



**NOTES OF THE BRIEFING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
HELD ON Tuesday 1st February 2022
by remote video conferencing commencing at 10.00 am**

Present:

Cllr John Griffin	Board Member
Cllr Charles Hussey	Board Member
Cllr Lynn Lloyd	Board Member
John Nicholls	Board Member, Deputy Chair
Paul Mains	Board Member, Chair
Cllr Richard Newcombe	Board Member

In attendance:	
Graham Hurst	CCB Finance Officer
Dr Elaine King	CCB Chief Executive Officer

Deirdre Hansen	Clerk to the Board
Bob Empson	Management Consultant joined 10.59

The Chair welcomed all present.

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Alison Doggett, Secretary of State appointee, Sir Hector Sants, Buckinghamshire Parish Council Member and John Shaw, Secretary of State appointee.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Notice of Urgent Business

The meeting was notified of amendments required to the bank authority.

4. Chair's update

1. We are still awaiting the response from Defra on the new Secretary of State appointment and the Chair has still to submit comments on Defra's new appraisal system for their Board appointees.
2. The planned meeting with the Cotswolds AONB has been delayed until March.

3. He had held a very useful meeting with Bob Empson, Management Consultant, the CEO, Deputy Chair and the Fundraising and Development Manager.
4. Geetha Ludhra has held her first EDI meeting with John Shaw and Robert Roche.
5. He had had a good session with the team to discuss engagement with farmers.
6. Engagement with HS2 and its contractors will be led by the team.
7. Lynne Cordice has been promoted to Senior Administration Officer. One of the tasks she will work on is reviewing Policies and Procedures. The Chair, CEO and Clerk will support.
8. Work on getting SharePoint or a similar filesharing system up and running for Board members is a priority.
9. The Chair is writing to support the Local Government Association in their aim to allow for hybrid meetings.
10. The CEO and Chair have met with Defra on their response to the Landscapes Review.
11. Meetings have been held on the AONB boundary extension.

1. The Committee NOTED the update.

5. Review minutes of the previous meeting 2nd November 2021.

The minutes of the meeting of 2nd November 2021 were reviewed and following a typing error were recommended for approval at the next meeting.

6. Matters arising

A question was asked if the generous legacy from a former volunteer should be put towards a physical memorial. The CEO, Chair, Deputy Chair and Finance Officer are looking into how make best and most appropriate use of the donation.

7. Chief Executive's Update

The CEO reported on key work and events. In general, there is a lot going on.

1. She has been working with the senior team on developing the Business Plan. Workshops have been held with the Board and the whole team. It is an ongoing conversation with continuous review. It has been useful to get feedback from the team. The process is iterative, ultimately leading to a 25-year vision for the CCB.
2. The Government's response to the Glover Review is now out and the team is working with the NAAONB and internally on a response.
3. Lynne Cordice's promotion was the right thing to do. She does a fantastic job and now line manages Donna Webb.
4. The promotion to Project Manager has been offered to and accepted by Alan Beechey. The project's work is expanding, including working with Thames Water on a Smarter Water Catchment pilot for the River Chess and Allen is doing a brilliant job. We also have opportunity to be even more ambitious through additional new Thames Water major projects.
5. Farming in Protected Landscapes is delivering huge impact, which includes a significant amount of tree and hedge planting and gapping up of existing hedgerows.
6. Chalk, Cherries and Chairs' Project Manager, Lachlan Stuart, is reviewing and reconfiguring elements of the project, which is our biggest project in terms of value and complexity.
7. The Comms team are very busy creating high quality content and working on our new website. The new website is shaping up well, with a great deal of time needed to update and create new content. The CEO will ask about a specific launch date, due in the next couple of months.

8. The CEO is working with colleagues and Natural England as part of its Designations Programme. The work comprises two strands – exploring a Chilterns AONB boundary extension and exploring management and governance arrangements that could improve effectiveness. The Chair has been asked to join the Management Advisory Group for the boundary extension work. The group meets every two weeks, the Countryside Officer, the Planner and the Conservation and Landscapes Officer are also involved with this work.

1. The Committee NOTED the progress update.

8. Finance Report

The Finance Officer reported on the Core and Project activities for the nine months to 31 December 2021.

Core income for the nine months is £516,785 and broadly as expected.

1. The full Defra grant of £448,203 has been received and the local authorities' contributions have also been received.
2. A legacy of £64,504 received from a former volunteer.
3. Fee income earned this year is expected to be substantially more than budgeted as we can recover a share of administration cost from the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme and Green Recovery Challenge Fund project.

Core expenditure for the nine months is £421,736, as expected.

Project income received for the nine months is £1,028,334, as expected.

Project expenditure was £600,143. The shortfall relates to expenditure made, but not yet claimed back.

The Finance Officer reminded the Committee of the projects that require match funding, including a contribution from the CCB:

Chalk Cherries Chairs - CCB contribution £10,000

Chalkscapes - CCB contribution £20,000

Chilterns Chalk Streams Project - CCB contribution £10,000 per annum

It was noted that the major expense is salaries. Additional one-off funding for all AONBs from Defra, to use this financial year, is being used in part to update IT systems and equipment.

Members were reminded that project funding is always a timing issue.

The Committee reviewed and commented on the financial report

1. The Committee NOTED the financial position at 31 December 2021.

9. Draft Budget 2022-23

The Finance Officer reported that the 2022-23 budget has been prepared as part of the CCB's five-year Budget and Business Plan. The aim is to set a budget to achieve our ambitions.

The Core budget 2022-23 makes some assumptions:

1. Defra and Local Authority contributions increase by 1% p.a.

2. Additional fee income can be generated by recovering a contribution to core activities from certain programmes.
3. Meetings are being held to plan income generation.

Core expenditure makes the following assumptions:

1. Employment costs reflect the number of staff required to facilitate the work of the CCB. This reflects substantial increases in costs in the next few years.
2. Project budgets show both current projects and potential projects.
3. A full workload is forecast for the next five years if funding can be obtained for potential projects.
4. As mentioned above in 8. the CCB currently match funds some projects, any deficits to be funded from reserves.

10.59 Bob Empson joined the meeting

Members discussed the draft budget and recommended some amendments before presentation to the Board. The Finance Officer will revise the budget and update the Board.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the progress of the budget.**
- 2. The Committee RECOMMENDED some revisions to the draft budget.**

10. Financial Regulations update

The Finance Officer had reviewed the Financial Regulations as advised by the Internal Auditors. The CCB has changed the financial software it uses, and the Financial Regulations have been amended to reflect this change.

The Finance Officer reported that having reviewed the Financial Regulations they are still fit for purpose.

The Bank Mandate needs to be updated to include the Chair, Vice Chair, and the Senior Administrative Officer. The CEO and the Financial Officer remain on the bank mandate.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the reviewed and revised Financial Regulations.**
- 2. The Committee NOTED the updated bank mandate.**

11. Business Plan

The Chair welcomed Bob Empson to the briefing and members introduced themselves.

Bob gave a reflection on his observations so far in formulating the Business Plan. The process has been hard work for the CEO and the team, due to a tight timetable, but everyone has had an opportunity to contribute. Progress in terms of timing is good and the draft is nearing completion. All credit to the CEO and her team.

The CEO had presented a draft Business Plan for comment and feedback. The draft Business Plan has been formed after analysis of the CCB's internal and external environments, a staff survey and Board member and staff workshops.

Key elements:

1. Prioritisation of work and use of limited resources.
2. Development of an operational plan.
3. Internal KPIs

Members discussed the draft Business Plan and provided feedback. The CEO and team will work on the Business Plan for presentation to the Board meeting on 1st March.

1. The Committee REVIEWED the draft Business plan and PROVIDED feedback.

12. Governance Update.

The Deputy Chair noted that the December Board briefing had taken a direction of travel which is being used for the work programme to go to the March Board meeting. He had had a meeting with the NAAONB and discussion had taken place at the Planning Committee.

The Planning Committee recommended:

1. Changes on the way the Planning Committee operates
2. Making the request to be a Statutory Consultee
3. Not pursuing a Chilterns wide Local Plan, but proposing worthwhile alternatives.

A paper is being put together and will go to the Planning Committee and possibly the next Board meeting.

The Countryside Officer is looking at the criteria that need to be set up for a Planning Committee in a different shape.

A next meeting for the Task and Finish Group is being planned.

The Chair thanked him for the helpful update.

1. The Committee NOTED the update.

13. Agenda Board meeting 1st March.

The Chair noted the following items for inclusion on the agenda for the Board meeting 1st March:

1. The budget needs to be signed off
2. An update on Landscape Review and our work with Natural England on its Designations Programme
3. Governance, EDI, Policies and Procedures
4. June Board meeting to be held in the north of the Chilterns AONB to include sight of the Chalkscapes project.
5. Business Plan – a word version to be sent out in advance of the next Board meeting and members to be asked to send comments before the meeting.

11.45 the Deputy Chair was thanked for his work and left the meeting

11.45 Bob Empson was thanked and left the meeting.

14. Risk Register

The CEO had reviewed the Risk Register and had updated this.
 Members briefly discussed the updated Risk Register.

- 1. The Committee REVIEWED the Risk Register and MADE recommendations.**

15. Landscapes Review

The CEO gave a summary, and it was noted that the CCB team will respond as will the NAAONBs. The CEO is leading the response for the NAAONBs, setting out a prospective for Defra offering a model to take forward.

The response involves a lot of work for the team.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the update.**

16. Mend the Gap

The CEO had circulated the papers.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions.

The clerk brought up a potential conflict of interest that might occur on the programme. Cllr Richard Newcombe provided some advice.

- 1. The Committee NOTED the update**

17 Any Urgent Business

None

Next meeting: 3rd May 2022 location TBC.

Future meeting dates:

<u>Full Board</u>	1 March 2022 14 June 2022 and AGM 6 September 2022 6 December 2022
<u>Executive Committee</u>	3 May 2022 2 August 2022 1 November 2022
<u>Planning Committee</u>	12 January 2022 13 April 2022 12 July 2022 11 October 2022

The Chairman.....

Date.....