



NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

**MINUTES of a meeting held on 10 February 2016 at
North Wessex Downs AONB office, Denford Manor**

Present

Richard Broadhead	Chairman
Robin Edwards	
Gerry Hamersley	
Ted Hiscocks	
Garry King	
Rowan Whimster	

In attendance

Henry Oliver	NWD AONB Director
Julie Baldwin	NWD AONB Partnership Coordinator (<i>minutes</i>)
Oliver Cripps	NWD AONB Projects & Development Manager

- 1. Apologies and Welcome**
The meeting convened at 10:00hrs. Apologies were received from Alison Cross, Rebecca Davies, Rose Somerset and Andrew Smith.
- 2. Minutes of Previous Meetings**
The minutes were agreed and signed off. To be noted that Councillor Andrew Bennet (Swindon representative to the Council of Partners) has announced that he will be retiring from the Swindon Borough Council and the Council of Partners with effect of the end of May 2016. All actions from the previous minutes have been completed.
- 3. Matters Arising**
None
- 4. Budget update 2015-16 – for information**
The current budget update was duly noted by members.
HO gave an update on underspend allocations. £3,000 to Farmer Cluster project that OC is working on; £8,500 for the visitor guide reprint and delivery; £1,000 for further planning support work; £1,500 to support the HLF Sharing Historic Landscape Character project; £1,000 for the forthcoming MWG workshop; £500 contribution to the CPRE Dark Skies mapping project; £150 to the NAAONB for an 'infographic' of the value of AONBs to business. If any further underspend comes to light, this will be redirected to the SDF.
- 5. Proposed Budget Allocations 2016-17 – for approval**
HO introduced the report. He advised members that the Government has confirmed that AONB funding is being protected and there is an additional 1.72% increase on last year, which provides a very welcome endorsement from central Government, largely thanks to the hard work of the NAAONB. It was highlighted that the Local Authority contribution to core funding still remains at 25% and the DEFRA contribution is dependent on that contribution. **HO** advised that the increase in core costs due to changes to National Insurance and superannuation would significantly exceed the 1.72% increase, even if local authority partners met their share. To maintain the level of activity as intended by DEFRA, therefore, we would

need more money. Rather than ask the local authorities to contribute more, we could draw from income and reserves to make up the shortfall. Therefore the proposed annual budget would increase by £4,000 from DEFRA, matched by £1,100 in contributions from local authorities and augmented by a further £4,500 from forecast AONB income. HO gave an overview of the 2016/17 allocations. TH asked whether the AONB could source a sponsor for the Annual Forum, he will look into this. HO advised that the 'Value for Money' report should be completed shortly. HO to advise local authorities of their revised contribution figure for 2016/17. GH queried whether the AONB can bring forward next year's forecast contribution to before Christmas 2016 in consideration for when the local authorities are setting their budgets after Christmas and for the next three years. **ACTIONS: HO to follow up contribution forecast for LAs; HO to advise LAs of their 2016/17 contributions.**

7. **Policy on Financial Reserves – for discussion and approval**

RB introduced the paper. We are aware there is currently no agreement in place to cover extreme circumstances on funding. RE advised that paragraph 8 of the paper 'Charity Commission Advice' is the fundamental for the policy. As long as you can answer the questions, then that would be your policy. RB advised that there is a need to review whether this is how and why reserves should be held. He also advised that this paper is not the answer to push forward a reserves policy and will take the paper back to Wiltshire Council for their comments.

6. **Work Programme: Progress Report on 2015-16 and proposed 2016-17 programme – for discussion**

HO introduced the supporting document within the presentation, the 5-year Priorities. The report covered 1st year progress and reviewed the 5-year priorities. HO wishes the MWG to decide whether anything within the work plan should be taken out or anything missing added. He gave an account of the progress of all the projects for 2015/16, along with the five-year priorities. Members requested a breakdown of projects showing the resources needed and staff capacity, with time allocated to individual projects. In summary, HO to circulate to MWG proposed breakdown of projects, resources, time and needs. **ACTION: HO to circulate to members' proposed Priority Projects table.**

8. **Planning Update – for information**

HO introduced the paper on behalf of the Planning Advisor. Further oral updates to the paper included: Crofton are submitting an HLF bid for restoration and improvements. Salisbury Road, Marlborough application continues to extend higher uphill than the allocated site, with officers recommending it for approval. The AONB has written to the committee and the Planning Advisor is at the meeting today. Wiltshire Council has circulated a list of possible sites for housing allocations. VoWHDC local plan examination is continuing with site visits in May.

9. **Agenda for next meeting**

It was agreed by members present that the usual reporting items be submitted and to include as a standing item a project progress update.

10. **Any Other Business**

HO to report by email on the national Lead Officers' meeting.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 8th June 2016

Meeting closed at 13:40hrs.

Signed..........

Date08/06/16.....