

# Meeting minutes

## Chiltern AONB Review Group Meeting 29

**Meeting date** Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**Meeting location** Teams Meeting

**Meeting time** 10:00am-13:00pm

Members (those who make the quorum of the forum)	Attendees (presenters/additional attendees)	Apologies
(Senior Strategic Partnership Manager - HS2) - SA	(Senior Project Manager – HS2/Align) - MC	
(Buckinghamshire Council) - TC	(Sustrans) - LD	
(Strategic Partnership Manager – HS2) - CE	(Archaeologist) - WM	
(Community Engagement Lead – Align) - DF	(EKFB – Interface and School Director) - SM	
(Senior Advisor and Phase 1 Project Manager – Natural England)		
(Senior Advisor – Natural England) - AM		
(Head of Strategy and Planning – Chilterns Conservation Board)		
(Chair - DfT) - TH		
(Landscape Senior Specialist – Natural England) - LB		
(Chilterns Conservation Board - Conservation and Landscape Officer) - NJ		
(Assistant Third Party Agreements Manager – HS2) - GP		

**Signed  
Chair  
Date**

Tom Hinds

## Attendees:

### 1 Introductions

- 1.1 All those present introduced themselves.

### 2 Review of Minutes

It was agreed that to catch up on recent approvals of Minutes, the group would need to review the October, December and March minutes together and send comments and acceptance by correspondence. No immediate issues of minutes were raised by the group and SA said that if no issues were raised by Friday, they would be considered approved.

**Action: Panel members to confirm any changes to minutes by 9<sup>th</sup> June 2023. If no correspondence received, this means acceptance**

### 3 Budget Review

- 3.1 SA reviewing expenditure and reconciliation on allocation of projects so far. He confirmed that £1,637,500 had been allocated so far, leaving a remainder of £1,362,500. NJ commented that spend to date seems to be doing well and expressed SA's summary was positive.
- 3.2 SA moved onto Admin budget and explained how the picture was not yet complete as there were still some outstanding invoices to be sent in. Panel members should send their invoices through a PO as the U&A budget only covered for 2 years, but this has been extended.
- 3.3 TH asked the group if this process sounded feasible, NJ confirmed and stated that they have been keeping a record of review group costs for a while.

**Action: SA to inform all members on how to claim and send invoices to be paid and set a target date.**

**Action: Panel members to then send SA invoices**

- 3.4 TH queried if Buckinghamshire Council (BC) were also reimbursed out of this allocation? SA answered that BCs reasonable costs are covered under other agreements so the way they are worded, they don't have a budget cap.

5

### 4 Ground Movement Update

- 4.1 MC joined meeting to present the following presentation:



Align%20-%20Groun  
d%20Movement%20C

- 4.2 Whilst presenting, NJ noted that in presentation that black dotted lines which are within those which are actually the tunnel routes so that it looks from that slide with the white lines are as if the tunnel crosses right beneath the lake, which it doesn't. MC confirmed NJ's statement is correct.
- 4.3 MC completed presentation and opened floor to questions.
- 4.4 NJ asked what post treatments will take place. MC and NJ discussed further on NJ's question which included that regarding the Ground Movement there was a local stakeholder workshop where more discussion and questions were answered to reassure concerns locally.
- 4.5 NJ highlighted that it is a Grade II Registered Park or Garden then announced Dr Wendy Morrison on the call who is an archaeologist and NJ asked about involving Historic England in conversations moving forward. MC confirmed Historic England are aware of the situation and no specific questions or concerns have come back from them.
- 4.6 This led to MTh requesting that HS2 take more action and communicate with wider stakeholders in a more timely manner. MC explained that a process is being adhered to with priority given to those with a formal role. SA noted that safety is a priority and obligations that HS2 have to stakeholders through the undertakings and assurances and other commitments and obligations is what HS2 meet as a priority.

## SA left meeting

## 5 ALIGN Update

- 5.1 DF presented the following Powerpoint Presentation:
- 5.2 DF started by declaring that construction is well underway and provided an ongoing construction update to the group.
- 5.3 After presentation, DF opened floor to any further questions. No further question asked. NJ fed back that from the presentation it was useful to see the Colne Valley South portal as it helps with knowledge on the North Portal. DF suggested that if anyone wants to visit sites, that this can be arranged.
- 5.4 Discussions took place on submissions and local planning regimes. Review group made offer to HS2 contractors on sharing their local expertise and knowledge.

5.5 DF explains mock ups of preparations not complete until late 2023 early 2024, when available will share with Review group.

5.6

## 6 EKFB Update

6.1 SM presented the following slides:



EKFB Review Group  
Presentation.pdf

6.2 During presentation, he confirmed that discussions were on-going with HE and that they wished to see as much of the Scheduled Monument preserved as possible. NJ confirmed that the CCB also wish to see as much of the SM preserved as possible, ideally together with opportunities for future educational study and research.

6.3 LB asked when of Schedule 17 pre-application discussions and were likely to happen on Leather Lane and the S17 submitted. SM explained that they were at the design option stage. Once this progresses they will be at the pre app stage and would welcome NE's input. S17 application will likely be submitted at the end of the year. SM will keep review group updated.

6.4 LB asked about the purpose of the metal work going into the concrete piers. SM clarified that it is reinforcing steel.

6.5 TH commented that the video of the construction sequencing really brought a good visual as to what is happening giving some positive feedback.

6.6 MTh provided the feedback that the engineering and attention to detail was impressive and appreciated. DF and NJ agreed. More discussion took place about quality of submissions and attention to detail of designs.

## 7 Ongoing Project update

7.1 Louis Devenish joined meeting.

7.2 LD confirms works progressing on 1km section of route funded by the Review Group – had commenced in April.

7.3 LD explained that in the initial request they had outlined risks around earth work ramps. Now the detailed design was in from the contractor, it was higher than had been expected as Network Rail required a new drainage system.

- 7.4 LD asked in principle if (a) more money could be requested (he was not currently sure how much) for the existing drainage challenge and (b) could a second bid be submitted for an additional length of route?
- 7.5 TH commented that both were possible, but would have to be considered by the panel, and balanced against other priorities.
- 7.6 MTa asked if Network Rail are putting in any funding for this? LD answered yes and no. They have contributed £200-250k of fencing. LD accepted to ask Network Rail to see if they can help fund it.
- 7.7 NJ asked LD if he any idea of the scale of additional funding that might be requested? LD answered perhaps £100k for the shortfall on the first 1km and perhaps £200-300k for the extension. However he stressed that these were only an educated guess at this stage.

SA re-joined meeting

**Action: LD would send an email with a clearer sense of his funding request during the next month and would provide feedback from NR response about funding.**

- 7.8 NJ gave a verbal update of the Landscape and Biodiversity project which was delivering a range of enhancements, including several km of new and improved hedges.

**Action: NJ to circulate a written update on landscape and biodiversity project**

## 8 Proposed Projects and Group Priorities

- 8.1 TH led discussion on remaining budget of c.£1.3m and priorities for spending it.
- 8.2 TH stated that most of the allocated funds to date have gone on access related projects and so it may be worth considering the remainder of funds be focused on other areas identified in the original shortlist documents moving forward. TH then opened the floor to discussion.
- 8.3 LB referred back to a previous paper issued by Helen Hall (former Review Group Project Manager) on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2020 which included various recommendations on the development of the Additional Projects. Liz reminded the Group that the approach had been to how much could be achieved first through HS2's works and contributions from its contractors.
- 8.4 LB quoted from the paper that said that 'It is the recommendation that any further development of Additional Projects be based on a review of the final Schedule 17 designs and what is approved by the local planning authority. LB commented that Buckinghamshire Council were best placed to review where there were 'gaps' in provision that could potentially be filled by the additional projects. It was proposed that the Council take this forward at the appropriate time.

**8.5** TH presented the following document setting out shortlisted project themes, from the Detailed Design Principles and Additional Mitigation Projects paper issued on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2020:

Rank	Project	Score	Page number
1	LCM5: Hedgerow strengthening	25	53
2	ARE4: Ridgeway Connections	23	42
	B104: Ancient Woodlands		71
	LCM3: Connectivity – eco-corridors		46
	DDP2: Holloway Rehabilitation		79
	DDP3: Wendover Link		83
3	ARE1: Citizen Science Connections	22	n/a
	ARE2: Misbourne Valley Paths		38
	LCM4: Decluttering/Character Enhancement		50
4	BIO1: Misbourne Water Enhancements	21	64
	BIO2: Headwaters and Springlines		68
5	DDP1: North Link	20	75
	HE1: Grims Ditch		57
	HE3: Management of Historic Sites		61
	BIO3: Chalk Geology		n/a
6	HE2: Historic Farmsteads	18	n/a
7	LCM1: Land Management Principles	14	n/a
8	ARE5: Visitor Centre	15	n/a
9	ARE3: Visiting the Chilterns	13	n/a
10	LCM2: Edible Chilterns	9	n/a

**8.6** Group discussed project priority lists and scores. NJ highlighted that several of the categories were picked up as part of the Landscape and Biodiversity project. He discussed and spoke about heritage projects that could be moved forward and the Misbourne water.

**8.7** TH asked LB and group if the Environment Agency should be asked about ideas for water related projects.

**8.8** TH commented that overall the funds were not in a bad place and the projects funded so far fitted in well with the original shortlist of themes, and there were some areas to focus on moving forward. Feels in a good position. The Group was asked to identify more projects.

**Action: Bucks to review schedule 17 situation and consider possible mitigation 'gaps'**

**Members with contacts to speak to Environmental Agency.**

**NJ to look and catch up with Heritage teams**

**8.9** Discussions took place about farmland and whether cables around Little Missenden vent shaft site could be put underground to reduce clutter.

**SA to follow up with EKFB about undergrounding of the cables**

**8.10** TC asked what timescales for use of further applications of funding. TH answered that no fixed timescale but to be aware of inflation and monetary value depleting with every passing month/year. Suggested in the next year or two the group should be looking to spend most of the rest of the money in a balanced way.

**8.11** TH queried if group identified anything from the shortlist to highlight. NJ noted no funding specific for Misbourne and will speak to colleagues for potential opportunities.

**NJ to feedback outcomes of Potential Misbourne projects discussions**

**8.12** Review group discussed Sustrans' request and agreed to wait until a formal submission was made. TH also raised the Wendover Arm Trust's request for further funding for the towpath upgrade.

**8.13** Discussions took place between MTh and NJ around planning permission for the housing development and whether it was feasible that the developer could be required to make a funding contribution to the towpath work as part of a community amenity investment.

**Action:** Buckinghamshire Council to consider whether it was feasible that the developer might contribute to funding this project.

**8.14** TH summarised that the overall conclusion from both proposals was that we need more information and details before agreeing anything.

**8.15** TH asked if there was any update about the Wendover Visitor Centre or Wildlife Verge that had been discussed at recent meetings. NJ said he would make enquiries as not much to update as it stands.

**Action:** NJ will chase up and make some inquiries.

## 9 AOB

- 9.1 NJ previously circulated report produced by Councillor Colin Sully that they visited the area between Jones Hill wood and Bowood Lane

NJ voiced concern about the success/failure rate in terms of the planting both in terms of the ancient woodland soil translocation, whether that's being successful as well as the bat mitigation. NJ asked how as a review group, should they look at these things?

- 9.2 TH and MTh discussed that its more in the role of the Ecological Review Group, but that the Chilterns AONB Review Group could provide local perspective and insight on the matter.
- 9.3 MTa had further input on the matter explaining detail of work on the mentioned sites in relation to Natural England's role in issuing the bat and other protected species' licences and ensuring that appropriate compliance checks take place.
- 9.4 TH thanked MTa on the information and asked if any other comments.
- 9.5 NJ asked MTa if the local community wanted to give feedback, what is the best route for it and whether it would be the Chilterns AONB Review Group or the Ecological Review Group. MTa responded and confirmed that they have regular contact with members of the public but that it does depend on what they are asking or talking about.
- 9.6 NJ asked SA or GP that from HS2's newsletter, they mentioned they are planning to plant trees in April at Jones' Hill wood and voiced concern that this is the wrong time of year. SA agreed to take this away and get an update from the ecological team at the next meeting as a potential agenda point to discuss how the engagement works with the communities and the stakeholders and the affected parties.

**Action: SA to speak to ecological team about planting times and suggest attendance for a slot in the next meeting.**

## 10 Next Meeting

- 10.1 Next meeting proposed for 9:30-12:30 Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September.