



# Chilterns National Landscape

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE CHILTERN'S CONSERVATION BOARD

held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at CCB offices, The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor  
OX39 4HA commencing at 10.00 AM

### Present:

Cllr Charles Hussey	Board Member	Parish Councils
Cllr Sue Rowland	Board Member – Chair	Parish Councils
Simon Mortimer	Board Member	Secretary of State
Cllr Sally Symington	Board Member	Local Authorities

### In attendance:

Lorna Coldwell	Clerk to the Board & minute taker	Officer
Mike Stubbs	Planning Advisor	Officer
Elaine King	Chief Executive Officer	Officer
Matt Thomson	Head of Strategy & Planning	Officer

Cllr Paula Hiscocks	Board Member attended remotely	Local Authorities
Paul Hayes	Co-optee attended remotely	Co-opted
Chris Hannington	Co-optee attended remotely	Co-opted

No public present.

### 24/25.1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Board member:  
John Nicholls.

### 24/25.2. Declarations of Interest

None.

### 24/25.3. Minutes of the meeting 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024

The minutes of the meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### 24/25.4. Matters Arising

Capacity within the Planning Team, there has been feedback given that the short fixed term nature of the Planning Officer role is off putting to those considering applying for the role, it is being negotiated as to whether there is scope for a longer term contract to be offered. It was commented that Planning Officers who contract can command a high daily rate. The Head of Strategy & Planning continues to pursue various avenues.

There is no update regarding the real time planning system since the previous meeting. The Head of Strategy & Planning is unable to provide the necessary IT support, and no input has been received from committee members other than the Chair.

**24/25.5. Public Questions**

No public present.

**24/25.6. Lighting Position Statement**

The Head of Strategy & Planning, Matt Thomson, provided a draft statement for consideration by the Committee. He gave thanks to Charles Hussey, Chris Hannington and Paul Hayes for their participation in the working group that started the draft statement. It was agreed that whilst a good and extensive document, some changes were needed to avoid ambiguity in wording.

**Action:** MT to circulate to the Planning Committee the draft statement for amendments. The Working Group to resolve these and make a final version to take to the September Board meeting after discussion at the July Planning Committee meeting.

**24/25.7. New Positions: SANGs and Woodlotting**

Cllr Sally Symington declared an interest in this item, as she is involved in SANGs with Dacorum Borough Council, and one potentially may be created close to her home.

The Head of Strategy & Planning discussed the powers that the Board may have to assist with the creation of SANGs and the general impact of them within the Chilterns AONB. Whilst the current Management Plan does not use the term SANG specifically, the policies embedded throughout are positive about the principle and reducing pressure on “honeypot” sites by providing other areas to visit in and around the National Landscape. It is important that when SANGs come forward within the National Landscape, they sit well with the existing landscape character, and any associated building such as cafes, lightning, car parks and toilets must be sympathetic. Chris Hannington volunteered to join a working group working towards producing a position statement, which is wider than only SANGs to futureproof any changes. This links in to the Nature Recovery Scheme, and findings from the recent Chalkscapes project, *Co-creating Spaces for Supporting Diverse Communities to use Greenspaces and the Countryside*.

**Action:** MT to circulate the Natural England guidelines for the creation of SANGs to Planning Committee members.

**The Committee CONSIDERED the merits of a Policy Statement on SANG provisions within the National Landscape and its setting and AGREED that officers should convene a working group to produce such a Statement for recommendation for approval to the Board.**

Woodlotting is the practice of dividing an area of woodland up into “lots” for sale to the public on the expectation (however unjustified) that the land could be used for a variety of purposes. Anecdotal evidence suggests that even the most benign examples of woodlotting can result in significant harm to the woodland habitat and to its visual appearance. There are limited powers for Local Authorities and National Landscape teams to address the issue, Defra need to be made aware, and to involve the Forestry Commission if they wish to be more proactive on the issue, and to lobby Government for a change in the law.

**The Committee REQUESTED that officers undertook further research into the issue of woodlotting with a view to identifying appropriate actions, which may include a Position Statement on for recommendation for approval to the Board.**

**24/25.8. Development Management Casework Update**

The Planning Advisor, Mike Stubbs, advised the Committee of 11 new comments/objections/responses that had been made. Since January Committee meeting, 1 application was granted to which the CCB made supportive comments and 0 granted to which

an objection was raised. 2 appeals were determined, with both dismissed (refused) The CCB had raised objections to both these appeals and gave evidence.

Particular note was made of the following Appeals/Planning Applications:

- PL/21/1309/FA 44 London Road West Amersham demolition of existing buildings and erection of a food store a holding objection has been placed as there is a missed opportunity to re-naturalise the River Misbourne that runs through it.
- PL/24/0065/FA Calf Barn Fullers Hill Farm Fullers Hill Hyde Heath demolition of existing equestrian buildings erection of 7 detached dwellings an objection was submitted as there is very clear harm to the AONB with inappropriate erosion of the landscape.
- Watlington relief road a holding objection has been placed regarding the proposed lighting at proposed junction 3 which will be visible from higher ground to the south including the panorama from Watlington Hill.
- Land south of Horse and Jockey Watling Street near Markygate application for a solar farm and associated electric and hydrogen vehicle charging service station and battery storage which is a major development in the AONB and would want to see plans with greater detail.
- The application to expand Luton Airport will be determined by 10<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Further representations were made in January.

**The Committee NOTED the updates and ENDORSED responses made.**

The Planning Advisor, Mike Stubbs gave an additional update about Land East of Tring ('Marshcroft') which was refused by the Secretary of State in March 2024, despite the Inspectors recommendation to approve. It was decided that the setting would be harmful looking into the AONB, and that the "tilted balance" argument that housing shortages outweigh other planning matters do not apply in the AONB.

#### **24/25.9. Policy Casework update**

Since the January Planning Committee meeting, the Chilterns National Landscape team had responded to one policy document, the Halton Supplementary Planning Document. Support was given, the document recognises the position in the AONB and its importance.

The changes to the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) for Householder Development consultation was also commented on. There was a new proposal for wheelie bin and bike storage in front gardens to come under permitted development, however comments were to the National Landscapes Association for this to continue to face the normal restrictions in sensitive areas such as the AONB and remain a planning matter.

**The committee ENDORSED the policy consultations made by the Officers**

#### **24/25.10. Planning Committee work programme**

The Head of Strategy and Planning will continue to update the Committee on work around the Management Plan review, the future long term vision work, and the governance review which will all have a knock-on effect of to the Planning Committee and its role. Following the "light touch review" the current Management Plan has been extended to the end of March 2025. The previously agreed delegation principles for the Planning Committee and Offices will be in the new Constitution, and amendments will be made as it continues to be reviewed.

**Action: MT to keep all updated including co-opted Members of the Planning Committee; standing item on the Planning Committee agenda**

National Highways A404 Junction Improvements

National Highways (NH) approached Officers regarding potential improvements on the A404 at Handy Cross, High Wycombe, and the roundabout at Bisham Abbey, Marlow. Both junction improvements have now been deferred to the next round of national road investment so this will now be after 2030. A good working relationship has been established with NH which can be built upon and used for discussions around Chilterns branded signage on the relevant highways.

#### River Chess Planning Guidance

The River Chess Smarter Water Catchment partnership programme approached the Chilterns National Landscape team about a legacy project that would prepare guidelines for local planning authorities when considering development proposals in proximity to the River Chess, based on works carried out for the River Wye in High Wycombe.

**Action:** MT to keep the Planning Committee informed of progress, and to ask the project partnership to consider the Committee as a key stakeholder.

#### Future meeting dates and times

The Board will agree dates for meetings in 2025 in December, following the setting by the Planning Committee in October. It was agreed by the Board that varying times and days encourages more attendance by as many Members as possible. It is difficult to maintain sufficient volunteers for the Committee, and of the correct category. Membership of committees is agreed at the Board AGM in June, Members will be invited to express an interest in membership of committees at the start of May. This will also serve as a reminder of who sits on which committee and Task and Finish Group to enable Members to make an informed decision. Members allowances will be dealt with around this time, to make the process easier and more transparent for all.

Jane McBean has resigned from the Chilterns Conservation Board, leaving a vacancy on the Planning Committee.

**Action:** MT to circulate a list of potential dates to Committee members for consideration

#### **24/25.11. Urgent Business**

The Planning Advisor, Mike Stubbs requested confirmation that the committee agrees for him to submit a holding objection to the recently received application Land to the East of Green St Chorleywood TRDC 24/0476/OUT and 24/0538/OUT. Cllr Sally Symington declared an interest in this matter and left the meeting.

**The committee CONFIRMED the objection had been tabled and would be discussed at the next Planning Committee meeting.**

#### **24/25.12. Dates of next and future meetings**

The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024, 5pm at Chinnor Office

#### **Future dates:**

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024, 2pm at Chinnor Office

The meeting was closed at 12.49

The Chair.....

Date

23/1/2025