



## NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

### MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

**MINUTES of a meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at  
North Wessex Downs AONB office, Denford Manor**

#### Present

Richard Broadhead                      Chairman  
Alison Cross  
Robin Edwards  
Gerry Hamersley  
Ted Hiscocks  
Garry King

#### In attendance

Henry Oliver                              NWD AONB Director  
Julie Baldwin                              NWD AONB Partnership Coordinator (*minutes*)

- 1. Apologies and Welcome**  
The meeting convened at 10:05hrs. Apologies were received from Rowan Whimster, Rose Somerset, Oliver Cripps and Rebecca Davies.
- 2. Minutes of Previous Meetings**  
The minutes were agreed and signed off.
- 3. Matters Arising**  
**HO** advised members of the arrival of Rebecca Davies who has replaced Lucy Page as the Planning Advisor. All actions from the previous minutes have been completed.
- 4. Constitutional Items**  
Those members present at the meeting unanimously appointed Gerry Hamersley to the Management Working Group. Andrew Smith is the self-appointed member from Natural England and will attend future Management Working Group and Council of Partners meetings as and when he can. The resignation of Moira Hankinson has been duly noted. **HO** will circulate an email outlining information on what potential new members joining the MWG should bring in way of skills, expertise and knowledge. **RB** gave an update of the Local Authority representative from the Council of Partners. Due to constitutional restraints, this needs to be looked at further. **RB** will speak with both Cllr Bennett and Cllr Sherlock regarding this position.  
**ACTION: PCO to send a letter of thanks to Moira Hankinson**  
**ACTION: RB to discuss CoP representation with Cllrs Bennett and Sherlock.**  
**ACTION: HO email to members outlining potential member skills and expertise.**
- 5. Budget update 2014-15**  
The current budget update was duly noted by members.  
**RE** queried where forecasted underspend will be allocated. **HO** advised that a significant amount will be allocated to Planning Support and some to Story of the North Wessex Downs project.

**ACTION: PCO to add an income line to the spreadsheet.**

6. **Future Business Model – for discussion**

**HO** introduced the report. From the last funding partners' meeting there were two requests: further work on the Value for Money report (inc. what it would cost the local authorities to do the work of the AONB team) and what the different level of cuts would mean to the partnership. Paper breakdown: **Background** – budget reduction over the last six years from DEFRA, being a contribution rather than a grant delivering services on behalf of the local authorities. The Value for Money report to be completed by February 2016. **Spending Review** – Government have made commitment to AONB's to protect their funding. **GH** asked if LAs are looking at funding cut as a straight line cut or on assessment on what the AONB does on their behalf. **GK** advised that Hampshire CC will pay current level but no extra funding will be available. **RB** advised that Wiltshire Council have not yet decided on their level of funding. **Scenarios** – **HO** gave an overview on each one. He asked members what they thought the unit should become in the future. **RE** asked if core spending included salaries and office costs as the largest outgoing. **HO** advised yes. **RE** therefore to counter office costs move into partner accommodation or amalgamation with other AONBs sharing office and back office facilities. Look at European Union-funded projects which will eventually pay for the staff member. **HO** advised members that a costing was done to amalgamate both director roles for Cranborne Chase and North Wessex Downs AONBs and, although it did come out as a cheaper option, the travel expenditure outweighed the cost saving for the remaining post holder. **AC** highlighted that the AONB team had worked hard over the last couple of years to raise the profile of the NWD and that would be lost if the team were to move into a council function. **GK** the independence factor does sway in favour of the AONB team to remain in their own accommodation. **GH** advised on good management to conserve funds in different cost lines. Where do the AONB want to be in five years' time? What are the strengths of the AONB? To honour that profile these are the essence of what the AONB is about. Need to emphasis this to the local authorities. **TH** is there scope to facilitate a workshop with partners to do what the team is doing now? **GH** asked what the Council of Partners really want: the AONB team to move to reduce costs or push the message of what the AONB team is doing? **RB** advised that the Council of Partners now need to receive an email with their respective expected contributions for 2016-2017. **TH** regarding the workshop idea, need to identify areas where expertise is needed, but not a closed door meeting. Perhaps the director could ponder on who to invite along with a facilitator. **HO** please could the members' forward suggestions on facilitator nominations by 18/12/15. The workshop to be held week commencing 11 April 2016. This to be confirmed.

**ACTION: HO to send out email to CoP members with financial commitment for 2016-17**

7. **Any Other Business**

**None reported.**

Meeting closed at 13:10hrs.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Signed..........

Date .....10/02/2016.....