Appointed by Secretary of State

Sir John Johnson (Chairman)	Secretary of State
Mike Fox	Secretary of State
Bettina Kirkham	Secretary of State
Kevin Mayne	Secretary of State
Dr Simon Mortimer	Secretary of State
John Willson	Secretary of State

Elected by Parish Councils

John Griffin	Oxfordshire
Margaret Jarrett	Hertfordshire
Shirley Judges	Buckinghamshire
Barbara Wallis	Buckinghamshire
Julia Wells	Oxfordshire

Officers

Tracy Adams	CCB Farming & Land Use Officer
Kath Daly	CCB Countryside Officer
Steve Rodrick	CCB Chief Officer
Chris Smith	CCB Finance Officer
Maureen Keyworth	BCC and Clerk to the Board

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies were received from Cllr David Barnard, Cllr Andy Strange, Dr Mike Render, and Cllr Mary Goldsmith.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 January 2007 were confirmed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present.

6. APPOINTMENTS TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND PANEL

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to appoint members to the Sustainable Development Fund Panel.

The Board noted that Mike Render and Jules Thomson were standing down and the Chairman thanked them for their work on the SDF.

Those remaining members expressed a wish to continue on the Panel.

The Board discussed whether changes were needed in the set up of the Panel and agreed that it should remain as it is for the time being.

RESOLVED

The Board AGREED to appoint five members to the Sustainable Development Fund Panel for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008, as follows:

2 Local Authority appointed members

**Brian Golby
Alan Walters**

2 Secretary of State appointed members

**Mike Fox
John Willson**

1 Parish Council appointed member

Julia Wells

7. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members received the report of the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to report decisions made under delegated authority.

The Chairman introduced Chris Smith, who would take over from Mike Collier as Finance Officer to the Board on 1 April 2007.

The Chief Officer reported that the financial position to the end of January was satisfactory and it was anticipated there would be a small surplus on the core budget at the year end.

The core grant payments had been received from Natural England but the Board was yet to receive the outstanding project grant claim. (*Addendum: subsequent to the meeting the grant claim was received.*)

The Audit Commission had not yet audited the accounts for 2005/06.

It was uncertain what the changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme would mean for the Board. The triennial re-valuation of the LGPF was due later this year.

Members were presented with a draft Accord between the Board and the Chiltern Woodland Project, outlining how joint working will take place and welcoming this alliance.

In discussion some members expressed concern that this Accord may set a precedent for other Charities to approach the Board for similar agreements. The Chief Officer commented that any other charity that wants to work with the Board could enter into an Accord to define the relationship as appropriate.

Members noted that this was not an agreement but an accord which sets out the relationship between the two parties in a clear way.

Confusion arose regarding the wording in one of the points which referred to the employment of a manager. This referred to the Chiltern Woodland Project Manager and was not a new post. It was agreed to refine the wording and remove this reference.

RESOLVED:

1. The Board **NOTED** the items considered at the Executive Committee
2. The Board **ENDORSED** the Accord with the Chiltern Woodland Project.

8. REPORT FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members received the report of Barbara Wallis, Board member and Colin White, Planning Officer, the purpose of which was to bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee and decisions taken under delegated powers.

The Roofing Note was due to be published on 29 March, but there were still problems regarding its adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. Advice was being sought from Government but to date no response had been received.

It had been agreed that the Annual Planning Forum, organised for officers, would be

cancelled due to declining attendance and the Committee was looking at other ways to address issues. It was considered important to continue with education for planning officers and councillors. Members noted that the Planning Officer did training sessions for undergraduates at Oxford Brookes and Reading. Officers already in post do have training via the Planning Institute but currently there was no link into this. Information regarding AONB is sent to planning officers. It was considered that lunch time seminars were the best way of imparting information. The Planning Officer had given a number of lunch time seminars. Seminars are also offered to local authority members and once the District Council elections have taken place they will be offered again.

It was suggested that the Board produce and distribute a summary of planning issues for Parish Councils.

Discussion took place on the role of members and officers in decision making, as well as the fact that, nationally, there was a shortage of Planning Officers. Those in post may not be aware of the local geography, and it took time for officers to get a feel for their areas.

The AONB Management Plan Review was underway and would be a standing item on the agenda of the Planning Committee.

Two DCLG consultations were discussed at Planning Committee, both of which had positive messages regarding the need to provide more forms of renewable energy generation in major developments. However, there was no mention of dealing with existing dwellings with regard to energy efficiency and water usage, and the need to consider more sustainable building materials.

The Secretary of State's proposed changes to the East of England Plan had also been discussed and concerns were raised with regard to car parking provision for new rural developments with little access to public transport. Adherence to the standards set was not working in rural areas where car ownership is generally higher.

Use of sustainable building materials needed to be promoted as well as the detrimental effects of using certain building materials, such as concrete.

There was a need to ensure the AONB guidance was used as supplementary planning documents.

Members noted that the Board had been consulted on 163 applications, and made formal representations on 25. Twenty two of the applications have been determined, and 18 were decided in line with the Board's comments.

RESOLVED

The Board NOTED the Report.

9. REPORT FROM THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND PANEL

Members received the Report of the Countryside Officer, the purpose of which was to review the operation of the scheme to date and consider any amendments for 2007-08.

The Board noted that it was expected that Natural England would provide a grant for next year but this had not yet been confirmed.

At its last meeting the Development Fund Panel reviewed the performance of the fund and looked at whether any amendments were needed. It also received a report from Land Use Consultants on a study on how the fund had operated across England in 2005-06. The Panel was surprised at the way the fund went this year with regard to applications. There had been a slower start than expected. There was no shortage of applications but the issue was timing, with funding still being allocated in January 2007.

The Board noted that 43% of the total grant had gone to nature conservation projects, 32% to awareness & enjoyment projects and 21% to access projects. It was noted that only a small percentage of grants had been given for Historic Environment and Built Heritage. 81% of the grant had gone either to local community or registered charities, which was higher than the national figures. The majority of grants were awarded to charitable and community groups.

One issue arising from the consultant's report was that urban areas surrounding the AONB did not appear to have been targeted for sustainable funding. As a way of encouraging this, it had been suggested that 5% be set aside for such projects.

The SDF Grants Advisory Panel proposed adjustments to the scheme for 2007-08 to include encouragement of projects dealing with renewable energy generation; marketing or processing of local products; sustainable tourism and support/development of new partnerships. It also recommended encouragement of applications from businesses, and groups/communities not traditionally involved in the conservation of the AONB. Members suggested that urban areas should also be included as a separate heading.

The Panel also proposed that the guidelines be amended to encourage projects that deliver on the ground as opposed to feasibility studies. A member suggested that this should not be included in the guidelines because feasibility studies ensure projects are properly carried out. However, it was considered that because of the limited funding a special case would need to be made for feasibility studies.

Members noted that officers did support applicants and provide guidance on completing application forms. An example of a completed form will be put on the website.

RESOLVED

- 1. The Board APPROVED the proposed amendments to the operation of the Scheme**
- 2. The Board AGREED to provide feedback on the proposals for promotion of the scheme in 2007-08**

10. HEDGEROW SURVEY REPORT

Members received a report and presentation from Tracy Adams, Farming and Land Use Officer and Dr Simon Mortimer, Board Member.

The Chairman reminded members that there will be a farm visit to Hampden Bottom Farm, near Gt. Missenden, on 9 July where there will be examples of good hedge management under the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

Members agreed that training was needed on hedge management, from farmers to

homeowner and smallholder level. It was also suggested that Parish Councils could be involved in recording information for the survey. A positive response had been received from local groups. The Survey will help provide a baseline for improving hedges and it was hoped this work would continue provided funding was available.

A summary of the report will be available on the website.

It was suggested that the information gathered could be matched to the Historic Landscape Characterisation to see if any of the hedges surveyed were part of old systems which could provide further historical information.

The Chairman suggested that an article on the Hedge Survey should be put in the Chiltern News.

The Board AGREED to

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

11. PROPOSAL TO CREATE A LAND MANAGEMENT FUND

Members received the report of Steve Rodrick, Chief Officer and Dr Simon Mortimer, Board Member, the purpose of which was to seek Board support for the creation of a Chilterns Land Management Fund.

The Report proposed providing funds, to be administered by the Board, for land management work such as nature conservation, landscaping and historic environment. Such work would be different to that done through the Sustainable Development Fund. The Fund would provide money for small projects where it will make a difference to land management. It will have a flexible approach to the needs of small landowners for whom HLS is not an option. The money would be administered in a flexible way by staff members providing small grants for work to influence land management. Any contentious issues would be referred to the SDF Panel.

If this trial proved to be successful, it was agreed that it should form part of a bid to Natural England in future years.

A member expressed reservations for this fund as a sustainable proposal and considered that project grant funding should be in place before committing. The Chief Officer commended the proposal to the Board because the time was right as reflected in the success of the Sustainable Development Fund and the new Stewardship Schemes and on the back of the Land Use and hedgerow survey information. The Management Plan contained projects which this Fund could deliver and any delay could undermine its effectiveness. Another member suggested that the Board did need to be aware of the wider implications of the budget and the recruitment of an Assistant Planning Officer should be high on the agenda.

The Higher Level Scheme will not cover more than half of 1% of the AONB in the coming year, whereas the Fund could cover 15 sites, which was positive. This would

be a significant contribution by the Board.

Members agreed that was an excellent proposal and hoped that some of the sites could demonstrate what the Board considers good practice working.

A member suggested that a board member should also be appointed to look at any proposals and in this connection it was agreed Dr Simon Mortimer should monitor proposals being made, alongside the Chief Officer.

It was also agreed that Commons should be added to the list of proposals that would be considered.

RESOLVED

The Board AGREED that

- 1. A Chilterns Land Management fund be created with an initial fund of £30,000.**
- 2. Progress reports will presented to each Board meeting in 2007-08**
- 3. Authority to award grants of up to £2,000 be given to the Chief Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Land Management Group – Dr Simon Mortimer.**
- 4. The Chief Officer be authorised to refer what may be regarded as contentious cases to the Sustainable Development Panel.**
- 4. A bid for grant aid to support the scheme be submitted to Natural England for 2008/09**

12. REPORT FROM THE CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP

Members received a report and presentation by the Chief Officer, the purpose of which was to report the progress of the Climate Change Group and to seek feedback on its initial assessment.

The Board noted that the table outlining the initial assessment of potential impacts of climate change on key characteristics of the Chilterns, would be converted into Action and Management Plans for the Board.

In discussion of the table, the following was noted

- The need to reduce energy use in existing buildings.
- The Board should be seen to be using and encouraging best practice.
- The possibility that more people will stay in the UK for holidays rather than travel abroad.
- Use of water power across the Thames. The proposed hydro-electric scheme at Goring was discussed, which will provide power for up to 100 households. Romney Weir, near Windsor, was the subject of a planning application and Sonning Mill, near Reading, was already generating power. It was possible that old water mills in the Chilterns could be re-generated.
- The impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on climate change with regard to bio fuels. Members noted there had been a mini reform of the CAP which had come from the energy sector.
- The potential impact on historic features by the increase in the rabbit population and damage incurred due to burrowing; increased production of cereal crops which will lead to more ploughing and could disturb unidentified historical sites.
- Encouraging local industry to use wood as fuel for heating.

RESOLVED:

The Board AGREED to

- 1. Provide feedback on the initial assessment of climate change impacts in the AONB**
- 2. Provide feedback on the initial assessment of the impacts of renewable energy technologies.**

13. TRAINING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

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

It was suggested that training take the form of afternoon sessions following the board meetings and separate sessions, such as field trips. Members were in favour of training sessions following the board meetings. Weekend sessions were suggested but concern was expressed at the amount of staff time which this may entail. However, visits to stalls at shows could form part of training.

In addition to those in the report, the following topics were suggested:

- Farming for Business
- Composting – visits to sites where composting took place. This was discussed in connection with the need to reduce landfill.
- A ‘Who’s Who’ with regard to relationships and contacts to enable increased networking.
- Geographical context for Board meeting venues.
- The urban fringe, i.e. urban areas such as Chiltern Towns.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The Board AGREED that a series of training sessions be organised for Board members.**
- 2. Members AGREED to advise on the subjects they would find most useful to learn more about.**

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. 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

Wednesday 19 September 2007 (Please note change of date)

Tuesday 11 December 2007

15. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Members noted the items presented for information.

An Archaeology and History Day was being held on 22 July at Cholesbury Village Hall from 12.00 to 4.00pm. There will be a full range of exhibitions and activities for all the family. Roelie Reed, who was studying for an Archaeology Certificate has agreed to be the contact officer.

Members noted that Susan Howkins, Chris Brearley and Jules Thomson would not be standing for their respective District Councils and would, therefore, not be eligible to remain on the Board. The Chairman thanked these members for their support and hard work.

16. POST BOARD MEETING TRAINING SESSION - CLIMATE CHANGE

Following the lunch break members received a training session on Climate Change, following on from the report presented by the Chief Officer, under item 12.

CHAIRMAN

Statement of Accounts for 2005-06

Author: Chris Smith, Finance Officer

Summary: The Audit Commission has issued its comment (5th June 2007) on the Annual Return for 2005-06 (submitted 14th Nov 2006) and require a few minor presentational changes.

Purpose of Report: To seek approval for the revised presentation of the 2005-06 accounts and accompanying Statement of Assurance

Background

1. The Accounting and Audit Regulations 2006 required the Board to approve its Statement of Accounts for 2005-06 by 30th June 2006. It did so at its meeting on 16th June 2006. Subsequently the Audit Commission provided forms for an Annual Return which were submitted on November 14th. The Audit Commission was required to have commented on that return by the end of 2006. They have only just done so, sent on 5th June 2007 and require the Board to make presentation changes concerning the treatment of the pension liabilities. It is important to note that the Audit Commission is, in effect approving the Statement of Accounts subject to these changes.
2. The Annual Return form includes a Statement of Assurance which the Board is required to approve. Again this was not available until after the June 2006 Board meeting.

Recommendations

1. **The Board notes the changes to the Annual Return required by the Audit Commission and approves the revisions.**
2. **The Board authorises the Chairman and the Chief Officer to initial changes to the Annual Return (Section 1).**
3. **To approve the Statement of Assurance (Section 2).**

Smaller bodies in England
Annual return
 For the year ended 31 March 2006

The Chilterns Conservation Board

Section 1 – The statement of accounts

In completing the boxes below please explain any significant variances, including any difference between Box 7 and Box 8, on a separate sheet and send this to the external auditor together with a copy of your bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2006. See page 6 and practitioners' guide for further guidance.

	Year ending		Notes and guidance for compilers
	31 March 2005 £	31 March 2006 £	
			Please round all figures to nearest £. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to the body's underlying financial records for the relevant year.
1 Balances brought forward	-	328,816	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the body's financial records. Value must agree to box 7 of previous year.
2 (+) Income from taxation and/or levy	-	-	Total amount of tax and/or levy income received in the year.
3 (+) Total other receipts	569,816	891,969	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less income from taxation and/or levy (line 2). Include any grants received here.
4 (-) Staff Costs	57,981	331,803	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all body employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and related expenditure.
5 (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	-	-	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the body's borrowings (if any).
6 (-) Total other payments	183,019	501,936	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7 (=) Balances carried forward	328,816	387,046	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. (Must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6))
8 Total cash & investments	311,000	541,894	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments as at 31 March – to agree with bank reconciliation.
9 Total fixed assets and long term assets	-	-	The recorded current book value at 31 March of all fixed assets owned by the body and any other long term assets e.g. loans to third parties.
10 Total borrowings	-	-	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

I certify that the statement of accounts contained in this annual return presents fairly the financial position of the body and its income and expenditure, or properly presents receipts and payments, as the case may be, for the year ended 31 March 2006.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer:

Date **20/11/06**

I confirm that these accounts were approved by the body and recorded as minute reference:

Minutes 20060 Item 6

Date **16th June 2006**

Signed by Chair of meeting approving the accounts:

Date : **14.11.06**

Section 2 – Statement of assurance

We acknowledge as the members of **The Chilterns Conservation Board** our responsibility for the preparation of the statement of accounts and for the body's internal controls, and confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the body's statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2006 in section 1, that:

	Agreed – Yes or No*	'Yes' means that the body:
1 We have approved the statement of accounts which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices.	YES	Prepared its statement of accounts in the way prescribed by law.
2 We have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	YES	Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge
3 We have taken all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters or potential non-compliance with laws. Regulations and codes of practice which could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the body to conduct its business or on its finances.	YES	Has only done things that it has the legal power to do and has confirmed to coded of practice and standards in the way it has done so.
4 We have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	YES	Has given all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the body's accounts.
5 We have carried out an assessment of the risks facing the body and taken appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	YES	Considered the financial and other risks it faces in the operation of the body and has dealt with them properly.
6 We have maintained an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the body's accounting records and control systems.	YES	Arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether these meet the needs of the body.
7 We have taken what we consider to be appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	YES	Has taken appropriate action in response to matters rought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8 We have considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year end, have a financial impact on the body and, where appropriate have included them in the statement of accounts.	YES	Disclosed everything it should have about its business during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant

This statement of Assurance is approved by the body and recorded as minute reference

Dated

Signed on behalf of

Signed by: Chair Date

Signed by: Clerk Date

* Please provide explanations to the external auditor in a separate sheet for each 'No' response that has been given; and describe what action is being taken to address the weaknesses identified.

Statement of Accounts for 2006-07

Author: Chris Smith, Finance Officer

Summary: The Board is required to produce accounts that comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as modified by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006. Once approved by the Board these accounts will be subject to external audit and available for public inspection.

The accounts cover the second full year of operation of the Board, from 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007.

The accounts show a net surplus of £19,177 for the year. Restricted and earmarked reserves showed a net increase of £12,197 leaving a net increase in the general reserve of £6,980.

Purpose of Report: To seek Board approval to the 2006-07 Statement of accounts.

Background

1. The Board is required to produce accounts that comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended). The accounts require Board approval before submission for public inspection and audit by the Audit Commission.
2. The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 reduced the reporting requirements for bodies whose gross income or expenditure is below £1million ("smaller relevant bodies"). At £835,000 the Chilterns Conservation Board falls within this limit and so the accounts have been prepared accordingly. Records are maintained in the office that will permit the completion of the additional requirements should that become necessary in the future.
3. The Statement of Accounts is subject to external audit by the Audit Commission. Under new arrangements introduced last year for smaller relevant bodies a lighter touch is now applied with the audit comprising a questionnaire for completion by the Board's officers. The 20th August 2007 has been set as the date on or after which interested parties for the area may exercise their rights to inspect the accounts. The Board is required to publish a notice advertising this fact.

Detailed results

1. Core expenditure totalled £569,806. This is above the threshold of £567,500 that triggers full entitlement to the Natural England (NE) grant of £454,000.
2. Core income included £454,000 from NE, £102,070 from local authorities, £14,862 interest earned on surplus cash balances, plus a further £12,635 from other fund raising. Merchandise activity earned a net £6,429 during the year. Project activity realised a net surplus of £515 although there were a number of pluses and minuses making up this figure.
3. The following projects are ongoing, and reserves associated with them totalling £82,737 are carried forward into 2007/08.
 - Friends of Red Kites
 - Getting Close to Nature
 - Red Kites
 - Chalk Streams
 - Woodland Research
 - Country Walks / Access Publications
 - Tranquil Cycling
 - Commons
 - Chalk Grassland
 - People and Places
 - Hedgerow Survey
 - Visitor Survey
 - Routes for All
 - Country Leaflets
4. The following projects are completed, with their surpluses, deficits, and reserve balances transferred, or met from, the general reserve. The general reserve balance carried forward is £323,486.
 - Planning and Design
 - Historic Landscape
 - Parishes Fund (40th Anniversary Celebrations)
 - Special Projects
 - Ridgeway Link
 - Landowner Management Guidance
5. A contribution of £1,500 was made to the South East Landscapes Co-ordinator.
6. The pensions liability for the Board, as calculated by the actuaries, shows a net decrease from £236,000 to £219,000.

Recommendation:

1. **That the Statement of Accounts be approved.**



Statement of Accounts 2006/07

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FOREWORD

This Statement of Accounts details the Board's activities for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007, and has been prepared in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as modified by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006.

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 reduced the reporting requirements for "smaller relevant bodies" – those whose gross income or expenditure falls below £1 million. At £835,000 the Chilterns Conservation Board falls within this threshold and so the accounts have been prepared accordingly.

The Chilterns Conservation Board was officially established by means of "The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Establishment of Conservation Board) Order 2004.

The Board operates to a budget based on the agreed grant aid from Natural England and local authorities for core functions. Additionally, the Board either takes the lead role or actively participates in a range of partnership schemes to secure external funding for project work.

The Statements included in these accounts are:

Income and Expenditure Account (pages 3 and 4)

This shows the costs of providing services across the various activities and projects that the Board has supported during the year and how these projects were supported from grants and income. Gross revenue expenditure for the year was £816,000, whilst income was £835,000. Taken together, these items show a net surplus for the year of £19,000. Net additions of £12,000 were made to restricted and earmarked reserves and the balance of £7,000 to general reserve.

Statement of Balances (page 5)

This details the Board's financial position as at 31st March 2007 listing the value of assets and liabilities.

Statement of Movements in Reserves (page 6)

This sets out the movements during the year for the reserves held by the Board.

Chilterns Conservation Board			
Income and Expenditure Account 2006-07			
	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure
	£	£	£
Countryside Management			
Chalk Streams	43,791	(38,277)	5,514
Commons	8,006	(5,000)	3,006
Special Projects & SDF	80,087	(77,572)	2,515
Woodlands Research	21,130	(30,000)	(8,870)
Landowner Management Guidance	2,789	-	2,789
Chalk Grassland	9,663	(9,636)	27
Hedgerow Survey	3,603	(4,955)	(1,352)
Misc		(2,490)	(2,490)
Core Costs	77,415	(77,415)	-
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	<i>246,484</i>	<i>(245,345)</i>	<i>1,139</i>
Recreation and Access			
Routes for All	15,280	(13,715)	1,565
Tranquil Cycling	676	-	676
Country Leaflets	3,484	(3,550)	(66)
Ridgeway Link	9,233	(9,813)	(580)
Visitor Survey	7,050	(6,000)	1,050
Misc		(942)	(942)
Office Costs	44,448	(44,448)	-
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	<i>80,171</i>	<i>(78,468)</i>	<i>1,703</i>
Planning & Development			-
Planning publications	140	(1,972)	(1,832)
Misc		(2,845)	(2,845)
Office Costs	65,940	(65,940)	-
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	<i>66,080</i>	<i>(70,757)</i>	<i>(4,677)</i>
Promotion & Awareness			-
Red Kites Project	3,428	(1,742)	1,686
Friends of Red Kites	-	(2,830)	(2,830)
Red Kites merchandise	605	(5,175)	(4,570)
Getting Close to Nature	19,068	(25,477)	(6,409)
People and Places	-	(6,600)	(6,600)
40th Anniversary Celebrations	7,362	-	7,362
Dunstable Downs	10,000	(10,000)	-
Misc		(6,266)	(6,266)
Office Costs	116,644	(116,644)	-
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	<i>157,107</i>	<i>(174,734)</i>	<i>(17,627)</i>
Management & Administration			
Salaries	91,529		91,529
PRP			-
NI	8,613		8,613

Pension & Staff Insurance	13,178		13,178
Recruitment	793		793
Staff Training	5,289		5,289
Travel & Subsistence	2,476		2,476
Premises	29,336		29,336
Office Costs	14,812		14,812
Equipment	1,560		1,560
IT	21,908		21,908
Meetings & Events	1,367		1,367
Finance	15,840		15,840
Personnel & Legal	8,560		8,560
Insurance	6,962		6,962
Members' Allowances	38,447		38,447
Board Member Training & Meetings	4,092		4,092
Misc	597	(90)	507
Interest Receivable		(14,861)	(14,861)
Core Income		(251,623)	(251,623)
<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	265,359	(266,574)	(1,215)
Cont'n to SE Landscapes Coordinator	1,500	-	1,500
NET DIRECT SERVICE EXPENDITURE	816,701	(835,878)	(19,177)
DEFICIT (SURPLUS) FOR YEAR	816,701	(835,878)	(19,177)
TO RESTRICTED & EARMARKED RESERVES	-	-	12,197
BALANCE TO GENERAL RESERVE			(6,980)

**CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD
STATEMENT OF BALANCES**

As at 31st March 2005	As at 31 March 2006	As at 31 March 2007	£	£
£			-	-
		FIXED ASSETS		
		-		
		CURRENT ASSETS		
5,904	5,904	Stocks in hand	5,939	
95,056		Debtors & accrued income	156,749	
541,894		Bank & cash	479,115	
<u>642,854</u>			<u>641,803</u>	
		LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		
(255,808)		Creditors and receipts in advance	(235,580)	
			<u>(235,580)</u>	
387,046		NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>406,223</u>
		LONG TERM LIABILITIES		
(236,000)		Defined benefits Pension Scheme	(219,000)	(219,000)
<u>151,046</u>		TOTAL ASSETS LESS TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>187,223</u>
		REPRESENTED BY:		
(236,000)		Pensions Reserve		(219,000)
10,439		Reserves - Restricted		17,178
60,101		Reserves - Earmarked		65,559
316,506		Reserves - General		323,486
<u>151,046</u>				<u>187,223</u>

CHILTERN CONSERVATION BOARD - STATEMENT OF MOVEMENT IN RESERVES

Restricted Reserves			Earmarked Reserves												General Reserve	Pensions Reserve
Friends of Red Kites	Getting Close to Nature	Landowner Management Guidance	Red Kites	Chalk Streams	Woodland Research	Planning & Design	Access Projects	Historic Landscape Character	Tranquil Cycling	People & Places	Country Leaflets	Hedgerow Survey	Commons	Chalk Grassland		
3100	3101	3102 £	3002 £	3003 £	3004 £	3005 £	3007 £	3008 £	3009	3009	3009	3009	3010	3007 £	3000 £	£
(195)	(7,744)	(2,500)	(2,010)	(200,400)	(24,106)	(526)	(6,059)	(1,000)	(2,000)	0	0	0	(2,000)	(2,000)	(316,506)	236,000
(2,830)	(6,409)	2,500	1,687	5,514	(8,870)	526	0	1,000	676	(6,600)	(66)	(1,352)	2,000	27	(6,980)	(17,000)
(3,025)	(14,153)	0	(323)	(14,886)	(32,976)	0	(6,059)	0	(1,324)	(6,600)	(66)	(1,352)	0	(1,973)	(323,486)	219,000

As at 1st April 2006
 Movements in the year
 As at 31st March 2007

Statement of Internal Control

Authors: Chris Smith Finance Officer

Summary: The Accounting and Audit Regulations 2006 require the Board to review its systems of internal control on an annual basis and to approve a statement of internal control. A revised SIC is presented for consideration by the Board. An internal audit check was undertaken by Herts CC. The internal auditor's report is also presented for approval.

Purpose of the Report: To secure Board approval for the revised Statement of Internal Control.

To secure Board approval for the Internal Auditor's Report.

Background

1. A revised Statement of Internal Control is attached as Appendix 1.
2. The Internal Audit Report is attached as Appendix 2.
3. A revised Service Assurance Statement is attached as Appendix 3.
4. A revised Risk Assessment is attached as Appendix 4
5. Previously the Accounting and Audit Regulations 2003 required the financial accounts to include a Statement of Internal Control. However the 2006 regulations no longer require the SIC to be published as part of the accounts. However, the relevant body (i.e. CCB) is required to conduct a review at least once in a year of its system of internal control and the findings of the review ".Shall be considered by a committee of the relevant body, or by members of the relevant body meeting as a whole, and following that consideration, shall approve a statement of internal control, prepared in accordance with proper practices"
6. The Statement of Internal Control is based upon the Service Assurance Statement and Risk Assessment, copies of which are attached for approval as Appendices 3 and 4. It is further supported by the report of the internal auditor, a copy of whose report is included as Appendix 2.

Conclusions

1. The report of the internal auditors makes a few, mostly minor recommendations to improve control, and these are agreed by the officers. However the final recommendation, 7.43, is difficult to implement given the uncertainties over a five year span. A medium term forecast will be devised covering a shorter period.

Recommendations

1. To approve the Statement of Internal Control.
2. To approve the revised Service Assurance Statement.
3. To approve the revised Risk Assessment.
4. To accept the Internal Audit Report and recommendations, subject to the comment above.

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

1. An internal control system comprises the policies, processes, tasks, behaviours and other aspects of the Board that taken together:
 - facilitate its effective and efficient operation by enabling it to respond appropriately to significant risks to achieving its corporate objectives;
 - help to ensure the quality of internal and external reporting; and
 - help to ensure compliance with laws, regulations and internal policies with respect to the conduct of its business.
2. The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is a process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Board's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
3. The Board was formally established on December 14th and became Operational on Feb 1st 2005. At its first meeting on 18th January 2005, the Board approved a constitution, procedure rules, financial regulations, codes of practice and protocols and a members' allowance scheme. At the same time the Board decided to continue to operate most of its financial systems in house, but to secure internal audit and the services of a Section 151 Officer from Hertfordshire County Council under a Service Level Agreement. With effect from 1st April 2007 a Section 151 Officer has been engaged as part of the financial services contract. Internal audit services remain with Hertfordshire County Council.
4. The system of internal control was in operation for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007 and up to the date of the annual report and accounts and accords with proper practice. The system of internal control will continue to develop and improve as the Board develops its own ways of working.

The Internal Control Environment

Establishing and monitoring the achievement of the Board's objectives

5. The internal control environment supports the Board in establishing, implementing and monitoring its policies and objectives.
6. The Board's purposes are set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and its key objectives are set out in the statutory AONB Management Plan. This was prepared by the Shadow Conservation Board on behalf of, and adopted by, the fifteen local authorities following wide consultation with community groups and stakeholders. It was adopted by the

Board on 13th June 2005 in accordance with the CROW Act 2000. The Management Plan gives rise to the actions set out in the Board's Annual Business Plan which is the basis for the Board's funding.

7. A review of the Management Plan will lead to the adoption of a new plan by 2008. The Business Plan is reviewed half yearly by the Executive Committee and the Board. It is the focus of the officer team's work as they implement its actions and activities.
8. Two types of indicators inform whether the objectives have been achieved:
 - Management Plan targets which indicate the success or otherwise of activities directly related to achieving Management Plan objectives.
 - Business Plan actions which indicate success or otherwise against activities set annually in the Business Plan.
9. The Board publishes an Annual Review to summarise and report on its performance to partners, funders and other interested parties. The Board also holds an Annual Forum at which its activities are presented for discussion and feedback is used to determine future priorities and actions.

Policy and decision making

10. All policy is made by the Board. Policy is developed by members and officers working in the Executive Committee, Planning Committee and other sub committees and working groups. Further detailed policy development is undertaken by officers reporting to members. Recommendations on policy are made by the Executive Committee and Planning Committee to the full Board.
11. The Board and its Committees have access to professional services from within and outside the staffing structure to provide specialist policy and legislative advice in key areas. To facilitate this arrangement both the Executive and Planning Committee can co-opt four members each, in a non voting capacity, to provide independent expert advice. Working groups are established by the Board and its Committees to enable the Board to draw on a wider range of expertise from partner organisations and other outside experts. The Annual Forum also provides a means by which further guidance is secured to assist policy development. Wider consultation is carried out during the development of the Management Plan.
12. The Board, Executive and Planning Committee meet quarterly. Meetings of the Executive and Planning Committees are timed to feed into the meetings of the full Board.
13. The Chief Officer has delegated authority to take decisions, as set out in the Board's Constitution. He also has authority to delegate decisions to other officers.

Ensuring compliance

14. Responsibility for compliance with policy rests with the Board, advised by its Executive and Planning Committees.
15. The Board has taken the strategic decision that high level legal and financial advice is independent of the Board's executive. The role of Finance Officer and Legal/Monitoring Officer were externally provided by Herts CC and Bucks CC respectively, and report directly to the Board. They are responsible for ensuring the Board's policies and activities comply with current legislation and regulations. They will also advise on forthcoming changes to regulation and legislation that the Board will be required to comply with. With effect from April 2007 a separate Section 151 Officer has been engaged.
16. The Board did not have a separate Standards Committee in place, but had taken the decision to refer any case to a committee which would be comprised of Board members and independent members drawn from Bucks CC Standards Committee panel.
17. In addition to the appointment of a 'Section 151 Officer', the services of a CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) accountant are engaged to assist with in house financial management. Herts CC internal auditors also provided initial advice and carried out preliminary checks on the systems.
18. Finance reports are provided to each, quarterly, meeting of the Executive Committee. Where necessary, financial matters were also presented to the full Board.
19. The Board is required to report quarterly to Natural England (which provides up to 80% of the Board's core budget) which operates its own scrutiny arrangements over the Board's activities and financial performance.

Identifying, assessing and monitoring risks

20. The Board adopted a Service Assurance Scheme incorporating a risk assessment, but does not yet have a fully developed risk management process in place. This was prepared under the guidance of Hertfordshire CC Internal Audit Section. It has identified key corporate risks and is in the process of identifying and implementing controls to guard against these risks. The main key risks to the Board are:

Operation of the Conservation Board: as a new organisation, there is a risk that the Board will be slow to become fully effective. The Board is supported by a small officer team and there may be a lack of capacity to carry out tasks, leading to the Business Plan not being implemented.

Funding: As the Countryside Agency and English Nature merge into one organisation, Natural England, its objectives and priorities will change. There is a risk that there will be a period of uncertainty and that AONB issues will

become low priority. This could affect funding from Government and long term planning. Any lessening of commitment from local authorities, which provide funding on a discretionary basis, would similarly affect the Board.

Partner organisations: With the shadow Board having been replaced by the Conservation Board, there is a risk that partner organisations will become less involved with implementing AONB actions as identified in the AONB Management Plan.

Cash flow: The Board needs to be careful to manage its cashflow. This is eased by the current agreement with Natural England to provide advance quarterly payment of grant for core costs. The Board would struggle to manage its cash flow if this payment were made in arrears.

Reserve Fund: The Board currently has, what it believes, is an adequate reserve fund. It is essential this is maintained at a minimum level, currently in excess of four months of operating costs.

Financial management: financial mis-management, inappropriate use of funds, theft and fraud could result in serious risks to the operation of the Board.

Work Programme: If the work programme is not adequately managed there is a high risk that actions will not be implemented and the associated budgets controlled adequately. The main risks are associated with new projects, especially where external partners are involved. Staff prepare project plans and, where required, steering groups are put in place to monitor budgets and activities.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework: Uncertainty about the legislative and regulatory framework that applies to the Board could lead to the Board failing to comply, causing disruption to the Board's activities.

Loss of Key Personnel

As a small organisation the Board is particularly dependent upon a small number of staff. Loss of these staff could disrupt the management of the Board and implementation of the work programme. These risks are difficult to cover.

Ensuring economical, effective and efficient use of resources

21. The Board's use of resources is controlled through the Business Plan, approval of which sets the budget for the Board. The process for setting the budget involves consultation with, and requires the approval of, the Board's principal funders, in particular Natural England.
22. The Board is committed to achieving best value through its approach to procurement. It has clear tendering arrangements. It has also decided to

secure support for its financial, personnel, legal, administrative and IT needs from external suppliers as the most cost effective arrangement.

23. The Board achieves many of its objectives by working with others in the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Board continually seeks new funding sources and to apply its resources in the most effective way by working closely with the community and other partners better placed to take a lead.
24. The Board's members and officers continuously research best practice and latest innovation, which may be applicable to the Board.

Financial management

25. During 2006-07 responsibility for the budget, at officer level, was partly delegated to named budget holders. Similarly specific projects have their own budgets and responsible officer, supported in some cases by steering groups responsible for monitoring work programmes and budgets.
26. Officers attend regular team meetings with the Chief Officer at which financial management issues are discussed. A monthly officer level finance meeting is held to monitor the budget and other financial issues.
27. A modern easy to use financial management system (SAGE) is in place, and is accessible to all officers.
28. Financial reports are presented to each Executive Committee and key funding partners. High level financial issues, such as setting the annual budget and approval of the Business Plan are raised with the Board
29. The District Auditor appointed the Audit Commission to undertake the external audit. Internal audit control and advice is provided by Herts CC.

Performance management

30. Performance management is undertaken in the following ways:
 - The Board has an annual Business Plan incorporating targets and outputs together with a Work Programme identifying specific actions, outputs, milestones and resource need. Achievement of the outputs in the work programme give a check of how the Board has been able to contribute to the implementation of the AONB Management Plan.
 - Half yearly and full year reports on, and reviews of, the Work Programme and other Business Plan targets are presented to the Board and Executive Committee.
 - A staff meeting is held monthly to discuss, review and plan a full range of actions.

- Feedback is provided to partners funding partners as required.
- Regular reports are provided to the Natural England and other major funding partners.
- The Board will publish an annual review of its activities, which will be presented to the Chilterns Annual Forum for discussion. Feedback is received on performance and future direction. This arrangement has been in place for several years under the shadow Conservation Board and it is planned to continue with it. Typically the Annual Forum is attended by over 100 delegates representing over 40 organisations.
- The Board operates a staff appraisal system, which identifies strengths and weaknesses, development needs and longer term career goals. This is supported by a personal annual work programme with actions, targets, performance measures and timetables. This is reviewed every six months, or more frequently if required.

Review of Effectiveness

31. The external auditor provides a management letter to the Board annually and this will be made available on the Board's public website. Recommendations within the letter will be given to the Chief Officer to produce an action plan to address areas of weakness. The action plan will be scrutinised by the Board and its Executive Committee to ensure that any major risk areas are addressed. Executive action will be taken by the Chief Officer and any corporate issues raised will be discussed and action-planned by the officer team.
32. In addition, the Executive Committee will receive an annual report from the internal auditor describing the results of their annual work programme. The work of the internal auditor will be determined in consultation with the external auditor.
33. The Executive Committee will examine the effectiveness of the system of internal control on an annual basis.

Significant Internal Control Issues

34. The Board has identified the following key control issues that need to be addressed in 2007/08:
 - The development of the Risk Management process
 - Further identification of the resource implications (finance, staff, Board member involvement) for internal control and reporting.
 - Further development of staff awareness of financial and other internal control systems.

- Improvements to cash flow forecasting with a view to maximising returns on investments.
- Development of robust project management procedures.

Signed:
Chief Officer

Date:19/6/2007

Signed:
Chairman

Date:19/6/2007

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT

DRAFT REPORT

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

AUDIT OF CHILTERNNS AONB CONSERVATION BOARD

TO: Final report only The Chilterns Conservation Board

Draft report only Steve Rodrick – Chief Officer
Chris Smith – Section 151 Officer
Roelie Reed – Office Manager

DATE OF REPORT: **May 2007**

FILE REFERENCE: **B7/B99/0500**

AUDITOR IN CHARGE: **Carol-Ann Collett**

REVIEWED BY: ***James Harbord***

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APPENDIX A	SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The County Council is actively involved in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CAONB) - designated in 1965 and covering 833km. of Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire. The Chilterns is one of 41 AONB's representing the finest landscapes in England and Wales outside National Parks.
- 1.2 The Chilterns is one of the larger AONB's and spans the administrative boundaries of 15 local authorities and two Government Offices.
- 1.3 The CAONB had operated until 2005 as a shadow Conservation Board overseen by a voluntary joint committee. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 enhanced the status of AONB's and provided for the setting up of recognised Conservation Boards. These changes were made in recognition of the limitations of the old system which relied upon goodwill and minimal funding commitments from central Government.
- 1.4 On the 1st October 2006 a new organisation called Natural England came into being. This incorporated the work of English Nature and the rural Development Service. Concerns were raised about the ability of Natural England to maintain adequate funding for the CAONB.
- 1.5 As a result of this change the shadow body moved from the local authority who had overseen it, to setting up its own accommodation, management and financial functions.
- 1.6 HCC was asked to provide the Internal Audit function. We accepted the offer and helped to develop a strong financial control environment in 2005/6 and reported upon its proper application.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 The scope of this audit is to perform a review of the systems relating to Chilterns AONB Conservation Board (CAONB), undertaking compliance testing on the key control areas. This particular audit area was the subject of a review in 2005/6.
- 2.2 Internal Audit's risk assessment is medium, as the CAONB is a now a settled organisation in its present form and robust systems have been developed, and the audit Commission has relaxed its audit requirement for this type of small organisation.

3 AUDIT OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The audit objective is to evaluate the continuing adequacy and effectiveness of the systems in operation, ensuring that the risk of errors or irregularities occurring and remaining undetected is minimal.

3.2 All significant findings and recommendations for any potential improvements in the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the current system of control will be reported.

3.3 Special consideration will be given to the funding arrangements with Natural England.

4 CONTROL OBJECTIVES

4.1 The control objectives to be audited are as follows: - ·

- Budgets are controlled in accordance with Financial Regulations
- The management structure of the department ensures secure financial control.
- All transactions are properly authorised by an appropriate officer.
- Income collection procedures and responsibilities are properly controlled in accordance with Financial Regulations.
- 'For sale' items should be securely controlled and a stock record maintained.
- The continuity of the CAONB's key systems is ensured by an effective Business Continuity Plan.
- Staff sickness, absence/leave is monitored and controlled.
- Procedures for claiming expenses are defined, documented and communicated to all.
- Orders used for all purchases are maintained in the SAGE system.
- Use of mobile telephones is monitored and controlled.
- Proper procedures are in place for project management.

-
- Imprest accounts are run in accordance with the financial Procedures.
 - Management information is sufficient to ensure effective control of resources.
 - The Service Assurance Statement has been completed.
 - There is effective control over the use of procurement cards.
 - Members Allowances are properly controlled.
 - There is proper Treasury Management of Reserves.
 - There is sufficient funding from Natural England

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the staff at CAONB for their help and co-operation during the audit.

6 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

We are generally satisfied with the controls operating within the CAONB. We particularly commend the smooth transfer of the payroll 'in house'.

There were a few, mostly minor control weaknesses identified during the audit and recommendations to improve these are listed in the next section.

The detailed findings overleaf show all areas examined during the audit; recommendations have only been made when improvements or actions are required.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern				
Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
Budgets should be controlled in accordance with financial regulations.				
Budget responsibilities should be clearly defined, documented, and communicated in accordance with financial regulations.	Budget Managers are fully aware of their responsibilities and sign up to this.	Compliant	7.01	
There should be adequate working papers to support the make up of the budget.	There are sufficient papers to support the make up of the budget. There are detailed minutes of Board meetings with a good record of discussion and decisions made about budgetary matters	Compliant	7.02	
Virements between budget heads within a cost centre should be authorised according to the scheme of delegation.	There have been no virements	Compliant in the fact that there are rules in place but no virements have taken place in the last financial year.	7.03	
A list identifies a named budget holder for each budget heading.	It is clear who the budget holders/managers are.	Compliant	7.04	
Training sessions and system manuals should be available as an aid to proficiency.	Staff have all been trained in SAGE and manuals and short guides are available.	Compliant	7.05	
Budget monitors are produced and distributed to budget holders and other key officers	Staff receive a monthly report from the Section 151 officer, these show bottom line figures and each budget manager accesses SAGE to drill down for the details of their particular projects.	Compliant	7.06	
Budget monitors are clear and	As budget managers have access	Compliant	7.07	

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern				
Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
useful.	to SAGE their reports are in the format they require. There is no profiling of project budgets, but core budgets are profiled.			
Budget monitors are acted upon.	There are monthly meetings between CO and staff.	Compliant	7.08	
Budget monitoring reports are provided to Board that accurately reflect the budget position.	There were no significant budget variations shown in SAGE. Full financial reports are presented at Board Meetings	Compliant	7.09	
The management structure of the department ensures secure financial control.				
A scheme of delegation is in place, which clearly defines responsibilities and reporting lines.	This scheme of delegation is adequate and follows financial regulations	Compliant	7.10	
Up to date contract register in place.	At present there is no Contract Register as it was thought that there were no contracts.	There may be a number of small contracts that could be listed.	7.11	It was agreed that a list of contracts/regular arrangements be identified and listed, with start/finish dates and contract names.
Evidence that up to date contract regulations have been issued.	There is a copy of the Contract Regulations on the IA file	Compliant	7.12	
Financial procedures are in place.	There are Financial Regulations but they are due to be reviewed.	The Financial Regulations may not reflect the current position of the Organisation	7.13	The Financial Regulations should be reviewed and re- issued as soon as convenient.
Gifts and Hospitality are	There is a register of gifts and	Compliant	7.14	

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern				
Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
declared and recorded	hospitality although it has never been used. Staff were reminded of the need to use the register should a gift etc. be offered			
All transactions should be properly authorised by an appropriate officer.				
Invoices must be properly approved for payment	All invoices were checked by IA and all without fail were found to be properly approved for payment	Compliant	7.15	
Income collection procedures and responsibilities should be properly controlled in accordance with Financial Regulation and Financial Procedures.				
All income amounts received should be recorded. Included should be details of whom the payment was from and also a payment reference.	There are very few income amounts by cheque but all were properly handled. As there is no bank in Chinnor cheques are banked when convenient. There are held in a safe which is more than adequate for the value concerned.	Compliant	7.16	
All grant income should be entered against the correct project and account number as soon as possible.	Income is received by BACS. However Natural England has outsourced its finance function and grant monies have not yet been received. Local authority income is properly received.	Cash flow projections are difficult without the surety of timely income from Natural England. Discussion took place about how to resolve this issue should it be in going. However, it is likely to resolve itself as the new organisation settles down.	7.17	This risk should be entered on the Risk Register. If this matter is not resolved it may be necessary to involve the Board Chairman taking this forward with Natural England.
All postal income should be	See finding 7.15	Compliant	7.18	

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern				
Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
entered against the correct fund and account number as soon as possible.				
All remittances should be processed on the day of receipt.	See finding 7.15	Compliant	7.19	
All post received should be opened in the presence of two employees.	See finding 5.15, little income is received through the post and is low value.	compliant	7.20	
The continuity of the CAONB's key systems is ensured by an effective Business Continuity Plan.				
Continuity of the CAONB's key systems is ensured by an effective business continuity plan.	Data records are taken off site each night and files are kept in fire retardant cabinets. As CAONB is such a new organisation everything is kept at present but the Office Manager has a copy of HCC's retention policy.	Compliant	7.21	
Sale stock items are controlled.				
There is proper control over stock items	Stock register is kept in SAGE and valued at year end. Receipts are given for all cash purchases.	Compliant	7.22	
Staff sickness absence/leave should be monitored & controlled.				
Records should be kept of each employee's sickness absence/leave.	There is very little sickness. With the resignation on one staff member there is virtually no sickness. All is properly recorded. Annual leave and time off in lieu is fully recorded and approved.	Compliant	7.23	
Periods of sickness are not	See finding 7.23	Compliant	7.24	

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern				
Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
limited to financial years. The sickness period may span two financial years.				
The absences due to sickness should be reported monthly to the Board.	The Office Manager records sickness and the CO would manage if it became a problem, but the levels are very small.	Compliant	7.25	
At the beginning of each financial year each employee's leave entitlement should be indicated on a new record sheet.	Full records are kept and leave is approved by e-mail by CO.	Compliant	7.26	
Procedures for claiming expenses must be defined, documented and communicated to all claimants.				
All employees collating and collecting expenses should have access to the Procedures' & comply with those procedures	Staff and Board Members are clear on the process for collecting expenses. Rates are known and claims properly approved.	Compliant	7.27	
Records of expenses should be maintained.	All claims had been approved and records are maintained.	Compliant	7.28	
Orders used for all purchases are maintained in the SAGE system				
Items cannot be purchased outside the SAGE and petty cash system	All purchases are through SAGE apart from some small amounts on procurement cards and petty cash.	Compliant	7.29	
Goods should not be received by the person responsible for the purchase order(s)	There is an informal division of duties in that the office manager is upstairs and good are received by staff working downstairs who answer the front door. The type of items purchased for delivery are not likely to be of any value personally to staff members.	Compliant	7.30	
Use of mobile telephones should be monitored and controlled.				

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern

Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
Mobile telephone invoices should be separate and not received by an individual employee. The invoices should be in the name of CAONB.	There are clear guidelines on the use of mobile telephones. Staff are sent copies of the bills and asked to identify and pay for personal calls. It is clear from copy bills in income checks that this is happening. It is a small amount and the costs of the telephones over the year for business use and rental is not significant.	Compliant	7.31	
The costs of private calls should be borne by employees.	See finding 7.30	Compliant	7.32	
Records should be kept of users loaned mobile telephones.	It is clear who the mobile telephones are allocated to.	Compliant	7.33	

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Proper procedures are in place for project management

Recognised project management procedures are used.	<p>There were some project management outlines prepared in 2006/7 which outlines each project in detail and was signed of by the responsible staff members.</p> <p>However there is no formal recognized project management system in place. After consultation with and a demonstration to the staff of Microsoft Project, they decided to try it out and see if it made for a smoother process.</p>	The CO spends a lot of time monitoring projects and reminding staff of grant claims dates etc. Using Microsoft Project would enable the staff to manage these milestones.	7.34	The use of Microsoft Project should be pursued and training implemented.
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Imprest accounts are run in accordance with the Financial Procedures

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern

Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
Only correct and proper payments are made from the imprest account.	Only small, agreed amounts go through the petty cash and it is properly authorised and checked.	Compliant	7.35	
Management information is sufficient to ensure effective control of resources				
Annually reviewed registers of fees and charges receivable are maintained.	<p>The only fees are for courses which are charged at cost. Consideration is being given to putting a small 'profit' element on courses to cover administration.</p> <p>The only charges are for postcards, books etc. which are at cost.</p> <p>All costs are recorded in SAGE</p>	Compliant	7.36	
Payroll reports for example, overtime reports, sickness reports; agency reports are available and are regularly reviewed.	The payroll was brought back ' in house ' earlier this year and the transfer went extremely well. There are reports for staff and Members allowances and they are monitored.	Compliant	7.37	
The department has a list of portable and attractive items.	<p>There are records of IT equipment.</p> <p>There is a list of portable and attractive items which needs updating.</p> <p>The insurance list is updated annually</p>	The inventory must be updated when new items are purchased.	7.38	The new GPS system should be added to the inventory and insurance list.

Has the Service Assurance Statement been completed?

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern				
Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
Obtain a copy of the Assurance Statement	<p>The Risk Register has not been updated. The payroll transfer remains at 'high' risk although the transfer went well and the payroll is accurate each month.</p> <p>The risks associated with the proposed building work to the rear of the property and possible disruption/access and parking problems had not been identified.</p> <p>There is some extra space at the rear of the building which is used for display boards etc. This is not part of the lease and there would be a need to find storage, possibly off site should these buildings be included in the building site.</p>	The Risk Register is not being re-evaluated and updated and needs to be shared with the Board on a regular basis.	7.39	<p>The Risk Register must be updated before this years Service Assurance statement is completed for the Statement of Internal Control.</p> <p>The Risk Register needs to be a 'living' document and re-assessed at regular intervals as risk is mitigated.</p> <p>Staff need to be reminded about personal safety when working away from the office base, especially if working alone. There is a 'buddy system' in place but it has fallen into disuse.</p>
Control and use of Procurement Cards				
The use of the cards is properly controlled	<p>There are 2 procurement cards with low daily values.</p> <p>The Section 151 officer checks for reasonableness of items and amounts.</p>	Compliant	7.40	
Members Allowances are properly controlled				
Written instructions are issued and followed	There are clear guidelines and adequate recording on SAGE.	Compliant	7.41	
There is proper Treasury Management of Reserves.				

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern

Key Control	Finding	Effect of Finding	Ref	Recommendation
Reserves are being effectively invested and managed.	There is investment of reserves however is could be more effectively invested and there needs to be a long term cash flow projection.	Less income could be received or investment income could vary from year to year.	7.42	The investment of reserves needs to be re-considered to see if more interest could be made. The Section 151 officer intends producing a long term cash flow projection.
Ascertain that there is sufficient funding from Natural England.				
There is a system to ensure that there is sufficient funding from Natural England.	Natural England had given a grant to cover core costs but little to support projects.	The organisation has healthy reserves at present but these will dwindle over time if projects have to be supported from reserves rather than grant income.	7.43	A five year long term programme should be devised accompanied by a mid term financial forecast of the costs of these projects to support further application to Natural England for funding, otherwise in the long-term the Board may just exist without funding to achieve any outcomes.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern					
Ref	Recommendation	Responsible for Action	Priority	Target Date	Action/Comments
7.01			Not Rated		
7.02			Not Rated		
7.03			Not Rated		
7.04			Not Rated		
7.05			Not Rated		
7.06			Not Rated		
7.07			Not Rated		
7.08			Not Rated		
7.09			Not Rated		
7.10			Not Rated		
7.11	It was agreed that a list of contracts/regular arrangements be identified and listed, with start/finish dates and contract names.		Low		
7.12			Not Rated		
7.13	The financial Regulations should be reviewed and re- issued as soon as convenient.		High		
7.14			Not Rated		
7.15			Not Rated		
7.16			Not Rated		
7.17	This risk should be entered on the Risk Register. If this matter is not resolved it may be necessary to involve the Board Chairman taking this forward with Natural England.		High		
7.18			Not Rated		
7.19			Not Rated		
7.20			Not Rated		
7.21			Not Rated		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern					
Ref	Recommendation	Responsible for Action	Priority	Target Date	Action/Comments
7.22			Not Rated		
7.23			Not Rated		
7.24			Not Rated		
7.25			Not Rated		
7.26			Not Rated		
7.27			Not Rated		
7.28			Not Rated		
7.29			Not Rated		
7.30			Not Rated		
7.31			Not Rated		
7.32			Not Rated		
7.33			Not Rated		
7.34	The use of Microsoft Project should be pursued and training implemented.		Medium		
7.35			Not Rated		
7.36			Not Rated		
7.37			Not Rated		
7.38	The new GPS system to be added to the inventory and insurance list.		High		
7.39	<p>The Risk Register must be updated before this years Service Assurance statement is completed for the Statement of Internal Control.</p> <p>The Risk Register needs to be a 'living' document and re-assessed at regular intervals as risk is mitigated.</p> <p>Staff need to be reminded about personal safety when working away</p>		High		

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS - Chiltern					
Ref	Recommendation	Responsible for Action	Priority	Target Date	Action/Comments
	from the office base, especially if working alone. There is a 'buddy system' in place but it has fallen into disuse.				
7.40			Not Rated		
7.41			Not Rated		
7.42	The investment of reserves needs to be re-considered to see if more interest could be made. The Section 151 officer intends producing a long term cash flow projection.		High		
7.43	A five year long term programme should be devised accompanied by a mid term financial forecast of the costs of these projects to support further application to Natural England for funding, otherwise the long-term the Board may just exist without funding to achieve any outcomes.		High		

Chilterns Conservation Board 2006-07 - SERVICE ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT

AREA OF ASSURANCE	ADEQUACY	BASIS OF ASSESSMENT	ACTIONS TO ADDRESS WEAKNESSES
1. Board operates in line with legislative requirements	Good	Adopted AONB Management Plan in place 2002 – 2008 Approved by DEFRA. Accordance with CROW Act 2000 Accordance with Establishment Order Accordance with the Audit and Accounting Regulations 2003 and Amendments 2006	Review will begin in late 2006 and published in 2008. Indicators need revision.
2. Board's activities are in line with the Management Plan	Good	Annual Business plan incorporating work plan and budget approved by the Board Annual Forum provides an opportunity for stakeholder feedback and input. Publish Annual Review	Need to identify longer term priorities Need to factor in climate change impact
3. Performance against the Business Plan and other targets is monitored through appropriate performance indicators and customer and stakeholder feedback, and appropriate action is taken to address any performance issues	Adequate	The Board receives a twice yearly report. Progress on projects needs to be more closely monitored	Need to develop longer term condition indicators for the AONB

AREA OF ASSURANCE	ADEQUACY	BASIS OF ASSESSMENT	ACTIONS TO ADDRESS WEAKNESSES
4. Performance is reported regularly and clearly to members to ensure that decisions are taken on the basis of adequate and timely information	Good	<p>Reports to the Board and Executive Committee</p> <p>Report to project steering groups, where these exist</p>	Closer monitoring of projects needed.
5. Staffing resources are adequate in numbers and skills to deliver the Board's objectives, and staff responsibilities have been clearly defined and are understood	Adequate	Staff are still coming to terms with the additional workload of managing an independent organisation, the skills needed and additional responsibilities	<p>Financial management capacity needs to be reviewed. Continuing support from finance advisor</p> <p>Payroll to be undertaken in house for 2006-07 capacity and performance reviewed</p>
6. The Board has ensured its financial stability	Good	<p>Annual grant for core costs and projects negotiated with the Countryside Agency/Natural England.</p> <p>Cash Flow Forecasts</p> <p>Memorandum of Agreement on funding with CA/NE and local authorities</p> <p>Advance payment of core grant on a quarterly basis avoids cash flow problems</p> <p>An unrestricted reserve equivalent to approximately 4 months operating costs has been established.</p>	<p>Should seek rolling three year grant agreement with Govt.</p> <p>Seek re-assurance that NE will continue to provide advance quarterly payments of core grant.</p> <p>Rapid access to reserves arranged in case of need</p>

AREA OF ASSURANCE	ADEQUACY	BASIS OF ASSESSMENT	ACTIONS TO ADDRESS WEAKNESSES
<p>7. Processes have been established to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all expenditure has been properly authorised and accurately recorded • all income has been properly collected and accurately recorded • assets are recorded and managed effectively • the budget has been effectively managed, with variations being reported and appropriate action agreed and taken 	Good	<p>Standing Orders and Regulations.</p> <p>Auditor Reports</p> <p>Advice from Internal Audit and Finance Officers (Herts CC)</p> <p>Reports to the Executive Committee</p>	Staff to be given regular training and reminders to help them cope with the new financial systems
8. There are effective risk management arrangements in place, covering the identification, control, monitoring and review of service risk	Adequate	Risk Assessment	More needs to be done to 'mainstream' risk management into service delivery/project implementation.
9. The Board can show that it has sought to achieve value for money in the use of resources	Good	<p>Financial Regulations</p> <p>Reports to the Board and Executive Committee</p> <p>Assessment of grant applications and claims by the Countryside Agency/Natural England</p>	<p>Tendering and regular re-tendering for ongoing contracts</p> <p>Regular Comparison with market prices</p>
10. The Board can demonstrate that it has prepared robust business cases to support any new developments, and that	Adequate	<p>Business Plan and Work Programme</p> <p>Applications to the Countryside</p>	Need to establish more rigorous mechanisms to evaluate objectives/outcomes.

AREA OF ASSURANCE	ADEQUACY	BASIS OF ASSESSMENT	ACTIONS TO ADDRESS WEAKNESSES
the risks of these developments are reviewed and monitored on a continual basis		Agency/NE and others for grant aid. Regular reports to steering groups, where they exist	
11. The Board can show that it has given due consideration to insurance, health and safety, community safety, environmental impact and other risks in making decisions	Adequate	Covered in project and activity planning	Need to be more rigorous
12. Recommendations from reports from auditors and other review agencies have been considered and appropriate action taken	Good	Auditor's report and recommendations reported to Board and Executive Committee. Recommendations and responses agreed with Finance Officer	Need to monitor progress in implementing recommendations
13. Partnership arrangements are well founded, clearly defined and adequately monitored for their effectiveness in meeting the Council's objectives	Adequate	Memorandum of Agreements Grants/Finance conditions	Need to be kept under review

SERVICE ASSURANCE STATEMENT

Chief Officer.....

Date

The services assurance assessment has been completed for 2006/07. An assessment of the level of assurance provided by controls currently in place has been carried out and is detailed in the Service Assurance Assessment

Overall Assessment

Overall within the Board, the level of assurance provided for the specific areas covered in the service assurance assessment is considered to be **Good**.

I am satisfied that except for matters identified in the service assurance assessment and those detailed below, adequate systems of internal control have been in place throughout the financial year and are ongoing.

Specific Risks

Management arrangements for addressing the high risks not covered in the specific areas of assurance in the service assurance assessment (as identified by the risk register) are considered to be **adequate**.

Risk Assessment 2006 -2007

Area of Assessment	Nature of Risk	Basis of Risk Assessment	Current Level of Risk	Action
Management Capacity	Board fails to fulfil legislative requirements	Review of requirements of legislation	Low	Service Level Agreements have enhanced Board's management capacity. Implement recommendations in Auditor's Report
	Staff spend disproportionate amount of time on management rather than project or technical tasks	Appraisals Staff Meetings Staff Feedback	Low	Training to make staff more aware and efficient.
	Inadequate staff capacity	Assessment of performance Staff Appraisals Feedback from Board and Executive Committee	Medium	Continuing need for support provided by Service Level Agreement (Clerk and Legal Services). Financial Management Support engaged. Training for Staff
	Loss of key personnel	Job descriptions	Low	Limited amount of cover can be provided by insurance. Support from local authorities/commercial providers would be sought in the event of loss of key personnel

Area of Assessment	Nature of Risk	Basis of Risk Assessment	Current Level of Risk	Action
Management of Payroll and Personnel Services	Staff and members do not receive salary / allowances or receive required level of HR support	Monthly payroll Provision of HR support when required	High	CCB in house management of payroll to be introduced –based on SAGE. Operating without SLA on personnel services for time being. To be kept under review.
Security of Funding	Board fails to secure funding to meet it core costs	Grant secured from Countryside Agency/Natural England and local authorities	Medium	A period uncertainty with formation of Natural England, local authority cut backs and anticipation of local government reform - seek longer term funding agreements and use of new Memorandum of Agreement Maintain current level of unrestricted reserves - equivalent to 4 months of operating costs Increase level of income generated from other sources
	Board secures less funding for projects – lower level of implementation of the AONB Management Plan	Grant secured for specific projects	Medium	Need to broaden range of funding sources and to generate more independent income. Minimise vulnerability of staff posts to short term project funding. Greater use of MoAs to secure funding contributions from partners

Area of Assessment	Nature of Risk	Basis of Risk Assessment	Current Level of Risk	Action
Financial Management	Mismanagement, fraud, theft	Financial Reporting Systems Expenditure Authorisations Systems Whistle blowing process used	Low	Implementation of audit trail systems should minimise risk
	Cash Flow problems leading to: becoming overdrawn and incurring interest charges restricting or re-scheduling expenditure, disrupting work programme	Cash flow forecast Finance reports	Low	Cash flow forecast prepared Advance payments of grant from the Countryside Agency/NE on a quarterly basis. Local authority contribution paid in full at the beginning of the financial year. Management of bank accounts and reserves avoids likelihood of becoming overdrawn
	Maintaining value of reserves	Bank statements	Low	Reserves will only be invested in the HSBC money market account which pays an interest rate above inflation
Work Programme	Work Programme is not implemented	Work Programme Reviews	Low	Needs to be kept under constant review. All staff have personal work plans.
IT	IT failure disrupts operation of Board	IT failure	Low	Effective back up system IT support in place with rapid response times.

Area of Assessment	Nature of Risk	Basis of Risk Assessment	Current Level of Risk	Action
	New IT system introduced requiring new equipment and skills	IT system requirements	Medium	New payroll system to be installed- advice engaged New Mapping system- member of staff identified to take the lead New GIS system – member of staff identified to take the lead. Specialist support secured.
Office Equipment	Electrical equipment does not work, is unsuitable or is dangerous to use	Equipment inspection Feedback from users	Low	Equipment is checked regularly. All electrical equipment is checked on an annual basis
Events	Public and staff safety	Risk Assessment	Low	Risk Assessment undertaken for all events
Disruption to Business	The Board's operations are adversely affected or stopped	Business Continuity Plan	Low	A Business Continuity Plan has been prepared and will be reviewed annually or after any disruption event.

Appointment to the Executive Committee

1. A vacancy on the Executive Committee has arisen as Chris Brearley did not seek re-election to Three Rivers DC. The vacancy must be filled by another Board member appointed by a local authority.
2. The appointment is initially until the AGM in October 2007.
3. The Executive Committee currently meets 4 times per year (next meeting is 19th September) in the Board's offices in Chinnor. Members of the Committee receive a special responsibility allowance of £500.

Recommendation

1. **The Board appoints a member appointed by a local authority to fill the vacancy on the Executive Committee**

Appointment to the Planning Committee

1. A vacancy has arisen on the Planning Committee as Susan Howkins did not seek re-election to Chiltern DC. The vacancy must be filled by a Board member appointed by a local authority.
2. The appointment is initially until the AGM in October.
3. The Planning Committee currently meets 4 times per year. The next meeting is 12th September in Chinnor. Members of the Committee receive a special responsibility allowance of £500.

Recommendation

1. **The Board appoints a member appointed by a local authority to fill the vacancy on the Planning Committee**

Report from the Executive Committee

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: To report on the discussions and decisions of the Executive Committee held on 15th May.

1. The provisional financial outturn for 2006-07 showed a small surplus.
2. Natural England had offered a core grant offer of which was an increase of 3%. The grant offer for projects was £32,000, a 55% cut compared to 2006-07. The SDF grant was cut to £70,000 from £80,000.
3. It was resolved to award staff an interim annual cost of living increase of 2% pending settlement of the national pay award to local government employees.
4. A report was received showing good progress on implementing the Board's Sustainability Plan.
5. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that it should seek to be carbon neutral by 2011.
6. The Board should allocate a budget of £20,000 for the review of the Management Plan by summer 2008.
7. The Board should support the bid for an EU funded LEADER programme for the Chilterns to provide grant aid for rural development initiatives.
8. Annette Venters, Access Officer, will be going on maternity leave from July 2007 - April 2008.

Purpose of Report: To report decisions made under delegated authority and to seek agreement to aim for carbon neutrality for the Board by 2011

Finance

1. The Committee received a statement showing that there would be a small surplus on the core budget of approx £15,000. This was achieved due to:
 1. Converting the Admin Assistant post from full time to part time.
 2. Savings on the audit fee
 3. Increased income from bank interest, merchandise sales and sponsorship.

Grant aid from Natural England

2. It was reported that Natural England has made a core grant offer of £467,620 (74.4% of costs) for 2007-08 which is a 3% increase on 2006-07. The application for grant aid of £12,000 towards to additional costs of publishing a revised management plan was refused.

3. It was also reported that Natural England proposed to only provide grant aid of £32,000 towards projects (The application was for £98,000) which represented a cut of 55% compared to the £71,000 offered in 2006-07. The Committee agreed a revised projects programme drawing on the reserves allocated by the Board at its meeting in March 2007 for the Land Management Fund (This is covered more fully in Item 11)
4. Natural England had also indicated that it would only be offered grant aid of £70,000 towards the Sustainable Development Fund (£80,000 was offered in 2006-07) and bids had been invited of up to £100,000.
5. The committee was concerned about the Natural England grant offers on several grounds including the cuts, timing and lack of discussion on the bids. It was decided to issue a press release and write to the chairman of Natural England seeking restoration of cuts next year and suggesting that improvements are made to the grant award process. The Chilterns had not been treated any differently from other AONBs. The National Association of AONBs was now raising these issues with Natural England and Barry Gardiner, the relevant DEFRA minister.

Cost of Living Pay Award 2007-08

6. The Committee resolved to award staff an interim cost of living increase of 2% backdated to 1st April pending the outcome of the national negotiations on a pay award for local authorities (The Board has already decided to mirror the pay scales of Wycombe DC which is party to the national agreement).

Sustainability Plan

7. A report was presented on the progress on implementing the Board's Sustainability Plan on its use of resources and energy. In general excellent progress has been made, with a couple of areas where more could be done including reducing car mileage and further reductions in use of energy for the Board's offices.
8. The Board is currently responsible for the emission of 21 tonnes of carbon dioxide. With the installation of solar PV cells this should fall in future but overall emissions are likely to remain approx. 15- 20 tonnes. The carbon offset scheme could be developed to cope with level. It was agreed to aim for carbon neutrality by 2011

Review of the AONB Management Plan

9. Following the NE decision not to offer additional grant aid to support the review of the AONB Management Plan it was decided to re-allocate some of the core budget to create a total fund of up to £20,000 over 2007-08 and 2008-09 to produce a reviewed plan. This sum would be used, in part, to engage the services of Alan Wheeler, a planning consultant, who was closely involved with the production of the 1994 and 2002 management plans.

LEADER Programme

10. It was decided to support the submission of a bid to the LEADER (EU funded) programme for the Chilterns for the period 2008-2013. The LEADER programme aims to provide grant aid, of approx. £2 million, for rural development which also contributes to environmental quality. Due to cash flow considerations it was not thought realistic for the Board to be the lead bidder, but instead proposed to request Bucks CC to take on that role (which they have subsequently agreed to do).
11. The timetable would be:

Expressions of Interest	July 2007
Full Bid	Jan 2008
Approval	April 2008
Start of Programme	July 2008
12. It is likely the Chief Officer will have to be heavily involved in preparing the bid and the Board will have influence in helping to create the Local Action Group which will be responsible for managing the project.
13. It is thought that there will be 6-8 successful bids in the south east. The Chilterns cross region bid is likely to be considered favourably.

Access Officer

14. The Committee was advised that Annette Venters will be going on maternity leave from July 2007 to April 2008. It was not proposed to require maternity cover but to reduce the work programme and use a consultant to help deliver a small number of projects. The committee also agreed to Annette's request to return to work on a part time basis (3 days per week).

Recommendation

1. **To note the discussion and decisions of the Executive Committee.**
2. **To adopt the target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2011.**

Report from the Planning Committee

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning Committee met on 23rd May. The following items were discussed: the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide review and the Chilterns Roofing Materials Technical Note; the Chilterns Buildings Design Awards; the provision of skills training; the AONB Management Plan review; response to DCLG consultation on changes to permitted development (householder microgeneration); Development Plans responses; an update on responses to planning applications, and the annual Planning Committee Tour.

Purpose of Report: To bring to the attention of the Board the items considered by the Planning Committee and decisions taken under delegated powers and seek comments on a planning application.

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

1. An update was given in connection with the Buildings Design Guide Review and the issue of Supplementary Planning Document status. Advice had been sought from the Planning Inspectorate. The recommendation was that the Board should act as an agent for the Local Planning Authorities and prepare the review as an SPD – this is the only way that the document would receive the weight in decision-making that it is due. A meeting is being arranged with key local authority planning officers to discuss this issue and the work needed on the Management Plan.
2. An update was also given on the Roofing Materials Technical Note – this is being widely circulated. The Design Guide and Technical Notes have been subject to a price rise – the new prices are £15 for the Design Guide and £12 for the Technical Notes.

Chilterns Buildings Design Awards

3. The entries and winners for this year's buildings design awards scheme were discussed. The overall winner for 2007 is the new bedroom accommodation at The Crown Inn, Playhatch near Reading. Two commended awards will be given for a house extension at Gerrards Cross and the new affordable housing scheme at West Lane, Bledlow. A special project award will be given for the new hospice building for the Hospice of St. Francis in Berkhamsted. The awards ceremony was held 15th June at St. Katherine's, Parmoor.

Planning Training Provision

4. The training given on AONB matters by the Planning Officer was discussed in some detail. This will replace the annual planning forum and will take the form of lunchtime seminars for officers and presentations to Councillors (at principally District and Parish Councils). Board Members have been asked to help and will also give training after receiving suitable training themselves. It was also resolved that a summary leaflet would be prepared based on the main presentations that would be used.

AONB Management Plan Review

5. The Management Plan review was the main item on the agenda. The broad aims, key issues and policies of the two key chapters that affect the work of the Planning Committee (the built environment and minerals and waste) were discussed in some detail, and a standard table was compiled based on the comments that were made. Much of the material was still considered to be relevant, though there is scope for removing some elements that are repetitive or are out of date (annex 2 for example). The relevance of the current indicators (chapter 14) was also discussed and these were generally considered to be appropriate. The table will be completed and used as the basis for the discussion with the local authority planning officers.

DCLG Consultation – Changes to Permitted Development (Householder Microgeneration)

6. The DCLG consultation on changes to permitted development rights for householder micro-generation was discussed. The key issues that were raised related to: the removal of AONBs and National Parks from the protection currently afforded by Article 1(5) of the GPDO; the need to address views from all areas (including waterways, open access land and public parks) as well as highways; the need to prepare good practice and advice notes at the national level, and the need to protect all historic assets.

Development Plans Responses

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

Bucks CC Minerals and Waste LDF Minerals DPD Issues and Options

8. Comments were made about the lack of recognition being given to the AONB and consistency in terms of wording when references are made. Various supporting representations were made in connection with support for the local brick industry, protection of the natural and cultural heritage and ensuring high standards of restoration and after use. Various options were proposed for the supply of aggregates and provision of sand and gravel and the response sought protection of the AONB and wider environment.

Wycombe DC Consultation on Proposed Pre-Examination Changes to the Core Strategy

9. Many of the proposed changes were supported as they addressed comments that had previously been made or added new information about the need to provide infrastructure, protection of habitats, the need to take account of the effects of cumulative development and the need to achieve carbon neutral development. However, a small number were objected to based on the implications for the AONB. One change that was objected to introduces a list of settlements (many within the AONB) which are stated as not being protected by other policies or designations although in many instances this is not the case.

Wycombe DC Consultation on Preferred Options Site Allocations DPD

10. One key objection in this instance was the omission of the AONB from the DPD whereas other similar constraints are included (Green Belt for example). Some of the proposals are affected by or would affect the AONB and for consistency it should be included here. Various proposals are supported including the removal of a coachway facility from the AONB, the inclusion of a walking and cycling network and the Council's stance in connection with not releasing land from the Green Belt. Detailed comments were made about proposals in the Hughenden Quarter. Various proposals are located within or adjacent to the AONB, and though these are not objected to in principle the fact that the sites are within or in close proximity to the AONB needs to be given greater prominence.

Oxfordshire CC Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Preferred Options

11. Much of the consultation document was supported and reflects comments made at previous stages. The prominence given to the three AONBs within the County is welcomed and supported, although in some of the more detailed sections objections had to be made to ensure that the AONBs received full recognition. The lack of reference to locally distinctive, traditional building materials was also objected to.

Oxfordshire CC Minerals and Waste Development Framework – Waste Sites Proposals and Policies Issues and Options

12. In this instance objection was made to the lack of recognition given to the AONBs within the County. The response stressed the need to ensure that all development within the AONBs should conserve or enhance the natural beauty. Any development should be small in scale (size) and designed to the highest quality. The principle of development at sites with the AONBs was not objected to but the above points had to be stressed for a number of sites.

Hertfordshire Waste Partnership's draft Core Strategy, draft Action Plan and draft Environmental Report

13. The lack of recognition for the purposes of the AONB and its associated Management Plan were objected to for both the Core Strategy and the

Environmental Report. The lack of a policy specifically dealing with the AONB was also objected to.

Luton BC Draft SPD Planning Obligations and Sustainability Appraisal

14. Much of the Draft SPD was supported as it would apply to many of the developments that are likely to come forward, and would address cumulative impacts (particularly as it relates to infrastructure provision). However, the lack of recognition given to the provision of Green Infrastructure was objected to. The Sustainability Appraisal was objected to because of the lack of recognition for the AONB and the need to provide Green Infrastructure. The need to secure sustainable construction standards was welcomed, though greater detail is needed in connection with energy schemes.

Mid Beds DC Gypsy and Traveller DPD Issues and Options

15. Limited comments were made about this document as the sites were all outside the AONB. However, sites may come forward in the future and the document as drafted did not take proper account of the AONB and its setting if this was to occur.

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_230507.pdf

Aylesbury Vale Growth

16. Subsequent to the Planning Committee it has been discovered (press reports) that the likely growth points at Aylesbury, as part of the wider growth agenda, are to be located to the east and south of the town (from the A41 to the A418).
17. The proposals are likely to lead to significant traffic generation towards and through the AONB and increased use of the AONB for recreation. The Board had previously responded to the consultation on the issues and options stressing the need to ensure that the AONB was protected from the implications of such development. A close eye will be kept on the proposals as they emerge (likely to be mid July for a six week consultation period).

Planning applications update

18. In the year from 1st April, the Board has been consulted on 27 applications, and has made formal representations on 6. Of these applications 1 has been determined, and that was in line with the Board's comments.
19. In the previous year the Board was sent details of 167 applications and appeals. Of these 26 were the subject of formal representations with 25 objections and 1 support. Of those applications that have thus far been determined (22), 18 are in line with the Board's comments and 4 are not. This

shows that 82% of those cases that the Board made formal comments on that have been determined were in line with the Board's comments. This will continue to be monitored.

20. Subsequent to the preparation of the Planning Committee papers details were obtained of an application at the High Heavens waste site near High Wycombe. A representation was made objecting to two very large buildings which would be massive in their bulk, being 40m long, 20m wide and 13m high (waste reception) and 112m long, 36m wide and 12m high (maturation building) and would be clearly visible both within and from outside the site. The square bulk of the reception building would make it more obvious in the landscape. Both the bulk and the proposed materials (white translucent fabric covering which would be highly reflective) of the maturation building will also make this highly visible and more obvious in the landscape.
21. The Planning Officer met two Officers from Buckinghamshire County Council. The need for the buildings and their design were explained. The need stems from making the site more efficient and removing odour problems. The design and materials arise from the use of the buildings and are at a scale that cannot apparently be changed (we had asked for the maturation building to be split). The covering material can be coloured and two colours will be proposed (the Council is open to suggestions). The material can be non-reflective. The Council stressed that they considered that there would be additional benefits based on meeting wider waste objectives and employment creation on the site, as well as control of odours. If a site visit was needed this could be arranged.
22. The application has been sent to the Secretary of State as it departs from the Development Plan and we had suggested that the application should be called-in for determination. If the Board has any further comments to make these can be forwarded to the County Council.

Annual Planning Committee Tour

23. The annual planning committee tour was also the subject of discussion. It was resolved that the tour should focus on successful diversification schemes. A visit has been arranged to Crowmarsh Battle Barns at Crowmarsh Gifford to look at the office development that has taken place. Other visits are being arranged. The tour takes place on Thursday 12th July.

Recommendations

1. **The Board notes: the progress made in connection with the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide; the suggestions made for planning training; the responses made on the DCLG Consultation and other Development Plan documents; the current situation regarding responses on planning applications, and the details of the Planning Committee Tour.**
2. **The Board considers what additional comments, if any, should be made in connection with the proposal at High Heavens.**

Report on the Planning White Paper

Author: Colin White Planning Officer

Summary: The Planning White Paper and associated documents on planning performance agreements and changes to permitted development rights are the subject of public consultation. There are implications for the Board and AONB and responses are proposed to each document.

Purpose of Report: To propose and approve responses to the Planning White Paper and associated public consultation exercises.

Background

1. The 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' White Paper was published by the Secretaries of State for: Communities and Local Government; Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Trade and Industry, and Transport at the beginning of June. It is subject to a public consultation process that closes on 17th August 2007.
2. The main aims of the White Paper are to:
 - streamline the planning system;
 - introduce a new system to make decisions on major infrastructure projects more timely and efficient;
 - set policy for such projects at the national level, and
 - improve engagement in the system.
3. The White Paper is accompanied by consultations on other documents including 'Planning Performance Agreements' (a new way to manage large-scale major planning applications) and 'Changes to Permitted Development' (permitted development rights for householders). All of these documents are subject to a proposed Board response detailed in Appendix 1. The key elements of the documents are detailed below.

The Planning White Paper

4. Key infrastructure projects will be considered by an independent Infrastructure Planning Commission which will base decisions on national policy statements. Guidance will be offered to promoters of such schemes.
5. The procedures for infrastructure projects will be improved by rationalising the different development consent regimes and improving the inquiry procedures for all of them.
6. Public participation will be improved across the entire process with opportunities to be involved being extended to include open floor stages at inquiries.

7. There is a proposal to explore devolution on decisions on smaller infrastructure projects, where appropriate, to local authorities.
8. National Policy Statements (NPS) would be better prepared in the context of a national spatial planning strategy and the implications for the environment should receive greater recognition.
9. Public consultation will be fundamental to the proposed system and applications for major infrastructure projects should meet defined standards before being considered by the infrastructure planning commission.
10. The Government proposes that certain organisations should be consulted on relevant projects – whilst National Park authorities are included in the list AONB Conservation Boards (and other management bodies) are not.
11. There will still be a requirement to have regard to the purposes of AONBs, as a result of the relevant Acts of Parliament, in decisions that the IPC will make.
12. There are proposals to review the current planning policy framework (PPG and PPS) to produce a more strategic, clearer and more focused national framework.
13. One proposal that is particularly welcomed and supported is that which would remove the requirement that all SPDs should be listed in a local planning authority's LDS (paragraph 8.21). In addition it is proposed that the blanket requirement for sustainability appraisal of SPD should be removed (paragraph 8.23).
14. The timely provision of infrastructure is also discussed and should be soundly addressed as part of the plan making process.
15. The Government intends simplify the planning application process by introducing an approach that assesses the impact of proposals on others, to determine what type of development is permitted.

Planning Performance Agreements – a new way to manage large-scale major planning applications

16. Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) are a means of providing greater certainty with regard to the speed and quality of large planning application assessments and decisions. Though not having direct implications for the Board and AONB the use of PPAs is to be welcomed.
17. The PPA process would allow early involvement by environmental bodies and specific consultees. As part of the process a list of key issues should be created.
18. The consultation document redefines major development into two categories – large-scale major and small-scale major applications and that only the large-

scale category would be removed from the 13 week determination requirement (BV target 109a).

Changes to Permitted Development – permitted development rights for householders

19. The Government is advocating an impact approach for permitted development.
20. The Government is proposing that the restrictions proposed for conservation areas should apply to other designated areas (including AONBs).
21. Consultation will be undertaken in connection with basement development.
22. The Government is considering changes to Article 4 directions so that the Secretary of State approval is not always required and the right to compensation may be removed.
23. Some types of permitted development could be subject to prior approval procedures (similar to those for telecommunications development).
24. The Government proposes various limits for extensions, roof extensions, alterations and developments within the curtilage of dwellings, many of which are similar to the existing situation, though many are restricted in designated areas.
25. The consultation suggests no restriction on paving over gardens as it is not considered to be a national problem.

Recommendation

1. **That the Board approves the responses to the Planning White Paper and associated consultation documents as detailed in Appendix 1.**

Details of the Board's Proposed Response

The Planning White Paper

1. The first section of White Paper that proposes changes is Chapter 2 which deals with improving the way key infrastructure projects are dealt with. Key infrastructure projects will include airport and port projects, improvements to the Strategic Road Network, significant energy infrastructure such as power generation and significant water and waste infrastructure such as reservoirs and waste water plants.
2. The Government proposes to produce national policy statements for key sectors to ensure that there is a clear policy framework for decisions on nationally significant infrastructure. The statements would integrate environmental goals and would be subject to thorough consultation. Provided that AONBs were considered as part of the process, particularly by involving the National Association of AONBs and AONB management boards and committees, and that responses to consultation exercises were actually taken account of then this is not objected to.
3. Help will also be given to promoters of infrastructure projects to improve applications and require effective consultation with statutory environmental bodies. If this rigour is applied and statutory AONB Conservation Boards are recognised and included as one of the statutory environmental bodies then the Board does not object to this proposal.
4. An independent infrastructure planning commission will be created to take decisions on nationally significant infrastructure cases. Decisions would be taken in the light of national policy statements unless any adverse local consequences outweighed the benefits. This is not objected to, provided that the Government listens properly to the input made by organisations like the Conservation Board into the policy statements. Any representations at the local level should also be listened to in the same way.
5. The Government proposes to streamline the procedures for infrastructure projects by rationalising the different development consent regimes and improving the inquiry procedures for all of them. The Board supports this proposal as it will lead to clearer processes that will be more easily understood at the local level.
6. Public participation will be improved across the entire process with opportunities to be involved being extended to include open floor stages at inquiries. On the basis that this will improve the decisions that are made and will allow organisations like the Board to be involved and to make a difference this is supported.
7. There is a proposal to explore devolving decisions on smaller infrastructure projects, where appropriate, to local authorities. The particular schemes that would be covered by this change are those that are primarily local in effect.

Provided that there will still be full opportunities for public involvement in the process the Board does not object to this proposal.

8. Section 3 of the White Paper deals with the National Policy Statements (NPS) which would establish the national case for infrastructure development. Though the production of NPS is not objected to the Board considers that these would be better prepared in the context of a national spatial planning strategy, which to date has not been properly considered. Nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty would have to feature as a fundamental part of any NPS. Before being approved NPS should be subject to extensive public consultation and any responses should clearly be taken account of.
9. The content of NPS is briefly outlined in paragraph 3.8. The Board objects to the lack of any reference to implications for the environment and the current over emphasis on economic matters. Paragraph 3.9 details common core elements that would appear in NPS, and in this instance the environment is considered, but only as part of a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the NPS. The Board considers that environmental objectives should be at the heart of NPS and not considered as an afterthought. The Government proposes that NPS should be the primary consideration with more weight than any other statement of national, regional or local policy. This causes the Board some concern as many statements of policy, which have evolved over time and which reflect the wishes and desires of many groups and individuals, are likely to be ignored in the rush to get large schemes through the planning process. The Board would prefer the status of NPS to be on a par with other national statements of policy (PPS for example) and should be considered alongside other statements of policy such as development plans that have been subject to full consultation and adoption procedures.
10. Chapter 4 of the White Paper considers the preparation of applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects. Public consultation on potential options appears to be encouraged at various stages throughout the process, and would be required before an application was submitted, which is welcomed by the Board. The Board also welcomes the proposal that applications should meet defined standards before being considered by the infrastructure planning commission.
11. The Government also proposes that other organisations should be consulted on relevant projects – whilst National Park authorities are included in the list AONB Conservation Boards (and other management bodies) are not. The Board objects to the omission of AONB Conservation Boards from the list of indicative statutory consultees because Boards have similar duties to National Park authorities and deal with landscape of exactly the same quality. As part of consultation the Government proposes to impose time limits by which responses should be made. Whilst not objecting to this, the Board wishes to ensure that any timescale that is set is appropriate to the issue and this should be longer rather than shorter to enable proper consideration. An appropriate time would probably be 12 weeks from receipt of notification.

12. The role of the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) is dealt with in Chapter 5. One of the key implications from this chapter is the proposal to rationalise the different development consents regimes and create a unified, single, consent regime. On the basis that the Board considers that this would simplify the process this is supported. The Board welcomes the recognition given to the requirement to have regard to the purposes of AONBs as a result of the relevant Acts of Parliament (Box 5.2) in decisions that the IPC will make.
13. Chapter 7 is concerned with providing a positive framework for delivering sustainable development. The Government proposes to extend permitted development rights for microgeneration to other land uses. This is supported and should be particularly encouraged for commercial and business uses, whilst also offering encouragements for making existing buildings more energy efficient.
14. The Government intends to review the current approach to retail development and will introduce a new test which has a strong focus on the town centre first policy. This is vital to ensure that developments take place in appropriate locations that serve to improve the vitality and viability of town centres, and should ensure that edge of town or out of town locations are properly considered taking account of landscape issues (particularly nationally designated landscapes). The review will take the form of proposals that are consulted on in the summer of 2007. The Board will continue to examine documents as they emerge.
15. There are proposals to review the current planning policy framework (PPG and PPS) to produce a more strategic, clearer and more focused national framework. This is welcomed provided that the nationally designated landscapes (including AONBs) remain a fundamental part of the framework as currently detailed in PPS7.
16. Strengthening the role of local authorities is covered in Chapter 8. Plan making procedures are proposed to be simplified by removing one element of consultation (preferred options) and allowing core strategies to include strategic sites, though consultation with the public will remain fundamental to the process. This is welcomed and supported by the Board.
17. One proposal that is particularly welcomed and fully supported by the Board is that which would remove the requirement that all SPDs should be listed in a local planning authority's LDS (paragraph 8.21). In addition it is proposed that the blanket requirement for sustainability appraisal of SPD should be removed (paragraph 8.23). These changes would ease the process and speed up production of SPD and allow the Board's publications (Management Plan, Design Guide and Technical Notes) to receive the weight and recognition that they are due.
18. The timely provision of infrastructure is also discussed and a change will be proposed that ensures that implementation has been soundly addressed as part of the plan making process. If the infrastructure that is to be considered includes Green Infrastructure then this approach is supported by the Board.

19. Chapter 9 is concerned with making the planning system more efficient and effective. The Government intends to introduce an approach that assesses the impact of proposals on others, to determine what type of development is permitted. Provided that the implications of development include impacts on the wider landscape, which can arise from issues other than size (design and use of materials for example) then this is not objected to. Similar principles would apply to other forms of development in the future, and the Board's stance would be the same in this instance. Controls could still be used in the form of Article 4 Directions and changes are likely to ease their implementation, which would be welcomed in connection with certain forms of development (selling of plots of land on the internet for example).

Planning Performance Agreements – a new way to manage large-scale major planning applications

20. Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) (formerly Planning Delivery Agreements) are a means of providing greater certainty with regard to the speed and quality of large planning application assessments and decisions. PPAs, which would include a project management framework, are considered to help the planning process in connection with certain larger applications. Though not having direct implications for the Board and AONB the use of PPAs is to be welcomed.

21. The PPA process would allow early involvement by environmental bodies and specific consultees. The Board welcomes and supports this approach.

22. As part of the process a list of key issues should be created. This is welcomed and supported.

23. The consultation document redefines major development into two categories – large-scale major and small-scale major applications. Large-scale major applications would be 200 or more dwellings or 4 hectares or more for residential and 10,000m² or more than 2 hectares for all other uses. Small-scale major applications would consist of 10 to 199 dwellings or 0.5 to less than 4 hectares for housing and for all other uses 1,000m² to 9,999m² or 1 to less than 2 hectares. PPAs would be encouraged on all such sites and only those within the large-scale category would be removed from the 13 week determination requirement (BV target 109a). This approach is supported and welcomed.

Changes to Permitted Development – permitted development rights for householders

24. The Government is advocating an impact approach for permitted development. Though this is not objected to the wider, often landscape, implications still need to be considered and impact should relate, not only to volume or size, but also to design and use of materials.

25. The consultation document refers to a study that suggests that conservation areas should be offered a higher level of protection than other designated areas (including AONBs). The Government should, rightly, be cautious in this instance

as the exclusion of National Parks and AONBs from Article 1(5) land, for the purpose of permitted development would be confusing and would send out the wrong messages. This would therefore be objected to by the Board. National Parks and AONBs, which according to PPS7 'have been confirmed by Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty', cover approximately 25% of the land surface of England and Wales. The Government is proposing that the restrictions proposed for conservation areas should apply to other designated areas (including AONBs) and this is welcomed and fully supported by the Board, although other areas should also be considered as detailed below.

26. Therefore, the Board considers that the restriction should include: all Article 1(5) land; waterways; highways (which should by definition include all rights of way); open access land, and other areas of land with public access (including parks) particularly in the wider landscape where there would be implications for tranquillity. The developments, in a few areas like the canal network, could be equally visible from waterways, or canal or waterside public paths.
27. Consultation will be undertaken in connection with basement development and the Board welcomes this approach and will reserve its right to comment at the appropriate stage.
28. The Government is considering changes to Article 4 directions so that the Secretary of State approval is not always required and the right to compensation may be removed. These changes are welcomed by the Board particularly as they should speed up the process of issuing such directions.
29. Some types of permitted development could be subject to prior approval procedures (similar to those for telecommunications development). The Board considers that there would be benefit in making certain types of development subject to a prior approval mechanism. It is difficult to propose exactly which forms of development should be included, though any with an implication for a nationally protected landscape should be included, and elements of proposals such as siting design and appearance (which would include materials use) should all be subject to approval. Examples could include: telecommunications; fencing above 1m high, and mobile field shelters and maneges for equestrian use.
30. The Government proposes various limits for extensions, many of which are similar to the existing situation. The Board welcomes the requirements for: materials to match the existing house, and planning permission for side extensions and cladding in designated areas.
31. A similar proposal is included for roof extensions and alterations. The Board welcomes the requirement for all roof extensions and roof alterations to be the subject of a planning application in designated areas.
32. Various developments within the curtilage of dwellings are also considered. The Board welcomes the restrictions that are proposed for the area covered by outbuildings, garages and swimming pools and the need for outbuildings at the side of properties to require permission.

33. The consultation suggests no restriction on paving over gardens as it is not considered to be a national problem. This is objected to by the Board and we suggest that the consultant's proposal of no more than 50% to be covered, with the covering being porous should be adopted and permitted development rights therefore removed.

Revised Projects Programme 2007- 08

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: The Natural England grant award for projects is significantly less than expected and requires a revision to the work programme including the postponement and down sizing of some projects.

Project Grants

1. The work programme was due to start in full on 1st April (some projects have been underway for much longer) but many are heavily reliant on Natural England grant aid. The Executive Committee considered the situation and supported the adjustments explained in this paper to allow work to begin as soon as possible, where sufficient resources were available.
2. The Board applied for project funding of £98,930 – the same amount applied for in 2006-07. Alistair Helliwell, NE team leader for the Chilterns, provided a verbal update on 3rd May informing the Board that it will receive a total offer of £32,000 for Chalk Streams, Chalk Downland and Commons projects. A minor re-allocation was suggested and verbally agreed. The details of the bid and offers are given in Table 1

Project	Total Cost	NE Grant applied for	NE grant awarded	Proposed Re-allocation of NE grant
Chalk Streams	44,300	22,000	22,000	22,000
Getting Close to Nature	30,000	13,000	0	1,000
Making of the Chilterns Landscape	10,000	5,000	0	0
Access For All	10,000	5,000	0	0
Chilterns Cycle Network	5,000	3,500	0	0
Countryside Close to Home	10,000	5,000	0	0
Visitor Survey	13,000	6,500	0	2,500
Commons	5,000	2,500	2,500	2,500
Chalk Grassland	20,000	10,000	7,500	4,000
Woodland Management	17,110	8,555	0	0
Ancient Woodland Survey	6,750	3,375	0	0
Discover the Chilterns Booklet	9,000	4,500	0	0
People and Places	11,000	5,000	0	0
Total	£194,160	£98,930	£32,000	£32,000

2. The shortfall in expected funding required adjustment to the programme.

Project	Notes	Recommendations
Chalk Streams	Chalk Steams Project Officer post can be retained and contract extended to 31 st March 2008. Environment Agency still to confirm their contribution but other funding in place	Proceed as planned and extend contract of project officer until March 2008
Getting Close to Nature	In its third year of an HLF grant supported throughout by CA/EN.	Reduce element of programme not supported by HLF grant and use ring fenced reserves from Friend of Red Kites scheme and donations to cover deficit (£6,000)
Making of the Chilterns Landscape	This project has insufficient funding in place to be started	Postpone to 2008-09 or until resources can be secured. Carry on with events and interpretation which can be accommodated from the core budget.
Access For All	This is a high priority and part of an ongoing work programme for which the Board has established a good reputation. The Board should seek alternative funds to keep as much of the work going as possible. In any event it would have been reduced in scale due to the access officer's maternity leave.	Reduce in scale and seek alternative funding possibly drawing on reserves and the SDF. (£3,000)
Chilterns Cycle Network	This is work in development (Chilterns Cycle way and Ashridge Cycle network) which will have to be slowed down and to a great extent delivered by other partners and volunteers. The CTC volunteers are doing much of the development work for the Chilterns Cycleway	Proceed but reduce scale of the Board's financial commitment, making use of reserves and/or SDF where possible. CTC and other volunteers may be capable of doing much of the development work. (£1,500)
Countryside Close to Home	This was a development of the access to woodland work undertaken over the last 18 months and would have added a valuable new part to the web site. It was largely a pilot project which will now have to be delayed.	Postpone until 2008-09.
Visitor Survey	The survey has begun and was grant aided by CA/NE in 2006-07. The survey is supported by a partnership which has provided the match funding - 50%. The survey is being undertaken this year to follow on from the 1997 survey to give a ten year comparison. It is important work which can underpin the review of the Management plan.	The survey should proceed as planned but the Board's contribution covered by reserves (£4,000). Other partners to be approached for additional funding.

Commons	Most of the funding, which has not yet been earmarked for specific commons, will be used to support work by local commons groups and the Chilterns commons Network	Proceed as planned, but on a smaller scale
Chalk Grassland	Most of the funding, which has not yet been earmarked for specific sites, will be used to support work by site owners and for training.	Proceed as planned, but on a smaller scale.
Woodland Management	This grant would have been used to engage the services of the Chiltern Woodland Project to advise on the management of small woodlands, in particular ancient semi natural woodlands and to provide advice and training on woodland heritage and archaeology. The Woodland Project will be severely affected by the lack of grant aid and the scale of advice offered is likely to be cut back and require the Project to levy a near commercial rate for its advice. The Project is likely to have to consider reducing its assistance in general to the Board and possibly even charge for that assistance currently given free.	Reduce the scale of the programme and consider allocating funds from reserves (£5,000). There is sufficient reserve remaining in the Forest Research Project fund
Ancient Woodland Survey	Surveys in Sussex have shown that up to 40% of ancient semi natural woodland was not included in the definitive inventory of ancient woodland prepared in 1992. The FC is now encouraging widespread re-surveying of ancient woodland as it is a national priority habitat - a significant proportion of the English total lies in the AONBs in the south east. This would have been a small scale pilot project to establish whether a full scale survey was needed.	Use reserves to proceed as planned (£3,375). There is sufficient reserve remaining in the Forest Research Project fund
Discover the Chilterns Booklet	The first edition was one of the most popular and highly praised of the Board's publications. The stock of 20,000 was exhausted in less than one year when it was expected to last for two. Some of the costs for a second expanded edition could be covered by income from visitor attractions and advertising but not all of it.	Delay and investigate alternative sources of funding
People and Places	This project has taken over a year to develop and secured a grant from the HLF which is time limited. It is a new area of work	Proceed as planned with an allocation from reserves (£3,000). Request funding support from The Chiltern

	and will be supported directly by The Chiltern Society and volunteers	Society (£2,000)
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- To proceed as recommended will require release of reserves of up to £26,000. The draw on reserves could be reduced by donations, SDF grant for Access and Cycling projects and downsizing of projects and re-allocation of core budget funds. In practice it may be possible to reduce the draw on reserves to approx.£20,000.

Re-allocation of the Land Management Scheme Funds

- The Executive Committee felt that the reserves needed to support the work programme should, in the first instance, be drawn from those recently allocated to the new Land Management Fund (£30,000). The fund would not be entirely exhausted by such a re-allocation, especially if other external funds can be sourced. Instead the Board should use what funds remain on a discretionary basis rather than promoting it as a formal grant scheme - in effect as a top up to the Sustainable Development Fund.

Recommendations

- The Board notes the impact of the shortfall of grant aid from Natural England and supports the adjustments to the work programme proposed by the Executive Committee.**
- To reallocate reserves allocated to the Land Management Fund to support the grant shortfall for projects, but to retain the scheme funded by the balance expected to be approx £10,000.**

Report on Draft CCB Lifelong Learning Strategy

Author: Cathy Rose Activities and Education Officer

Summary: The Board has a primary purpose of promoting the understanding and enjoyment of the AONB by people of all ages. A Lifelong Learning Strategy is being developed to address the provision of learning opportunities to everyone, regardless of age, background, race or physical and mental ability.

Purpose of Report To present the Board with a Draft Lifelong Learning Strategy document for discussion.

Background

1. The scale and variety of landscapes, buildings and habitats in the Chilterns offer a tremendous learning resource. The Board and its partners are developing learning opportunities to meet the needs of all through a wide range of programmes supporting both formal and informal learning.
2. Limitations on staff and resources within the Conservation Board dictate that priorities must be set. This strategy gives us the opportunity to identify the role of the Board in providing learning opportunities for the broadest possible audience.
3. The draft strategy has been developed by the Activities and Education Officer with input / comments from :
Shirley Judges (CCB), David Nimmo-Smith (CCB), Heather Barrett-Mold (CCB), Peggy Ewart (The Chiltern Society), Julie Lloyd-Evans (Chiltern Study Centre)

Why Lifelong Learning?

4. Lifelong learning means that everyone is provided with opportunities for learning at all ages and in numerous contexts: at work, at home and through leisure activities, not just through formal channels such as school and higher education.
5. The concept of increasing knowledge and understanding should be at the heart of everything the Board does in relation to raising awareness of the special qualities of the Chilterns. Through its publications, events and website, everyone, young and old will have the opportunity to learn more about the extensive natural, cultural and built heritage of the Chilterns AONB.

The Aims of the Strategy:

6. The aims of the Chilterns AONB Lifelong Learning Strategy are:

- to provide opportunities for the widest possible audience to learn about, understand and appreciate the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB.
- to promote partnership working between the Chilterns Conservation Board and education providers across the Chilterns.
- To add value to the education projects currently provided by our partners.
- To encourage visitors and residents to have direct, positive learning experiences and in the process instilling a sense of guardianship.

What should the Board's role be?

7. It can be argued that the Board is not best placed for direct delivery of formal education programmes and that maybe a supporting / signposting role in this area would be more appropriate. The Board has a proven track record in organising informative programmes of walks, talks, family days and events which, with careful promotion, have the potential to reach a wide and diverse audience.
8. Adopting a Lifelong Learning ethos brings the Board into contact with a huge range of audiences, which include:
 - Formal Education (schools, Adult Learning)
 - Community Groups (U3A, WI, youth groups)
 - Families
 - General public
 - Volunteers
 - Special Interest groups and enthusiasts
 - Non-Traditional Countryside Users (e.g. people with disabilities, Black and Ethnic Minority groups, urban dwellers)
9. Meeting the differing needs of these audiences can be achieved in two ways. 1) Specifying priority audiences and tailoring provision for them, or 2) developing a range of learning opportunities that work across the board and are (as much as possible) inclusive to all. It is suggested that the latter option is more practical, in view of restrictions on staff time and budgets, though this is open to discussion.
10. The attached draft Lifelong Learning Strategy (Appendix 1) indicates which areas of the Board's current and planned work contribute to increasing the knowledge of our audiences and includes a work programme and mechanisms of delivery.

Recommendations:

1. **The Board approves the Lifelong Learning Strategy subject to any amendments.**



DRAFT LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY FOR THE CHILTERNES CONSERVATION BOARD

Summary

1. The Chilterns Conservation Board is committed to promoting the understanding and enjoyment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty by people of all ages. The scale and variety of landscapes, buildings and habitats in the Chilterns offer a tremendous learning resource. The Board and its partners are developing learning opportunities to meet the needs of all through a wide range of programmes supporting both formal and informal learning which aim to stimulate understanding, develop skills and encourage creative responses.
2. The countryside can be inspiring and life changing and barriers to its enjoyment and understanding must be removed. Engaging the mind and the heart through the experience of learning in the countryside enhances enjoyment and arouses a determination to protect the countryside for the future. Lifelong Learning encourages appreciation and care of the countryside and helps people to understand their own place in the world.

What is Lifelong Learning?

3. By definition, Lifelong Learning is the concept that "It's never too soon or too late for learning", a philosophy that has taken root in a whole host of different organizations. Lifelong learning is attitudinal; that one can and should be open to new ideas, decisions, skills or behaviors. Lifelong learning sees citizens provided with learning opportunities at all ages and in numerous contexts: at work, at home and through leisure activities, not just through formal channels such as school and higher education.

Aims

4. The aims of the Chilterns AONB Lifelong Learning Strategy are:
 - to provide opportunities for the widest possible audience to learn about, understand and appreciate the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB
 - to promote partnership working between the Chilterns Conservation Board and education providers across the Chilterns
 - To add value to the education projects currently provided by our partners

- To encourage visitors to and residents of the Chilterns to have direct, positive learning experiences, that may change their lives for the better, instilling a sense of guardianship.

Links to Chilterns AONB Management Plan

5. The Conservation Board's primary purposes are:
 - to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB
 - to increase the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the AONB's special qualities.

6. The second primary duty links clearly to the concept of lifelong learning, and throughout the Management Plan reference is made to our broad aims of increasing public awareness of the various aspects of the Chilterns including:
 - Nature Conservation
 - The Historic Environment
 - The Water Environment
 - Farming and Forestry

7. In addition, within the Recreation and Access section of the Management Plan, the broad aims include:
 - Provide recreation and access opportunities for all, including local communities, those living in adjacent towns and visitors, ensuring their visit is sustainable and compatible with the overriding aim of the AONB – to conserve and enhance natural beauty

 - Ensure a high quality experience for all, with special encouragement for those who are currently unable to visit the countryside.

8. Bearing this in mind, it is clear that the Board's Lifelong Learning Strategy should not only consider the subjects we wish to promote, but also the audiences we wish to reach.

Audiences for Learning

9. Potential audiences for learning in the Chilterns could include anyone, but broadly, the audiences can be sub-divided as follows:
 - Formal Education (schools, Adult Learning)
 - Community Groups (U3A, WI, youth groups)
 - Families
 - General public
 - Special Interest Groups and enthusiasts
 - Non-Traditional Countryside Users (e.g. people with disabilities, Black and Ethnic Minority groups, urban dwellers)

10. Limitations on staff and resources dictate that rather than concentrating on any one of these audiences, the Board should seek to promote a range of activities that meet the needs of as many of these groups as possible.

11. Lifelong learning should be at the heart of everything the Board does in relation to raising awareness of the special qualities of the Chilterns. Through its publications, events and website, everyone, young and old will have the opportunity to learn more about the extensive natural, cultural and built heritage of the Chilterns AONB.
12. The table below shows how the variety of work currently undertaken by the Chilterns Conservation Board provides learning opportunities for a wide range of audiences.

Area of Work	Schools / Adult Learning	Community groups	Families	General Public	Special Interest Groups	Non-Traditional Users
Education Packs	x	x				
Education Providers Directory	x	x				
Talks programme	x	x	x	x	x	x
Skills Training workshops		x		x	x	x
Volunteer-led walks programme		x	x	x	x	x
Family fun events			x	x		
'Wildlife on the Move' events		x	x	x	x	x
Wildlife Watching CCTV Initiatives	x	x	x	x	x	x
AONB Website	x		x	x	x	x
Volunteering Opportunities		x		x	x	x
Guidance on Buildings				x	x	
'People and Places' Project	x		x	x	x	x

13. The Management Plan relates to the whole AONB, and not just the work undertaken directly by the Board, and it is clear that with limited staff and resources, only so much can be achieved. It is therefore necessary to prioritise the areas in which the Board is best placed to deliver in the future.

The Role of the Board in Supporting Formal Education in the Chilterns

14. Many organisations across the Chilterns offer formal, curriculum-linked education programmes to schools on their sites. Rather than adding to these with our own programme of formal educational opportunities, it is considered that the Board would be best placed liaising with the various organisations, providing information on the wider Chilterns to be incorporated into the existing programmes. The key is to ensure that consistent messages about the Chilterns, and issues affecting the area should be delivered by all education providers.

15. It is proposed that the Board, in partnership with The Chiltern Society, aims to work as an education signposting service, helping teachers find suitable sites and education providers to meet their needs. The Board will produce a Directory of Education Providers and Resources which will be a web-based resource that will be accessible to teachers and youth leaders providing details of what educational courses and resources are on offer across the Chilterns.
16. The Board will continue to promote two Curriculum-linked Education Resource Packs which are currently being used in local schools. The Red Kite Resource Pack for Key Stages 2 and 3 is available as a paper pack and is downloadable from the Chilterns AONB Website. The Chalk Streams pack for Key Stages 2 and 3 is currently available as a CD with supporting teachers' notes, but will soon be adapted as web pages.
17. The Board will positively encourage teachers to maximise the use of existing resource material prepared by its partners to study aspects of the Chilterns natural, built and cultural heritage. Where materials are not available to cover a particular Chilterns theme, and a demand can be recognised, the Board will work with partners to produce suitable materials and promote them to the relevant educational bodies.
18. The Board receives many requests from schools to give talks, yet does not have the time or staff available to meet this demand. A CD of Power Point presentations on various aspects of the Chilterns will be provided to schools with scripts, enabling the teachers to deliver their own Chilterns-themed lessons. Should the school still require an 'expert' speaker, these requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
19. The Activities and Education Officer is registered with Bucks Adult Learning as a tutor and will offer 6 Adult Learning sessions a year. Currently the talks offered are on the subject of red kites, however this will be expanded to cover other Chilterns subjects.

Face-to-Face Initiatives

20. Volunteers registered with the Chilterns Conservation Board will offer up to 30 'on-demand' talks per year on red kites to local community groups (e.g. U3A, WI, Rotary, bird clubs etc). Once the CD of Power Point presentations (originally designed for schools) is available, volunteers will be trained to offer a wider variety of subjects.
21. Volunteers will also deliver the Board's programme of guided walks. The walks are themed around various subjects including chalk streams, red kites, butterflies and blooms, local history, woodland archaeology and farming. They are designed to be both educational and entertaining, and have added health and well-being benefits.
22. As part of the Board's 'Getting Close to Nature' project, trips will be offered that utilise various modes of transport for wildlife watching. These 'Wildlife on

the Move' trips are particularly popular with family groups and allow participants to learn about the area's wildlife and countryside in an informal, entertaining way.

23. Within the same project, in partnership with BBOWT and National Trust, a series of CCTV wildlife watching initiatives will allow the public close-up views of wildlife such as red kites, sand martins, badgers, frogs and garden birds. Volunteers staffing the displays and written interpretation make these entertaining and educational experiences.
24. Skills training will be offered to the general public and to specialist groups on a number of subjects including building skills, map reading, woodland crafts, photography and presentation skills. The Board is keen to tailor these courses to enable staff and volunteers with partners and local community groups to develop their own skills and thus be able to pass on valuable Chilterns-related messages to a wider audience.
25. Training will also be offered to our own volunteers to enable them to undertake their volunteering duties to best effect. The Board is ideally placed to help 'train the trainers', increasing the skills and knowledge of people who in turn will be able to pass this knowledge to others.
26. Many of the Board's events and initiatives are aimed at families, and whilst they provide entertainment, they also allow family groups to learn about important aspects of the Chilterns together. The Board will organise 4 family fun days per year based on different Chilterns subjects including woodland crafts, history / archaeology and wildlife.

Wider Learning Opportunities

27. The People and Places project will engage a number of volunteers in researching the stories of famous people of the Chilterns, linking them with particular places. As well as providing learning opportunities for the volunteers involved, the stories will be published on the AONB website, providing a learning resource for the general public.
28. A children's newsletter will be produced once a year. The newsletter contains quizzes, activities and information presented in a 'child-friendly' format with information for parents on places to go and things to do in the Chilterns.
29. The Chilterns AONB website provides a wealth of information, photographs and maps and is a fantastic learning resource for people of all ages. A new woodland web section concentrates on the seasonal; wildlife of Chiltern woods and their historical aspects and has been designed to appeal to a younger audience, with audio and video clips as well as written and illustrative information. This section will be promoted through our own publications, local press and through a postcard campaign.
30. A new section of the website will be developed, aimed specifically at children and young people. In addition, information will also be available to teachers

and educators. This will include the two education resource packs and the Directory of Education Providers and Resources. Children's quiz sheets will be available for download linked to five of the Chilterns Country walks:

- Angling Spring Wood
- Bourne End / Little Marlow
- Hughenden Manor
- Hambleden
- Goring

These will be promoted on the homepage of the website and in the children's newsletter.

Delivery

31. It is clear that the scale of learning-related work requires input from more than one member of staff. While the whole programme of work will be coordinated by the Activities and Education Officer, the draft work programme below indicates which members of staff will take responsibility for the delivery of the various elements of the programme.

Draft Lifelong Learning Work Programme 2007-08

Task	Output	Outcome	Time table	Resources	Main Audiences	Responsibility	Public Awareness
Supporting Formal Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce web-based directory of education providers and sites for visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased school visits to education providers Increased teacher knowledge of resources available 	July 2007	~ £300 (Core Education, secured) Staff time	School children Teachers Education providers	Activities & Education Officer, Admin Asst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Bulletin Website Schools bulletins
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and distribute disk of Power Point presentations for schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of Chilterns in school curricula Increased pupil knowledge of Chilterns features 	June 2007	~ £1,000 (Core Education, secured) Staff time	School children Teachers Education providers	Co-ordinated by Activities & Education Officer Input from all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Bulletin Website Schools bulletins
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 20 talks to schools per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of Chilterns in school curricula Increased pupil knowledge of Chilterns features 	On demand	Staff time	School children Teachers	Activities & Education Officer + others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On demand therefore promotion minimal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer 5 Adult Education sessions per year Increase range of subjects offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased public awareness 	Ongoing	Staff time	Public Enthusiasts	Activities & Education Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bucks Adult Learning publications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Chiltern Society with their Lottery Bid for Education Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chiltern Society Lottery Bid successful Education Outreach Officer Appointed 	Ongoing	Staff time		Activities & Education Officer	

Task	Output	Outcomes	Time table	Resources	Main Audiences	Responsibility	Public Awareness
	Officer						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend Chiltern Society and Thames Alliance Education Steering Group Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved partnership working 	Ongoing	Staff time	Education partners	Activities & Education Officer	
Face to Face Initiatives	Plan, promote and run: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 30 themed walks per year (red kites, woodland, chalk streams, farming, archaeology / history) Up to 30 themed talks per year (subjects as above) 3 walks per year accessible to people with mobility difficulties Taster days for BEM groups with Rainbow Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public attendance at walks & talks Increased public knowledge of Chilterns themes Increased number of disabled visitors Increased number of BEM visitors Increased volunteer participation 	Ongoing programme	Staff / volunteer time ~ £500 (not secured)	Public Speciality groups Enthusiasts People with disabilities BEM groups Volunteers	All AONB Staff involved Co-ordinated by Activities & Education Officer Black Environment Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's On Chalk & Trees Web site Leaflets Press
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 4 family days in / close to urban areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased public enjoyment / knowledge Increased attendance from families and urban dwellers 	Spaced through year	~ £3,000 (not secured) Staff time	Public BEM families Urban dwellers	All AONB Staff involved Co-ordinated by Activities & Education Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's On Chalk & Trees Web site Leaflets Press
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage and promote 3 CCTV initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased public awareness of Chilterns 	Spring / summer	~ £2,000 (Friends)	Public	Activities & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's On

Task	Output	Outcome	Time table	Resource s	Main Audiences	Responsibility	Public Awareness
	(Stokenchurch, Hughenden Manor, College Lake)	wildlife <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased website usage Increased media / tourism profile 		of Red Kites donations) Staff / volunteer time	Enthusiasts Speciality groups	Officer (in partnership with NT and BBOWT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chalk & Trees Web site Leaflets Press
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop training programme for staff / volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased volunteer knowledge 	Ongoing	~ £500 (not secured)	Volunteers	Activities & Education Officer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 building skills training days per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge / skills in building profession 	2008 - 09	~ £3,500 (not secured)	Speciality groups Enthusiasts	Planning Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's On Trade Journals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 'Wildlife on the Move' trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased public enjoyment / knowledge 	April – September	~ HLF funded for 2007, not secured for 2008 Staff / volunteer time	Public Enthusiasts Urban dwellers Families	Activities & Education Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's On Chalk & Trees Web site Leaflets Press
Wider Learning Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop children's newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge / understanding amongst younger audience 	September	~ £1,000 (Core Promotions, secured)	Children Families	Information & Interpretation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's On Chalk & Trees Web site Leaflets Press
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and update Woodland Web pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of website Increased 	May / June	~ £500 (Forest Research	Public Children	Information & Interpretation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chalk & Trees Web site

Task	Output	Outcome	Time table	Resource s	Main Audiences	Responsibility	Public Awareness
		understanding Chilterns amongst younger audience		Budget)	Enthusiasts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postcards • Press
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop children's pages on website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of website • Increased understanding Chilterns amongst younger audience 	2008 - 09	~ £4,000 (£2,000 secured from Core Promotions)	Children / families Schools	Information & Interpretation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chalk & Trees • Board Bulletin • Promotional postcards • Press releases
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote quiz sheets for Chilterns Country Walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased public understanding of Chilterns historic environment 	June	Already funded from 2006 / 07	Children / families	Access Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's On • Chalk & Trees • Web site
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 'People & Places' research project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of website • More trained volunteers 	Ongoing	£21,000 (£13,00 secured from HLF)	Public Enthusiasts Volunteers Schools	Information & Interpretation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's On • Chalk & Trees • Web site • Leaflets • Press

Energy Crop Scheme Guidance Document

Author: Kath Daly, CCB

Summary : Last year, grants were available through the Energy Crop Scheme (ECS) for establishment of Miscanthus (Elephant Grass) and Short Rotation Coppice. Site assessments were undertaken by the Forestry Commission (FC). The local, and Area Office received a total of 50 Miscanthus establishment grant applications, of which 2 were in the Chilterns AONB, 8 in the North Wessex Downs AONB. The Energy Crop Scheme (ECS) is currently closed but expected to be re-launched later this year. A draft guidance note has been produced locally, for potential ESC applicants who are considering a scheme with the Chilterns or North Wessex Downs AONB.

Purpose of report: To seek the Board's approval of the draft guidance.

Background

1. The market for energy crops – crops grown specifically to be harvested and burnt in power stations for electricity or heating systems – is developing in response to the concerns about climate change and targets for reductions in greenhouse gasses.
2. The UK Government has a target to generate 10% of the nation's electricity from renewables by 2010. The Defra website suggests that one way of meeting this target could involve up to 125,000 hectares of energy cropping.
3. One energy crop is miscanthus - woody, perennial grasses, originating from Asia with the potential for very high rates of growth at the most productive sites. Regarding yields, Defra guidance states that 'More experience is needed of yields under a wide range of soil conditions, but current information suggests that most lowland agricultural sites in England should be suitable for miscanthus cropping, with the highest yields coming from deep, moisture retentive soils.'
4. Didcot Power Station is the main existing end user locally. It should be noted that use of energy crops for energy production via power stations is far less efficient than use for direct heat production.
5. Miscanthus is planted in spring and canes produced during the summer are harvested in winter. This species is capable of maintaining this annual cropping cycle for 15 years. Miscanthus differs from short rotation coppice willow (an alternative energy crop) in that it gives an annual harvest and thus an annual income to the farmer.
7. Defra advise that all propagation, maintenance and harvest operations can be undertaken with conventional farm machinery.

8. Growth cycle: new shoots are produced annually which usually emerge during April. These shoots develop into erect stems, which reach 1 - 2 m in height by late August of the year of planting, with a diameter of 10 mm. The stems have an appearance similar to bamboo canes. From late July the lower leaves start to dry. Crop drying accelerates during autumn, as nutrients move back to the rhizome. Leaves then fall and a deep leaf litter develops. Any remaining foliage dies following the first air frost, and the stems dry to a relatively low moisture content (30-50%) during winter. By February, free standing, almost leafless canes remain and it is these which are harvested mechanically. This growth cycle is repeated once spring-time temperatures increase again. From the second season onwards the crop can achieve a maximum height of 2.5 - 3.5 m.

Winter: - Harvestable stems



Spring: - New shoots emerge



**Summer: -
Crop reaches
maximum height**



Autumn: Accelerated crop drying



Energy Crop Scheme Guidance

9. No details are yet available regarding the ECS which is expected to be re-launched later this summer.
10. Earlier this year, the Forestry Commission (Berks Bucks and Oxon Area Office) approached the Chilterns Conservation Board and North Wessex Downs AONB unit regarding the production of local guidance to complement

the national guidelines produced by Defra. Despite the uncertainties over how the new scheme will operate, it was felt to be useful to proceed with the work so that a final version could be produced quickly once the details are confirmed.

11. The guidance is intended to highlight the key issues that applicants will need to consider in relation to the impact of energy crops on landscape, recreation, biodiversity and the historic environment when planning a scheme within the AONBs. It is also intended to direct applicants to appropriate sources of advice and information. It was produced in liaison with Natural England.
12. A copy of the draft document is attached, Appendix 1 – the final version will include photographs.
13. The draft has been discussed at both the Land Management Group and the Technical Panel at recent meetings. Both were supportive in principle the idea of producing the guidance document, and made a number of comments on the draft.
14. Whilst there may be merit in future in carrying out a more detailed analysis of the sensitivity of certain landscape elements within the AONB to energy crops it seems, at present, unlikely that there will be a major uptake in the Chilterns. Also, there is likelihood that Natural England will be producing more detailed guidance for future years so it will be important to avoid any duplication of effort.
15. At Defra's request, Natural England have produced some initial information on potential effects of biomass crops on landscape, broken down by Joint Character Area (JCA). This provides a matrix of potential impacts of energy crops in relation to each of the key landscape characteristics of the JCA. (see copy below). A more detailed map-based analysis is under consideration.
16. The review of the AONB Management Plan provides an opportunity for the Board to set out its position on the broader issue of energy crops and bio fuel - including wood fuel. These issues have been highlighted within the draft Climate Change Action Plan

Recommendation

1. **That the Board endorses in principle the draft guidance and the approach to production of future guidance.**



Energy Crop Guidance within the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

This guidance is aimed at anyone within the North Wessex Downs and Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) who may be considering planting energy crops.

The guidance has been developed to highlight some of the issues that you will need to consider when planning an energy crop scheme within these areas. If you are intending to apply for Energy Crops Scheme grant assistance, the Natural England representative who will visit your site once you have submitted your application will also consider these factors.

It is not intended that this guidance should replace Defra's Energy Crop Scheme Guidance and other such documents. Instead, it brings together some of the information that is of particular relevance to the AONBs and shows you where to go for further information that may help you with your application

This guide does not cover every eventuality in every field within the AONBs. Below are the general considerations that will help you decide if the field is appropriate. A list of useful publications and sources of advice are listed at the end of this guide

If you require further information after reading this guide please speak to Natural England, the Forestry Commission or the AONB team in your area. Please see the map and contact details on the back of this guide. A list of useful publications and sources of advice are also listed

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are nationally important landscapes. The AONB designation exists to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. In this instance, the term "natural beauty" covers both the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

AONB designations are not supposed to prevent change. However, they do place a responsibility on all of us to think carefully about the impact of our decisions and actions on these important landscapes. By thinking about these considerations and the information in the guide before you apply, you will be able to submit an appropriate scheme, which will meet the conditions of the Energy Crop Scheme at an early stage.

The Chilterns

The Chiltern Hills have been designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in recognition of their exceptional landscape qualities.

Whilst the natural beauty of the area is undeniable the Chilterns is above all a cultural landscape, with a deep and pervasive sense of history. Winding sunken lanes, old

enclosed fields and Anglo-Saxon boundaries are all elements of 'ancient countryside' which have survived the rapid and dramatic changes of the present century and are an essential ingredient of the Chilterns identity.

Two of the most fundamental aspects of the Chilterns landscape are its complexity and diversity. The intricate mosaic of woodland, copses, enclosed pastures, arable fields, wooded and open heath and scattered farms and villages, overlying a complex landform of rolling hills and hidden valleys, presents a continually varying landscape. Loss of this variety or a change in scale significantly alters the character of the landscape.

While the Chilterns as a whole can be identified as a distinctive area, there are variations in landscape character between different parts. Four broad regions have been identified: Scarp and Foothills, Plateau and Dipslope, the Arterial Valleys, and the Thames Fringes. These are further divided into characteristic landscape types which have a coherent and recognisable identity

Insert map

The North Wessex Downs

The North Wessex Downs is an area of contrasts. It contains large scale open chalk downland and arable sweeps, significant areas of woodland and areas with smaller, high hedged fields interspersed with heathland, woodland and parkland. The conservation and enhancement of the character and diversity of these landscapes is fundamental to the AONB designation.

The North Wessex Downs contains a diverse range of habitats of national and international importance, including semi-natural chalk grassland, woodland, chalk rivers, wet meadows and low intensity arable land. Associated with these are a wide range of nationally important and rare species – from stone curlew to rare arable plants. The North Wessex Downs is working to conserve and expand these habitats and maintain and increase protected priority species.

The area also contains internationally important historical and archaeological remains. Enhancing the protection and management of these features is a key objective for the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership.

For the soils of the North Wessex Downs, the main threat is erosion, particularly on steeper slopes and under "open" crops. Threats to water resources include poor management e.g. loss of river side vegetation and cultivation of winterbourne channels; water loss/abstraction and diffuse pollution

The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan gives strong support to community led, bottom up renewable energy initiatives that fit within the landscape and meet local needs.

Insert map

Areas likely to be unsuitable for planting.

There are certain areas likely to be considered unsuitable for planting energy crops. These include:

- registered commons
- open access land
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- Scheduled Ancient Monument.

It is also likely that planting will be considered unsuitable in Conservation Areas, registered historic parks and gardens, within the setting to a listed building, historic battlefield sites, on former water meadows, existing semi-natural habitat such as woodland and permanent pasture, local nature reserves, local wildlife sites, well known and popular beauty spots and country parks.

Permission would not be given if planting resulted in obstruction of rights of way.

Some of the Factors when considering Energy Crop Schemes

Landscape character

You will need to consider how the landscape may be affected by any planting. Your energy crop scheme should respect and strengthen the key characteristics of the landscape that you are within. They should be in keeping with the local landscape and rather than standing out.

To help you consider the landscape, Landscape Character Assessments give descriptions of those key characteristics and these are available within both the North Wessex Downs and Chilterns AONBs (see reference list at the back of this document). Advice can also be sought from your AONB office or local authority landscape officer.

A few examples of how the design of energy crop schemes can affect landscape character:

Scale Of Planting

The impact of an energy crop scheme may be quite different in a large, open landscape than in a more enclosed area.

You will need to consider:

- How much of the open area within the landscape will be planted on?
- Would the energy crop fields be broken up by other crops, land uses or boundary features?
- Would large fields under one crop be characteristic of the area?
- Will your planting add to an existing or proposed area of energy crops nearby? (Details of schemes that are in the pipeline or being planted can be obtained from Natural England.)

Landform and Views

The impact of an energy crop will vary considerably depending upon the form of the land it is being planted on and where it is located. You should consider whether the crop will be seen from above e.g. looking down from a hill, from below e.g. looking up to a skyline or from the side (often the case on flatter ground).

There are both short and long distance views to consider. Short views are those from the edge of the field and within the field, such as the view from a footpath. Planting may also affect or obscure long or panoramic views. All of these issues may affect both the shape and the scale of planting that is appropriate and whether you need to plan open areas within the field.

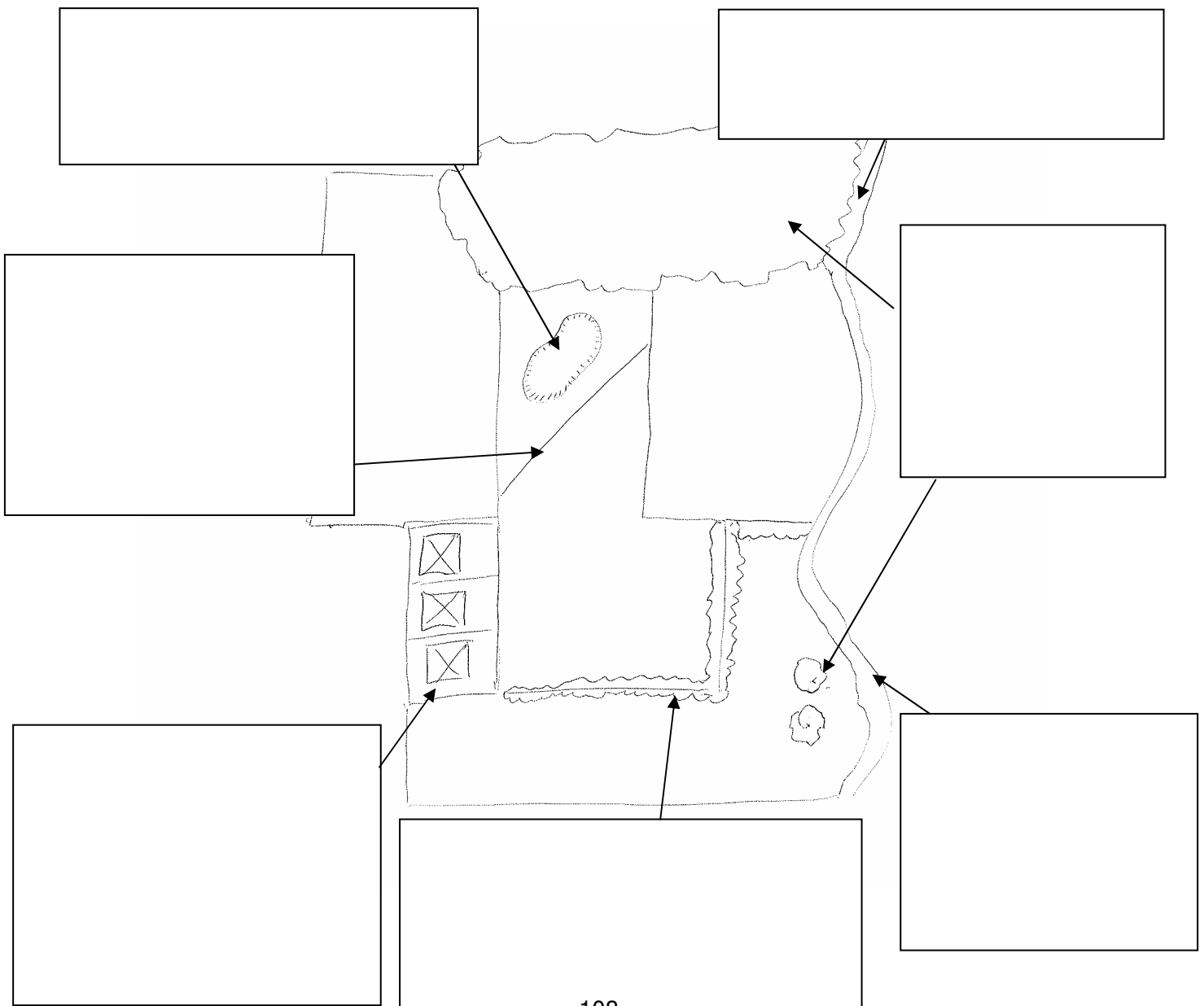
Field Patterns

The impact of an energy crop will depend upon whether it is set within a landscape with a strong field pattern bounded by well developed hedgerows or in a largely open landscape of large fields divided by post and wire fences. The scale and shape of any planting should respect the scale, shape and pattern of the fields in the local area. Some field systems may be important remnants of traditional forms of land management, old enclosures or clearances of heath, common or woodland.

Direct Impact on Landscape Features

Energy crops can have direct impacts on landscape features through for example over shading, competition, impact on associated flora and fauna, run off into water courses and lack of space between the crop and the feature to still manage those features effectively. In many cases, adverse impacts can be avoided simply through leaving sufficient open space around these features. The diagram below highlights the main factors to consider.

A table giving recommended margin sizes can be found at the back of this guidance note.



Archaeological and historic features

A number of issues need to be considered when planting in an area where there are archaeological or historic features. These include the potential for damage to archaeology from the root systems of the energy crop, damage by machinery at planting, harvesting and final removal of the crop, and localised lowering of the water table (with corresponding impacts on waterlogged archaeological remains). However, there can also be *indirect* adverse impacts on the setting of historic sites and their “sense of place”.

Landscapes have always evolved and the changes to the landscape caused by the growing of energy crops are not always damaging. However, the planting of energy crops is likely to be more appropriate in landscapes that have already experienced considerable alteration e.g. intensive agricultural landscapes, than in areas with well preserved historic field patterns or other features.

Historic Landscape Characterisation Studies are available for both the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. These can help to highlight important historic landscape features in your area.

Further guidance should be obtained from your local authority archaeology department.

Wildlife and plants

Before submitting an application you should find out about the wildlife on the site and its surroundings **and** the likely impact that such planting may have on that flora and fauna. Existing semi-natural habitats should be conserved. Before considering a change to arable cropping patterns, consider the fact that light, shallow soils may contain rare arable plants. Planting up formerly open ground may have a negative impact on some birds and other species so you will need to consider how to reduce this or compensate for it in other areas. New planting may affect the soil and local drainage and you should consider whether this will affect important habitats nearby. You may also need to think about the likely impact on nearby habitats or species from shade. Again, many issues can be resolved by retaining open space within and around the energy crop to maximise biodiversity.

Your local Wildlife Trust or conservation adviser should be able to provide further guidance.

Margins

Please see the table below as a guide to the minimum margins that should be applied to ensure that key landscape features are not adversely affected by energy crops. In many circumstances the actual margins will be larger than this to take in to account the local issues. Under the energy crop schemes an element of the grantable area can be left open and unplanted. This rate depends on the crop used. In some circumstances extra open space may be required to facilitate the planting.

Margin Type	Miscanthus	Short Rotation Coppice
Field Boundaries	3m	3m
Woodland	10m from edge of canopy	10m from edge of canopy
Infield Trees	5m from edge of canopy or 15x the diameter of the tree, which ever is greater	5m from edge of canopy or 15x the diameter of the tree, which ever is greater

Margin Type	Miscanthus	Short Rotation Coppice
Public Rights of way	3m on field edge paths 5m through crop; this should be irregular along its length.	5m each side of path.
Farm Drains	3m	5m 7m internal drainage board
Neighbours property	10m	10m
Wayleaves	As specified by utility company or 6m either side of centre	As specified by utility company or 6m either side of centre
Headlands	3m	3m
Archaeological features	10m from edge of feature	10m from edge of feature
Water courses	10m and consider additional buffers zones for run off	10m and consider additional buffers zones for run off

What Next?

This guide will hopefully help you in considering which fields you may wish to include in your application to Natural England. It is important that you read the contract information and conditions and complete the application form and provide the appropriate maps to the standards stated in the application literature. Giving the most up to date information and maps will help speed up the assessment process.

If you have further questions about the scheme or suitability of a field to be included in the scheme you should contact the local office of Natural England.

Where to go for further advice

Natural England: *Add Local Contact Details*

AONB Offices:

North Wessex Downs AONB
Denford Manor
Lower Denford
Hungerford
Berkshire
RG17 0UN

Tel: 01488 680452
Fax: 01488 680453
Email: info@northwessexdowns.org.uk
Website: www.northwessexdowns.org.uk

Chilterns AONB
Chilterns Conservation Board
The Lodge
Station Road
Chinnor
Oxon OX39 4HA

Tel: 01844 355500
Fax: 01844 355501
Email: office@chilternsaonb.org

Website:
www.chilternsaonb.org

Forestry Commission:
Upper Icknield Way
Aston Clinton
Aylesbury
HP22 5NF

Tel: 01296 696543
Fax: 01296 696662
Website: www.forestry.gov.uk

Local authority contacts – names of authorities:
West Berkshire Council, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury RG14 5LD E-mail:
jdavy@westberks.gov.uk

Useful reference documents:

Defra Energy Crop Scheme Establishment grants
Defra Planting and Growing Miscanthus
Defra Growing short rotation coppice

Forestry Commission Guidance Short Rotation Coppice in the Landscape

English Heritage (2006) Biomass Energy and the Historic Environment

Countryside Agency (2002) The North Wessex Downs Landscape: A landscape assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

(2004) North Wessex Downs Management Plan

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan – The Framework for Action 2002 - 7

Countryside Commission (1992) The Chilterns Landscape: A landscape assessment.

Local Records Office for local information on nature conservation

Local authority archaeology service for historic records

Guide produced June 2007

This guidance has been produced by the North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership, the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Forestry Commission¹, in consultation with Natural England

¹ The Forestry Commission was involved in the 2006 application by undertaking the site assessments on behalf of Natural England.

Opportunities and optimum sitings of energy crops (produced by NE for DEFRA)

JCA No 110		Name Chilterns	
Overall comments	The Chilterns are one of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England and half of the area is designated AONB. It consists of chalk hills and plateau with a prominent escarpment in many places, and gradual dip slope with many dry valleys. Miscanthus may have potential to be accommodated where intensive arable already exists, such as on the scarp foothills and Thames Valley. SRC could potentially be assimilated into an already heavily wooded landscape, particularly within river valleys where the visual impact of the crops would be lessened.		
Generic landscape characteristics	<i>Key landscape characteristics</i>	Potential effects (PA =potentially adverse N =neutral, PB = potentially beneficial)	
		SRC	Miscanthus
Topography	Chalk hills and plateau with a prominent escarpment	PA – likely to be conspicuous on escarpment	PA – likely to be conspicuous on escarpment
	Extensive, gentle dip slope with many dry, enclosed and intimate valleys	N – potential to be planted on gently sloping land and to be into valleys	N – potential to be planted on gently sloping land and to be into valleys
Woodland	Extensive areas of woodland, dominated by beech on plateau, and ‘hanging’ woodlands in valleys – one of most wooded lowland English landscapes	PB – may have potential to be accommodated into an already heavily wooded landscape	PA – large-scale plantings would be out of keeping in areas that are heavily wooded
Boundary features	Small fields and dense network of ancient hedges characterise steep ground	PA – avoid obscuring hedgerow pattern	PA – avoid obscuring hedgerow pattern
	Medium or large regular fields on dip slope, gentler slopes of escarpment and foothills; hedgerows often poor or sparse	PA/N – whilst appropriate in large fields, would bring some enclosure. Avoid hedgerow loss.	PA/N – whilst appropriate in large fields, would bring some enclosure. Avoid hedgerow loss.
	Many areas of semi-open common land on plateau	PA – would bring greater enclosure and hence change character	PA – would bring greater enclosure and hence change character

Agriculture	Overall mixture of dairying and sheep and arable farming; includes intensive arable farming on scarp foothills and in Thames Valley	N – providing would not lead to loss of pasture.	N/PB – could potentially be accommodated into current cropping pattern. Avoid loss of pasture.
Settlement and development	On plateau areas and in some valleys high dense hedges edge sunken lanes, offering limited views into fields beyond	PB – as crops would be partially obscured	PB – as crops would be partially obscured
	Historic riverside towns in Thames Valley and picturesque villages in chalk valleys	PA – avoid impacting on settings	PA – avoid impacting on settings
Semi-natural habitats	Remnants of chalk downland on escarpment and valley sides	PA – where it would result in loss of chalk downland	PA – where it would result in loss of chalk downland
Historic features	Numerous archaeological sites and settlements including Palaeolithic flint sites, later burial mounds, Iron Age hillforts and strip lynchets.	PA - avoid known archaeological sites and their settings, and respect historic landscape character	PA - avoid known archaeological sites and their settings, and respect historic landscape character
	Designed landscapes occupy prominent positions on sloping valley sides	PA – avoid impacting on parkland settlings	PA – avoid impacting on parkland settlings
Rivers and coasts	Chalk streams with associated waterside landscapes are an important localised landscape feature	PA – large-scale plantations would affect the character of these areas	PA – large-scale plantations would affect the character of these areas
Views and inter-visibility	Limited intervisibility in enclosed valleys	N – crops likely to be less noticeable	N – crops likely to be less noticeable
	More open plateau top, with extensive views from scarp to clay vale below	PA – may limit long-distance views to vale	PA – may limit long-distance views to vale

Assessment of Climate Change

Author: Steve Rodrick Chief Officer

Summary: The initial assessment of the impact of climate change on the Chilterns AONB has been completed. This is likely to be an evolving document but the Board is invited to adopt this current assessment as a basis for its work and, in particular, to assist the review of the AONB Management Plan. An area requiring further work is the development of specific policies on renewable energy. It is suggested that the Board's Climate Change Group reviews this assessment on a regular basis.

Purpose of the Report: To advise that the Board to adopt the initial assessment of the potential impact of climate change on the Chilterns AONB.

Background

1. The Board should operate on the basis that climate change is happening and is, in large measure, attributable to man's activities. As the effects are likely to be wide ranging the Board should be prepared to proof all its activities for potential climate change impact and to assess its own future activities based partly on their vulnerability to climate change and as possible contributions to the causes.
2. It is the emission of greenhouse gases which are of most concern and, as such, it is those activities which generate a demand for energy which require most attention. This basic hierarchy should apply:
 - Reduce demand for energy.
 - Improve energy efficiency.
 - Replace carbon intensive sources of energy.
 - Offset carbon emissions.
3. The landscape of the Chilterns is unlikely to change rapidly solely in response to climate change - any changes are likely to become apparent in the medium to longer term. For example the beech woods, which will be affected, are likely to take many decades to show significant visible signs of change. However, as many decisions affecting land management have long term consequences (e.g. which tree species to plant), it is essential that climate change is considered as a significant factor in making those decisions from now on.

4. Many individuals and organisations are already taking climate change into account or know this is a challenge they must face up to. The Board is increasingly involved in those deliberations and, despite the immense uncertainty over many of the issues, needs to provide guidance based on available evidence and an assessment of the likely changes.
5. The assessment of potential impacts on climate change is accompanied by an initial overview of renewable energy technologies. This is an area which will require further policy development work, which should embrace issues such as:
 - The growing of biomass for electricity production - which is relatively inefficient compared to biomass for heat.
 - The growing of crops for biofuels rather than food, which is already attracting widespread concern.

Recommendations

1. **To adopt the initial assessment of the potential impact of climate change on the Chilterns, and the associated action plan.**
2. **To develop the Board's policy on renewable energy options.**
3. **That the Climate Change Group reviews the assessment at least twice per year.**

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 Wetter and warmer winters	Changed growing seasons Disrupted ecological relationships. Changed species composition. New species of invertebrate Grass Fires Year round breeding of rabbits – increased grazing pressure. Changes in micro climates (e.g. south facing slopes)	Low	Medium		Provision of water supply to enable grazing. Link sites to facilitate species migration New varieties of grazing stock New habitat management regimes for “new species”. Improve site linkages to enable species migration	Monitoring Support for grazing related infrastructure Support for site planning and management Promotion of appropriate reversion techniques Review areas suitable for habitat recreation and reversion.
Woodland	Earlier spring Hotter and drier summers Fewer frosts	Drought stress/soil moisture deficits Periodic water logging Wind blow	Low	High	Woodland creation	More careful species selection. Promote demand for	Information (e.g. potential impacts according to soil types) Monitoring

	<p>(timing)</p> <p>More frequent gales</p> <p>Wetter winters</p> <p>Increased CO2 in atmosphere</p>	<p>Reduced growth rates/crown and root die back</p> <p>More disease/pests</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>Increased risk of scrub fires</p> <p>Co2 concentration will affect some species growth rates</p>				<p>wood fuel</p> <p>Link woods to facilitate species migration.</p>	<p>Promote and assist with preparation of long term management plans</p>
<p>Water Resources/ Chalk Streams</p>	<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> <p>Variable impact on selected species - ecological balance will be affected.</p> <p>Reduced water quality</p>	High	High		<p>Reduce demand for water</p> <p>Reduce Abstraction</p> <p>Protect Stream Bed and banks</p> <p>Channel and floodplain restoration</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>

		(e.g. due to heating, lower oxygen levels, pollution run off). Changed species balance and growth rates Changed channel profiles				Promote water storage Promote use of grey water systems	
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	
Farmland	Hotter Summers Milder, wetter Winters Fewer Frosts Drought Winter run off	Longer growing seasons Variable and unpredictable yields Opportunities to grow new crops including biofuels New pest species and greater abundance of pests Summer drought stress for crops Soil erosion (winter run off) Leaching of soils Summer drought stress for livestock Possibility of more	Medium	Medium	Reduce use of fertilisers More targeted use of fertilisers Conserve soil organic matter. Reduce food miles – seek local markets Grow biofuels and biomass	New crops Avoid crops requiring irrigation Water storage Reduce vulnerability to erosion and leaching New production methods Different breeds of livestock. Target agri-env support to increase	Monitor changes Support promotion of local markets and procurement policies Provide guidance of growing biofuels

		<p>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>				ecological connectivity	
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>Increased number of extreme weather events</p>	<p>Buildings will be hotter in summer</p> <p>Winter damp may be more of a problem</p> <p>Vulnerability to flooding</p> <p>Response to climate change will result in further environmental impact, e.g. design of housing and installation of renewable energy</p>	Low	Medium	<p>Enhanced energy efficiency</p> <p>Reduced energy demand</p> <p>Installation of renewable energy capacity</p> <p>Use of</p>	<p>Change design of houses/all buildings</p> <p>Retro fitting of energy efficiency measures</p> <p>Bigger rainwater goods</p>	<p>Guidance</p> <p>Lobbying for higher building standards –aiming for carbon neutrality for new building</p> <p>Promotion of energy efficiency</p> <p>Promotion of local building materials</p> <p>Promotion of water conservation and “blue</p>

		<p>technology</p> <p>Installation of solar panels and wind turbines</p> <p>Increase in timber boring insects.</p> <p>Increase in subsidence especially on clay soils</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>building materials with low embodied energy.</p> <p>Use of permeable surfacing to reduce run off</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>More regular maintenance of drains to remove blockages</p> <p>Promote garden design which are more tolerant of climate</p>	<p>infrastructure"</p>
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						change- e.g. require less or no irrigation.	
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	
Historic Environment	Hotter Summers Heavy rain	Erosion of soil covering Windblown trees damaging sites Growing more cereals and biofuels may result in more ploughing damage. Appearance of historic parks may change if significant trees die. May not be possible to maintain water features in history parks and gardens	Low	Low		May need to import soils and divert recreation uses Remove trees which may cause damage if wind blown	
Enjoyment and Understanding	Hotter Summers Milder winters	Hot summer weather may deter visits. Mild winter weather may lead to increased number of visits. Some sites and routes will be damaged –water logging in winter and erosion in summer. May be more holidays taken in UK.	High	High	Promote visits without use of car – close to home. Promote public understanding of how their actions can lead to the way they use and enjoy the	Give greater weight to weather dependency at planning stage of events, e.g. avoid hottest months, provide under cover areas Hold events in, and visits	

		Unpredictability of weather may deter holding of outside public events			natural environment	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. Possibility of disruption to economic activity and loss of assets			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

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. Promote on non building locations.
Wind	Low	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. May be acceptable where it is grown in large fields currently used for arable crops. Oil seed rape is already grow non a significant scale and is likely to increase	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	Could be supported in a small number of locations subject to minimised

		hydrology and landscape intrusion of new infrastructure. The variable flow along all other streams suggests potential is low.	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

Introduction to the Review of the AONB Management Plan

Author: Steve Rodrick

Summary: A consultant, Alan Wheeler, has been engaged to support the production of the Management Plan review. The review should be completed by May 2008, although September 2008 is more realistic. At each Board meeting during this period the agenda will include an item on the progress of the review.

Purpose of Paper: To advise the Board on the programme, appointment of a consultant and introduce the afternoon session on the Management Plan.

Background

1. Alan Wheeler, an environmental and planning consultant, has been appointed to assist the Board under the review of the Management Plan. Alan was heavily involved in the 1994 and 2002 plans. He also has expertise in the production of Strategic Environmental Assessments. Alan will be leading the afternoon session which will be taking an overview of the review process, plan structure, board aims and issues not adequately covered in the 2002 plan (and new foreword produced in May 2005).

Process and Timetable

Table 1	Process of undertaking the review
Table 2	Work Programme
Table 3	Key Stage Analysis and timetable

Broad Aims and Policies

2. It is essential that Board members familiarise themselves with the current Management Plan. The Board Aims and Policies are given in Appendix 1. The Board's various committees and task groups have begun the task of assessing existing aims and policies according to the table headings advised by the Countryside Agency guidance. In essence it is an assessment of continuing relevance.

Plan Structure

3. A Key task for the Board at this stage is to decide upon the structure of the Revised plan. It is advised that the existing chapter headings are retained, but regrouped according to the Board's main purposes.

Purposes	Chapters
To Conserve and Enhance Natural Beauty	Landscape
	Nature Conservation
	Farming and Forestry
	Historic Environment
	Water Environment
	Built Environment
	Travel and Transport
	Minerals and Waste
To Promote Awareness and Enjoyment of the Chilterns	Recreation and Access
	Travel and Transport
To foster social and Economic Well Being	People, Jobs and Services

4. It is further advised that the following themes should be laced through those chapters:
- Climate Change
 - Life Long Learning
 - Social Inclusion
 - Health and Well-being

Recommendation

1. **The Board advises on the basic structure for the reviewed Management Plan**

5. Table 1

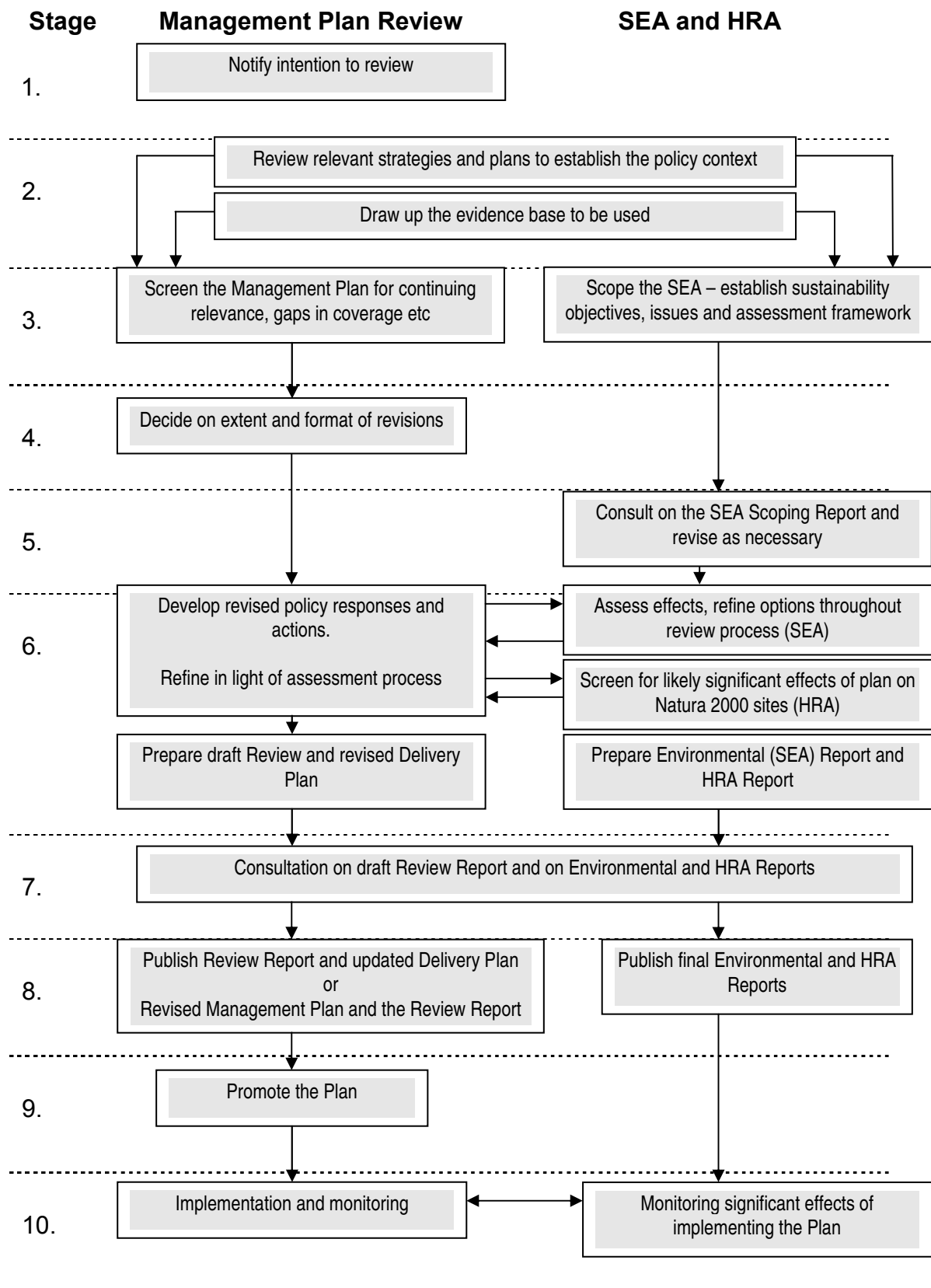


Table 2

Chilterns AONB Management Plan- Work Programme and Timetable			
Review Stage	Task	Who	By When
Phase 1: May – August 2007 – Scoping the review			
1. Notify intention to review	Write to Natural England, LAs etc	Chief Officer	End- May
2. Establish policy context. Develop evidence base	For each chapter of the current Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify relationship of the Plan to other national, regional and local policy instruments Identify and populate key indicators of the condition of the AONB i.e.-		20 July 2007
	Landscape		
	Nature Conservation	Land Management Group	
	Historic Environment	Historic Environment Group	
	Built Environment	Planning Officers Group	
	Water Environment	Chalk Streams Stg Group	
	People, Jobs & Services	CCB Task Group	
	Farming & Forestry	Land Management Group	
	Minerals & Waste Disposal	Planning Officers Group	
	Recreation & Access	Recreation & Access Group	
	Travel & Transport	Roads & Transport Group	
3. Screen the Plan for continuing relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite views of key stakeholders 	Chief Officer	End- May
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Vision Statement & Statement of Significance 	CCB Review Group	24 August 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review each chapter: 		
	Landscape		
	Nature Conservation	Land Management Group	
	Historic Environment	Historic Environment Group	
	Built Environment	Planning Officers Group	
	Water Environment	Chalk Streams Stg Group	
	People, Jobs & Services	CCB Task Group	
	Farming & Forestry	Land Management Group	
	Minerals & Waste Disposal	Planning Officers Group	
	Recreation & Access	Recreation & Access Group	
	Travel & Transport	Roads & Transport Group	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft SEA Scoping Report 	Consultant	20 July 2007
4. Decide on scale and form of Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft report for Executive Committee 	Chief Officer	Early September 2007
5. Consult on SEA Scoping Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite views 	Chief Officer	23 July – 24 August 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make any necessary amendments 	Consultant	14 September 2007
Phase 2: September 2007 - January 2008 – Developing the revised Management Plan			
6. Undertake draft review and test with SEA/HRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft revised material in light of screening and decision on scope and format of review 		Mid-November 2007
	Vision Statement & Statement of Significance	CCB Review Group	
	Nature Conservation	Land Management Group	
	Historic Environment	Historic Environment Group	
	Built Environment	Planning Officers Group	
	Water Environment	Chalk Streams Stg Group	
	People, Jobs & Services – to be replaced by new chapters: Health & Well-being Social Inclusion	CCB Task Group	
	Farming & Forestry	Land Management Group	

	Minerals & Waste Disposal	Planning Officers Group	
	Recreation & Access	Recreation & Access Group	
	Lifelong Learning (new chapter)	CCB Task Group	
	Travel & Transport	Roads & Transport Group	
	Nature Conservation	Land Management Group	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake SEA of initial draft material as it becomes available 	Consultant & CCB Review Group	Mid-November 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake HRA screening 	Consultant, Land Management Group & CCB Review Group	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise draft material as necessary 	Groups as above	Early December 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop candidate actions for Delivery Plan 	Groups as above	Early December 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft report for Executive Committee 	Chief Officer	Early December 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report for Conservation Board 	Chief Officer	Early January 2008
Phase 3: December 2007– March 2008 – Prepare the consultation drafts			
6. Prepare Draft Review & revised Delivery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft new introductory chapter(s) 	CCB Review Group & consultant	Mid-February 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edit Task Group material for theme chapters 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce Delivery plan 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print consultation document 	Chief Officer	End February 2008
6. Prepare draft Environmental & HRA Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assemble and agree texts for these two reports 	CCB Review Group & consultant	End-December 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print consultation documents 	Chief Officer	End February 2008
Phase 4: January – September 2008 – Consultation and Adoption			
7. Consultation on draft Revised Management Plan, Environment & HRA Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any necessary presentations etc in accordance with consultation programme tba 	TBA	Early March- End May 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review consultation responses 	CCB Review Group & consultant	Early June 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial report to Conservation Board 	Chief Officer	3rd week June
8. Prepare revised Management Plan and Review report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise draft Management Plan as appropriate 	CCB Review Group & consultant in consultation with theme Groups	June 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare Review Report 	CCB Review Group & consultant	July 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft report for Executive Committee 	Chief Officer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report for Conservation Board 	Chief Officer	September 2008
Conservation Board adopts revised Management Plan – September 2008			

Table 3

Review Stage	2007								2008									
	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
1. Notify intention to Review	○ —●																	
2. Establish policy context and evidence base	—————																	
3. Screen Management Plan for continuing relevance etc	—————																	
Key stakeholder survey	—————																	
Develop SEA Scoping Report				———	———													
4. Decide on scale and form of review			—————		○	●												
5. Consult on SEA Scoping Report					—————	—————	—————	———										
6. Undertake draft Review and test with SEA. Refine and decide preferred policy options and actions							—————		○	●								
Screen for likely significant effects (HRA)										—————	—————							
Prepare draft Review and revised Delivery Plan										—————	—————							
Prepare draft Environmental Report and HRA Report											—————	—————						
7. Consultation on Draft Revised Management Plan, Environmental and HRA Reports															●			
8. Revise, Adopt & Publish Management Plan and Review Report															—————	—————		●
9. Promote the Plan																		—————
10. Implementation and Monitoring																		—————

Review of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2002 - 2007

Existing Plan	Still Important	Less/more/same importance	Include in revised plan?	Delete/Revise/no change	Comment or Proposed amendment
Broad Aims	The Landscape				
Conserve and enhance the outstanding qualities of the AONB as part of the national landscape heritage.					
Maintain those features which make an essential contribution to the character and quality of the area and to regional and local distinctiveness.					
Use such characteristics to guide future positive change in the landscape to reinforce regional and local identity.					
Enhance and restore degraded landscapes and features.					
Policies	The Landscape				
L1 – Recognise and protect those elements in the landscape that contribute to the overall identity and character of the Chilterns, notably the characteristic elements of the chalk scenery, the woodland – particularly beechwoods, elements of ‘ancient country’, river corridors and the traditional buildings and settlements.					

<p>L2 – Promote increased awareness of local landscape character to guide the maintenance of local distinctiveness in development plans and landscape management or enhancement schemes.</p>					
<p>L3 – Maintain and restore the varied rural, farmed character of the countryside, resisting developments which would detract from this character or intrude into unspoilt areas, and promoting those features which strengthen character and improve its condition.</p>					
<p>L4 – Promote awareness and consideration of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering development and land use change proposals on sites adjacent to the AONB.</p>					
<p>L5 – Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of rural settlements by promoting the conservation of important buildings and high standards of new building or alterations to existing properties, all with the consistent use of traditional materials and designed to reflect the traditional character of each</p>					

area.					
L6 – Enhance the landscape by promoting the removal of existing eyesores, repairing damage and mitigating the effects of existing intrusive developments.					
L7 – Identify and implement methods to monitor landscape change.					
L8 – Promote greater public awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the Chilterns landscape.					
L9 – Develop an enhanced awareness and understanding of the Chilterns landscape through achieving AONB-wide coverage of local landscape character assessments using a consistent methodology and production of guidance to help manage change.					
Broad Aims	Nature Conservation				
Restore and conserve Chilterns habitats and species in accordance with the targets identified in local, regional and national biodiversity action plans.					
Conserve wildlife on farmland and in the wider countryside.					
Promote integration of nature conservation with social and economic activity.					

Promote greater knowledge of the wildlife resources of the AONB and their management requirements.					
Increase public awareness and respect for the needs of the natural environment.					
Secure protection and appropriate management for statutory and non statutory sites.					
Policies	Nature Conservation				
NC1 – Promote strategic management of the nature conservation resource on both protected sites and in the wider countryside.					
NC2 – Ensure that all nationally and internationally designated statutory sites are brought into and maintained in favourable management.					
NC3 – Implement Local, Regional and National targets for key habitats and species outlined in the Chilterns AONB Biodiversity Action Plan, notably: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the area of chalk grassland in appropriate management. • Promote the conservation of riparian and in-stream habitats and species 					

<p>associated with chalk streams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the area of beech yew habitat in accordance with national and local biodiversity action plan targets. • Enhance efforts to conserve farmland bird species. 					
<p>NC4 – Promote awareness and provide guidance on the existing nature conservation resource of the Chilterns to land managers and the general public.</p>					
<p>NC5 – Promote the Red Kite, and other species to be identified as a ‘flagship species’ for the Chilterns to generate increased public enjoyment, knowledge and understanding of the countryside and its wildlife.</p>					
<p>NC6 – Promote wildlife based tourism in particular highlighting public awareness of flagship species.</p>					
<p>NC7- Promote the creation of links between appropriate fragmented sites of nature conservation importance and target grant aid to support habitat creation and expansion, whilst ensuring that</p>					

landscape and historic environment objectives are not compromised.					
NC8 – Promote the conservation of habitats and sites which are of local importance (SINCs/2 nd Tier Sites/County Wildlife Sites or equivalent).					
NC9 – Promote provision of co-ordinated, consistent and high quality conservation and funding advice to farmers, landowners and managers.					
NC10 – Promote the uptake of current and future incentives which encourage farmers and other landowners to conserve and enhance the landscape, and the archaeological and ecological attributes of their land and increase the area and number of sites entered into agri-environment schemes.					
NC11 – Lobby for a more effective and integrated system of incentives, embodied in a specific agri-environment scheme tailored for the Chilterns including the enhancement of existing agri-environment schemes.					
NC12 – Ensure the effective sharing of standardised base					

information on land cover, designated sites, BAP species and habitats with all relevant organisations to assist in effective wildlife management and monitoring.					
NC13 – Support the monitoring of, and assessment of change in, those species and habitats within the AONB stated as indicators of sustainability and environmental condition in local and national strategies.					
NC14 – Support existing wildlife management networks and establish new ones where appropriate, to promote information exchange and co-operative working. In particular support and promote the work of the existing records centres.					
NC15 – Utilise national funding schemes such as Heritage Lottery Fund and Local Heritage Initiative to support multi-purpose initiatives for the significant habitats in the Chilterns.					
NC16 – Promote the improved management for conservation, and re-creation where appropriate, of farmland, orchards, hedgerows, ponds,					

veteran trees and arable weed communities.					
NC17 – Identify and support existing highway verge management initiatives across the Chilterns and seek to increase the conservation value of additional verges.					
NC18 – Promote the management of commons in order to achieve BAP targets.					
NC19 – Assess the impact of access and recreation on key sites of nature conservation and develop guidelines for the management of sites where key species and habitats are adversely affected by visitor pressure.					
Board Aims	The Historic Environment				
Ensure the sustainable conservation and management of the historic environment of the AONB for the benefit of current and future generations.					
Encourage greater public appreciation and understanding of the historic environment of the AONB and promote sustainable access.					
Policies	The Historic Environment				
HE1 – Ensure the sustainable					

<p>conservation, management, maintenance and, where appropriate, restoration of the historic environment. There should be a presumption against land use changes and management practices which would harm important historic landscapes, buildings and archaeological monuments and their settings.</p>					
<p>HE2 – Utilise the development planning and control powers of Local Authorities to protect important historic landscapes, buildings and archaeological monuments from destruction or damage by inappropriate development.</p>					
<p>HE3 – Promote best practice guidance to community groups, landowners and managers on sustainable management practices.</p>					
<p>HE4 – Promote best practice guidance to agencies and other groups (e.g. utilities) whose activities fall outside of planning controls and draw their attention to their responsibilities towards the conservation of the historic environment.</p>					

<p>HE5 – Promote high standards of development through the application of principles contained within the <i>Chilterns Buildings Design Guide</i>, and related Technical Notes, and encourage local planning authorities to produce Conservation Area Appraisals.</p>					
<p>HE6 – Encourage highway authorities to implement the <i>Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Roads in the Chilterns</i>, to help protect the historic character of highways and adjacent land.</p>					
<p>HE7 – Identify and promote opportunities to improve the management of important and threatened historic parks and gardens.</p>					
<p>HE8 – Increase knowledge and understanding of the historic environment in order to identify important and locally distinctive historic landscapes and feature.</p>					
<p>HE9 – Ensure that archaeological fieldwork within the AONB is undertaken within the context of a relevant research framework and that the data is incorporated into the Sites and Monuments Record</p>					

responsible for the locality.					
HE10 – Undertake an “historic environment risk assessment and management project” to assess risks and identify opportunities for enhanced access and limits of acceptable change.					
HE11 – Ensure the Sites and Monuments Records reflect historic landscape character and distinctive landscape patterns.					
HE12 – Increase appreciation and understanding of the historic environment of the AONB and its conservation needs both amongst local communities and visitors.					
HE13 – Develop strategies to promote economic wellbeing through sustainable tourism based on raising public awareness and enjoyment of the historic environment.					
HE14 – Promote social inclusion through community involvement in the conservation and interpretation of the historic environment.					
HE15 – Encourage sustainable enjoyment of the historic environment through the promotion of public access and tourism.					

Broad Aims	The Built Environment				
Ensure that new development conserves and enhances the local distinctiveness and aesthetic qualities of the built environment of the Chilterns.					
Promote improvements to the built environment of the Chilterns to enhance its distinctive character.					
Policies	The Built Environment				
BD1 – Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the built environment of the Chilterns AONB, particularly reinforcing local distinctiveness to contribute to the conservation of the special qualities of the Chilterns landscape.					
BD2 – Promote high standards of development through the application of principles contained within the <i>Chilterns Buildings Design Guide</i> , and related Technical Notes, the <i>Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Roads in the Chilterns</i> and, once published, the <i>Agricultural Buildings Design Guide</i>					
BD3 – Encourage the adoption of these documents as Supplementary Planning					

Guidance and their practical use by all local authorities within the Chilterns AONB.					
BD4 – Promote best practice and use of specific guidance for the Chilterns on the siting, design and construction of new agricultural buildings.					
BD5 – Promote best practice in the use of traditional materials, namely flint, clay products and timber, to supplement the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide. Efforts to use sustainable locally derived materials should be encouraged.					
BD6 – Support the sustainable use of local natural resources, notably, timber, fireclay and flint, for local building.					
BD7 – Seek to guide developments and activities exempt from planning control in order to lessen their impact on the Chilterns AONB.					
BD8 – Seek to reduce the impact of telecommunication infrastructure and provide guidance to operators and local planning authorities on how environmental impacts can be minimised.					

<p>BD9 – Lobby Central Government and other relevant agencies to prevent damaging development in the AONB, including telecommunications masts and overhead power lines.</p>					
<p>BD10 – Enhance the quality by the removal or mitigation of existing visually intrusive developments when the opportunity arises and resources are available.</p>					
<p>BD11 - Pursue opportunities for landscape improvement when development is proposed in, or adjacent to, the boundaries of the AONB.</p>					
<p>BD12 - Encourage appropriate development, especially on previously developed land, that will improve the economic and social well-being of the area, whilst having regard to the special qualities of the AONB and to policies in Development Plans.</p>					
<p>BD13 - Encourage increased densities on new housing developments to appropriate levels, and to incorporate significant amounts of affordable dwellings, whilst having regard to the special qualities of the AONB</p>					

and to policies in Development Plans.					
BD14 - Promote full consideration of the environmental effects of proposals to expand airports, especially Heathrow and London Luton, beyond existing permissions in terms of the number of flights and passenger throughput, with due weight given to the potential adverse impacts on the Chilterns, particularly in terms of traffic and air and noise pollution.					
BD15 - Encourage the use of renewable energy, in appropriate circumstances, and particularly of small combined heat and power facilities for new public buildings or other new developments if feasible.					
Broad Aims	The Water Environment				
Maintain the environmental and aesthetic value of river corridors and, in particular, provide a variety of river landscapes and habitats characteristic of the AONB.					
Conserve and enhance biodiversity associated with wetland habitats.					
Protect and improve the water environment within the AONB					

through effective management of water resources and reductions in pollution.					
To raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the water environment.					
Policies	The Water Environment				
WE1 - Support the Environment Agency in fulfilling its obligations under the Water Resources Act 1991 to conserve and enhance the water environment when discharging all its duties.					
WE2 - Promote the development and implementation of River Sustainability Schemes on all rivers affected by low flows due to over-abstraction.					
WE3 - Promote management planning of the water resource and abstraction levels at a catchment scale.					
WE4 - Promote creation of riparian buffer strips to reduce impact of surface water run off into rivers and help conserve their biodiversity.					
WE5 - Promote and develop sustainable drainage systems to reduce the impact of run-off on watercourses.					
WE6 - Promote agri-environment					

schemes that reduce applications to reduce diffuse pollution within catchments.					
WE7 - Develop a programme of improvements to sewage treatment works under the AMP3 investment programme to attain water quality targets.					
WE8 - Continue programme of River Corridor and River Habitat surveys on all Chilterns rivers.					
WE9 - Promote and undertake surveys for relevant Biodiversity Action Plan species.					
WE10 - Develop a programme of riparian and in-stream conservation works in support of Biodiversity Action Plan targets for chalk streams, rivers and wetlands, and key species such as water vole, water crowfoot and water shrew.					
WE11 - Promote natural flow conditions in rivers and streams through the removal of man made in-stream features, such as weirs, where appropriate.					
WE12 - Promote appropriate management and monitoring of ponds in the AONB.					
WE13 - Develop programmes for monitoring and controlling					

invasive plant and animal species.					
WE14 - Seek to safeguard all statutory designated wetland sites within the AONB and work in partnership with landowners and occupiers to ensure that these sites achieve and maintain favourable condition.					
Broad Aims	People, Jobs and Services				
Whilst ensuring the conservation of the AONB, foster the social and sustainable economic well being of local communities.					
Promote understanding of the Chilterns as a living and working landscape.					
Raise awareness of the social and economic needs of local communities, and address the issue of social exclusion.					
Support the provision of affordable housing for local people.					
Identify and develop opportunities to add value to local products and services which benefit the environment and economy of the Chilterns.					
Retain and enhance the provision of, and access to, facilities and services as part of programmes to promote the conservation and enjoyment of the environment of					

the Chilterns.					
Support the efforts of local communities to conserve their local environment and enhance their sense of local pride and stewardship.					
Policies	People, Jobs and Services				
PJS 1 - Support an increase in the provision of affordable housing, both for rent and for sale, in market towns and villages.					
PJS 2 - Promote the provision and use of public transport to assist local people gain access to services and facilities.					
PJS 3 - Highlight the potential impact on local rail services of national transport programmes and the implications of these for local communities.					
PJS 4 - Reduce the need to travel by promoting the use of communications technology for the provision of services and work, and generally more flexible home working arrangements.					
PJS 5 - Promote the rural economy by assisting rural diversification, and developing marketing initiatives which add value to local products and services.					

<p>PJS 6 - Develop a Chilterns branding scheme, incorporating a kite mark, to add value to local products which benefit the environment, such as those produced from environmentally sensitive farming.</p>					
<p>PJS 7 - Encourage buying policies which reduce or minimise the impact on the environment generally, and the Chilterns in particular.</p>					
<p>PJS 8 - Promote the sustainable development of the local tourist economy, to increase the contribution of visitors to the local economy, by promoting the natural and cultural environment and opportunities to enjoy the countryside and buy local produce.</p>					
<p>PJS 9 - Promote the special distinctiveness of local towns and villages to help develop their visitor appeal.</p>					
<p>PJS 10 - Promote the role of villages and market towns as centres in the rural economy.</p>					
<p>PJS 11 - Seek to retain and enhance the general level of services and facilities available to local communities and, if</p>					

necessary, support the provision of services and facilities through integration, e.g. a pub or village hall incorporating a post office, or a shop providing visitor information.					
PJS 12 - Promote the involvement of local people in conserving the Chilterns, notably through the Chiltern Society, Wildlife Trusts, National Trust and other active local and regional organisations.					
Broad Aims	Farming and Forestry				
Support and promote sustainable agriculture and forestry that will conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns.					
Maintain and enhance, through sustainable management, the wooded and farmed landscape, with its characteristic pattern of valley-side woodlands, open wooded commons, beech-woods, ancient semi-natural woodlands, irregular fields patterns and hedgerows.					
Create and maintain well managed woodland, based on a mixed, high forest structure capable of producing high quality timber.					
Maintain and enhance the					

biodiversity of woodland and farmland of the area.					
Enhance the quality of recreational opportunities on farmland and in woodland.					
Enhance public awareness and identity of forestry and farming.					
Policies	Farming and Forestry				
FF1 - Secure the continued viability of sustainable farming and woodland management through support measures linked to the widespread adoption of environmentally sensitive practices, including the retention, management and re-creation of wildlife habitats and landscape features.					
FF2 - Promote the uptake of current and future incentives, such as agri-environment schemes, which encourage farmers and other landowners to conserve and enhance the landscape, and the archaeological and ecological attributes of their land.					
FF3 - Lobby for a more effective and integrated system of incentives, embodied in a specific agri-environment scheme tailored for the Chilterns.					
FF4 - Support agricultural					

practices which contribute to, or mitigate damaging impacts on the environment e.g. integrated crop management, precision farming, extensive grazing and organic production.					
FF5 - Encourage the use of whole farm management planning to promote larger scale and integrated conservation management.					
FF6 - Promote targeted habitat re-creation, particularly chalk grassland and scrub, especially where this will link existing fragmented sites.					
FF7 - Promote sustainable and multi-purpose management of woodland, balancing amenity, wildlife conservation, recreation objectives with the aim of producing high quality timber where appropriate.					
FF8 - Promote the management of Heritage Woodlands, other Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands (ASNW), SSSIs, SACs and other designated nature conservation sites in accordance with approved management plans and good practice guidance.					
FF9 - Strengthen existing					

landscape character and link isolated woods by new woodland planting, whilst ensuring that sites of existing conservation value are protected.					
FF10 - Lobby for enhanced levels and new forms of grant aid to encourage management and re-stocking of existing woodland and new planting.					
FF11 - Provide practical assistance, advice and training to encourage the management of woodland and other environmental features which are currently neglected.					
FF12 - Support the viability of sustainable woodland management by enhancing the marketing of local timber and other woodland produce.					
FF13 - Encourage woodland owners to enter their woodland to national certification schemes such as UKWAS and FSC.					
FF14 - Promote a co-operative approach to woodland management and marketing, geared particularly to the issue of managing small woodlands.					
FF15 - Promote co-ordinated, consistent and high quality					

conservation and funding advice to farmers, landowners and managers.					
FF16 - Support the viability of farming by enhancing the marketing of produce from environmentally sensitive agriculture.					
FF17 - Resist the planting of genetically modified crops until the results of the government research are known and the impacts on the environment shown to be acceptable.					
FF18 - Promote the creation and use of farmers' markets to encourage the production and purchase of local produce from environmentally sensitive farming.					
FF19 - Develop a Chilterns branding scheme, incorporating a kite mark, to add value to local products which benefit the environment, such as those produced from environmentally sensitive farming.					
FF20 - Encourage forms of diversification and new business ventures that will support the viability of farming and forestry, whilst contributing to the conservation, enhancement and					

enjoyment of the AONB.					
FF21 - Promote best practice and use of specific guidance for the Chilterns on the siting, design and construction of new agricultural buildings.					
FF22 - Encourage a sensitive approach in local planning policy and development control in order to conserve and enhance the contribution that suitable farming and forestry buildings make to landscape character and quality.					
FF23 - Promote a wider public understanding of farming and forestry.					
FF24 - Promote the benefits of farmland and woodland for recreation and health.					
FF25 - Promote and develop methods by which the wider social benefits provided by agriculture and forestry, particularly recreation, nature conservation and landscape management, can be recognised by the market.					
FF26 - Promote the management of pest species, where necessary, in the interests of nature conservation, and agricultural and timber production.					

<p>FF27 - Encourage field sports to contribute to the environmentally sustainable management of landscape features and wildlife conservation.</p>					
<p>Broad Aims</p>	<p>Minerals and Waste Disposal</p>				
<p>Reduce any adverse impact of former extraction sites on the character of the AONB. Complement the policies of the minerals and waste local plans to ensure the objectives of AONB designation are upheld.</p>					
<p>Policies</p>	<p>Minerals and Waste Disposal</p>				
<p>MW1 - Secure the implementation of appropriate restoration measures to integrate worked out quarries into the landscape.</p>					
<p>MW2 - Encourage appropriate management of redundant quarries for nature conservation (including geological features), remaining archaeological interest and, where suitable, recreational activities.</p>					
<p>MW3 - In partnership with landowners, devise and negotiate appropriate management schemes where sites are identified for landscape treatment, recreational use, wildlife, geological or archaeological</p>					

interest.					
MW4 - Encourage the continuation of the local brick making industry, to ensure a continued supply of high quality, traditional building materials, consistent with principles of environmental sustainability.					
MW5 - Support the demand for such materials by seeking their use in new developments, in accordance with the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.					
Broad Aims	Recreation and Access				
Provide recreation and access opportunities for all, including local communities, those living in adjacent towns and visitors, ensuring their visit is sustainable and compatible with the overriding aim of the AONB - to conserve and enhance natural beauty.					
Promote greater concern for, awareness and understanding of the Chilterns.					
Ensure a high quality experience for all, with special encouragement for those who are currently unable to visit the countryside.					
Enhance the contribution of recreational visitors to the local					

economy.					
Policies	Recreation and Access				
RA1 - Promote awareness and understanding of the special status of the Chilterns as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.					
RA2 - Develop and maintain a strategic understanding of recreation and access activity, management needs and priorities across the Chilterns.					
RA3 - Promote and support environmentally sustainable management of sites used for recreation including historic landscapes open to the public and other popular areas with open access such as downland and commons.					
RA4 - Promote sustainable and multi-purpose woodland management, balancing amenity, wildlife conservation, recreation objectives with the aim of producing high quality timber where appropriate.					
RA5 - Promote the provision of countryside management services across the Chilterns and to nearby towns, by co-ordinating existing services and where necessary develop new services to ensure					

Chilterns-wide coverage.					
RA6 - Enhance the quality of Visitor Welcome at all promoted sites.					
RA7 - Promote the development of Chilterns visitor facilities - as part of an initiative to provide gateways to the Chilterns based on existing facilities.					
RA8 - Provide additional interpretation and information material to visitor and information centres, to enhance the quality of visitor experience and to encourage those who are not traditional visitors to the countryside.					
RA9 - Promote responsible behaviour by all visitors to the countryside including promotion of the 'Caring for the Chilterns' Code.					
RA10 - Develop strategic access and recreational opportunities to strengthen links between town and country.					
RA11 - Provide special encouragement and assistance to 'non traditional' users to visit the countryside, including information in specialised forms.					
RA12 - Maintain and Enhance the					

Public Rights of Way Network.					
RA13 - Enhance the quality and consistency of rights of way and promoted route signing across the AONB.					
RA14 - Increase the use of local timber for countryside furniture including signposting, gates and stiles.					
RA15 - Improve the network of promoted routes and enhance co-ordination between route managers.					
RA16 - Improve co-ordination and consultation arrangements for development and management of local, regional and national routes.					
RA17 - Support local groups which provide and manage access facilities.					
RA18 - Encourage all visitors to enjoy the Chilterns without using a car, by promoting use of public transport, walking, cycling and riding.					
RA19 - Promote walking in general and specifically through the Health Walks Programme.					
RA20 - Promote the production of Green Travel Plans for all major attractions, sites and routes.					
RA21 - Promote Safer Routes to					

Schools campaigns to encourage school children to walk or cycle to and from school.					
RA22 - Develop networks of Quiet Lanes and Greenways on a pilot basis, to provide safer and more attractive opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding, and apply to the rest of the Chilterns as appropriate.					
RA23 - Address the needs and aspirations of those with mobility impairments and develop provision where appropriate throughout the AONB.					
RA24 - Maximise the benefits of sustainable recreation activity and access to local communities and the rural economy.					
RA25 - Minimise any damaging impacts of recreation activities and facilities or tourism development within the wider countryside.					
RA26 - Discourage, and when appropriate refuse permission for noisy and damaging recreation activities.					
RA27 - Enhance the quality of experience for all visitors by conserving and restoring peace and quiet.					

Broad Aims	Travel and Transport				
Conserve and enhance the rural character of the AONB, whilst ensuring safer access for travellers to and within the area.					
Promote environmentally sustainable and integrated forms of travel, especially alternatives to the car.					
Enhance the quality of the environment for local communities and visitors by reducing the impact of vehicle traffic on rural roads, and within towns and villages.					
Promote the importance of conserving the Chilterns AONB in the development and operation of regional and national transport systems.					
Protect the special landscape and other environmental qualities of the AONB from the damaging impacts of transportation developments and highway improvement schemes.					
Policies	Travel and Transport				
TR1 - Develop and promote schemes, in conjunction with public transport operators, for improved and specialised services.					

TR2 - Promote the establishment and use of the roads hierarchy to assist in ensuring inappropriate traffic does not use rural roads.					
TR3 - Use traffic management measures to conserve sensitive areas by seeking to prevent the inappropriate use of particular roads by inappropriate traffic.					
TR4 - Develop area based approaches to traffic management, integrating traffic and transport measures.					
TR5 - Develop networks of Quiet Lanes and Greenways on a pilot basis, to provide safer and more attractive opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding, and apply to the rest of the Chilterns as appropriate.					
TR6 - Promote lower speed limits in selected areas and roads where this would be environmentally beneficial and confer safety benefits on users and local residents.					
TR7 - Promote speed reduction in villages, including the possibility of introducing a speed limit of 30mph in all villages.					
TR8 - Promote the use of speed cameras and speed activated					

signs, especially in villages and on roads where this would provide an effective alternative to intrusive engineered traffic calming measures.					
TR9 - Develop new designs to ensure physical traffic calming methods in villages and along rural roads are environmentally sympathetic and respect local character.					
TR10 - Promote cycling, walking and horse riding as alternatives to the car and to encourage healthier lifestyles.					
TR11 - Develop a safer cycle-route network which is attractive for all types of cycling, social, utility and leisure, and designed to be sympathetic to the environment and respect local character.					
TR12 - Promote passenger transport options which reduce the need to travel by car.					
TR13 - Promote Travel wise initiatives encouraging people to consider alternatives to using their cars.					
TR14 - Promote the potential benefits of working at or close to home.					
TR15 - Promote the use of Green					

Travel Plans by local businesses.					
TR16 - Promote Safer Routes to Schools campaigns to encourage school children to walk or cycle to and from school.					
TR17 - Promote development and use of the existing Rights of Way network for those wishing to travel on foot, by cycle or on horse.					
TR18 - Promote the use of car parking associated with pubs, village halls and churches within villages in the AONB, as a safer alternative to rural car parks.					
TR19 - Promote full consideration of the potential environmental impact of highways and traffic management proposals in and adjacent to the AONB so that damaging developments may be firmly resisted.					
TR20 - Promote appropriate standards of design in future highway and other transportation infrastructure schemes in order to mitigate their impact and so conserve the special character and quality of the AONB landscape.					
TR21 - Promote high standards of management through the application of principles contained					

in the Environmental Guidelines for the management of Roads in the Chilterns.					
TR22 - Reduce roadside 'clutter' by rationalising signing where possible and to ensure appropriate designs are used.					
TR23 - Promote the use of low noise road surfaces, on motorways, principal roads and roads through villages.					
TR24 - Reduce light pollution by remove existing lighting and illuminated signs now considered unnecessary and use of cut off lanterns on all new and replacement street lights.					
TR25 - Where necessary, improve the system of consultations to ensure highway maintenance and improvement works within the AONB are fully assessed in regard to their potential environmental impacts.					
TR26 - Promote full consideration of the potential impacts on the Chilterns of major rail infrastructure proposals, including the impact on the landscape; light, noise and air pollution; and knock-on effects on other rail and road					

use.					
TR27 - Promote full consideration of the environmental effects of proposals to expand airports, especially Heathrow and London Luton, beyond existing permissions in terms of the number of flights and passenger throughput, with due weight given to the potential adverse impacts on the Chilterns, particularly in terms of traffic and air and noise pollution.					
TR28 - Seek a reduction in the nuisance caused by aircraft movements over the Chilterns, especially by aircraft using London Luton Airport, and low flying light aircraft and helicopters.					
TR29 - If necessary, promote a code of conduct to reduce the nuisance caused by low flying light aircraft and helicopters.					
TR30 - Increase public awareness and use of public passenger transport services as an alternative to the car.					