

Meeting minutes

Chiltern AONB Review Group Meeting 30

Meeting date Thursday 14th September 2023
Meeting location Teams Meeting
Meeting time 09:30-12:30

Attendees:

Members (Those who make the quorum of the forum)	Attendees (presenters/additional attendees)	Apologies
(TH) - DfT Chair	(LD) Sustrans	EKFB
(NJ) - Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB)	(LB) - Sustrans	
(GP) - HS2	(CP) - Sustrans	
(MT) - Natural England (NE)	(DF) - Align	
(LB) - Natural England (NE)		
(SA) - HS2		
(AB) - Buckinghamshire Council		

Signed
Chair
Date

TH

1 Introductions

1.1 All those present introduced themselves.

2 Review of Minutes and Actions

- 2.1 It was agreed to catch up on June's minutes together.
- 2.2 GP shared screen and group read through minutes.
- 2.3 Discussion took place over clause 9.2 but it was agreed that the minutes were accurate.
- 2.4 No other immediate issues of minutes were raised by the group.

GP to look into upload and publishing of previous minutes

- 2.5 Group discussed previous actions.
- 2.6 SA gave the update regarding cost of attendance and invoices. SA is working on legacy payments until the 28th October this year.

SA to send out timings, dates and milestones for Panel to send invoices over against PO

- 2.7 NJ's previous action of updating Panel on the landscape and diversity project was sent out in an email as an update prior to meeting.
- 2.8 No questions or comments from group.
- 2.9 AB asked about to spend so far and TH summarised the position. .
- 2.10 Next action was for people with contacts at the Environment Agency to alert them to the Additional Mitigation fund and the potential interest in funding water-related projects.
- 2.11 NJ updated group that he spoke with a Chalk Streams Project Officer and that Affinity have a whole list of restoration projects along the River Misbourne. They were going out to public consultation later this month or October.

NJ to keep in touch with Chalk Officer for any further updates and to report to group

- 2.12 NJ updated group on potential heritage projects. Spoke with archaeologist Dr Wendy Morrison who has new role within the CCB so pleased that there is an archaeological resource in the AONB.
- 2.13 SA updated on action of speaking with Ecological team and has asked for them to send a briefing or their attendance at the next meeting.
- 2.14 Discussions took place about tree planting and tree species and NJ raised the point to discuss with Sustrans regarding new planting proposal.
- 2.15 Discussion moved onto Action Tracker to keep up to date with actions

SA sent apologies and is going to attach action tracker to be sent out with minutes

TH to send GP/SA latest action tracker

2.16 NJ asked AB about the visitor centre proposal that was brought to the review group in March and a wild verge proposal between Little Missenden and Amersham suggested by Buckinghamshire Council.

2.17 Conversation took place and AB is to see what is happening on the verge proposal.

3 HS2 Forward Look

3.1 SA explained that this section falls from the IPT in terms of what the works are looking like for the next six months and looking to then 12 months. SA updated the group that he is waiting to co-ordinate between the two IPT's for maps and visuals to present to the panel.

SA to draw information together for the group

4 ALIGN Update

4.1 DF joined meeting to present the following presentation:



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2014%2009%2023%:

4.2 During the presentation, MT commented successes are great to see however did ask what hasn't been so successful and lessons learned.

4.3 Conversation took place discussing the grass and flower growth and DF suggested it could be worth getting one of their ecologists' environmental team to discuss further with panel.

4.4 SA recommended as part of the ecological notes that were spoken about earlier that we add this topic in so specific questions can be answered. NJ agreed.

4.5 Further discussions took place throughout the presentation including discussion of chalk, soil and activities been carried out on site.

4.6 DF suggested an action to be taken to have a group visit to the South Portal.

GP to get dates for visit.

4.7 DF opened floor to questions.

- 4.8 NJ asked about rejigging of the work between Align and EKFB and how Align are doing more work within the Chilterns. NJ asked what implications that has on Leather Lane Bridge and other works.
- 4.9 DF answered that discussions are taking place but couldn't confirm full scope.
- 4.10 SA committed to briefing the group accordingly once those key pieces of work are defined.
- 4.11 There were no further questions from the panel.

5 EKFB Update

- 5.1 SM sent on apologies.
- 5.2 GP delivered update on SM behalf.
- 5.3 GP updated: The development of the design in preparation of the Schedule 17 applications and for EKFB those applications are now complete. The remaining planning approvals for the works around Leather Lane have now been passed to align as part of the scope of transfer however Align wouldn't have picked this up yet which is why Duncan wouldn't have mentioned it in the Align update.
- 5.4 For the other S17 approval, around Grim's Ditch – EKFB are still awaiting feedback from Historic England on the requirements to retain a small section of the earthwork to the east of the cutting.
- 5.5 At this time, there is no further information available than what was shared at the previous meeting.

6 Ongoing Project update

- 6.1 Ridgeway Project was briefly discussed but with no update as NJ noted that Sarah sent apologies due to the Ridgeway National Trail 50th anniversary celebrations.
- 6.2 The panel discussed the Wendover Canal towpath upgrade with the following presentation



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Wendover Canal towpath
being shown on screen:

- 6.3 Brief discussions took place about the presentation.
- 6.4 Conversation went on with positive opinions discussed regarding progress and efforts made with projects

7 Sustrans update

7.1 CP, LD and LB joined the meeting.



HS2 13 09 23.pdf

7.2 LD presented the following presentation:

7.3 CP opened the floor to questions.

7.4 TH asked if the new bid is separate to the ongoing project or is it additional funding needed.

7.5 LD confirmed it is a separate element.

7.6 NJ asked when the path will be open.

7.7 LD confirmed once they have the highway licenses resolved at each end of the Firecrest section, that section could be opened in isolation.

7.8 CP went through and described the planting of the hedges, shrubs and trees and the funding bid that's been put in.

7.9 CP further explained that what they are hoping to do is to plant 4.4 kilometres of hedgerow along the Misbourne Greenway and in addition to the hedgerow planting, they want to plant some standard trees and do some shrub planting as well.

7.10 CP explained they want to rejuvenate the existing hedgerows, and to enhance them and increase the species diversity in them with a mixture of native plants. They want to spread the planting over several seasons, which will ensure sustainability and improve aftercare, and the aspiration is to do this with local school groups and other local groups, and they want to do it through community planting days and hoping to do that in partnership with the Chiltern Rangers.

7.11 4.15 kilometres of hedgerow is left, which require funding. The cost of delivering this hedgerow planting by contractors is £32,304, including VAT per kilometre, and if they do it for community days, it's £34,664 including VAT. The reason why it's slightly more expensive to do it via community days than to do it through contracted tree planting is because of the extra staff time that is required.

7.12 The preferred option is to do 50% of this through contractor tree planting and 50% through community days.

7.13 The total cost of that preferred delivery plan is £139,728.

7.14 Then, in addition to that, they want to plant 34 standard trees and this will replace those lost during construction.

- 7.15** Also adding a few extra trees as well, but alongside that, Sustrans also want to do shrub planting and to plant climbers.
- 7.16** The cost of those trees, shrubs and climbers is £50,605.00.
- 7.17** CP discussed aftercare and the need to make sure that watering, mulching, weeding and trimming the new plants happens in order to establish and minimise a plant failures and the cost of that is £2,850 per kilometre.
- 7.18** So the total aftercare costs for the full 4.4 kilometres is £12,540.
- 7.19** CP summarises that the outcome will be a linear habitat corridor for wildlife and landscape scale connectivity which will enable species to move through the landscape.
- 7.20** The floor was open for questions.
- 7.21** NJ asked when will they want to start the work.
- 7.22** LB answered ideally this year depending on when they secure funding.
- 7.23** TH asked if the tree replacement was under the original scope or something that has been added.
- 7.24** CP answered that there are elements of the Greenway that hasn't got funding and they've packaged all of the biodiversity planting into one package.
- 7.25** SA commented on HS2's assurance process for spend and highlighted that obtaining quotes is necessary.
- 7.26** NJ told the group that they can put Sustrans in touch with colleagues who have completed hedgerow and tree planting schemes which can potentially be better value for money.
- 7.27** TH asked about corporate volunteering and expressed a possible interest in DfT staff helping with any planting.
- 7.28** The next steps are that the panel are potentially interested, but that there are a few questions around the costs and things which need to be acknowledged. So there's going to be a bit of time needed to see whether those can be refined and brought down.
- NJ to put Sustrans in contact with his contacts and see whether costs can be brought down.**
- 7.29** Sustrans left the call and further discussion took place in the panel emphasising that they need to get quotes and ideally get the cost down.

8 Budget

- 8.1 SA gave figure that we are at £1.23million spend with £1.77million allocated but noted that reconciliation is still being undertaken.

SA to share budget and spends

- 8.2 SA to send over full reconciliation and funds.

9 AOB

- 9.1 Next meeting date and time discussed

- 9.2 Ideally, next meeting would be in person potentially at South Portal if dates align

- 9.3 5th December and 19th December were put to the group.

GP to ask panel what dates suit best and for visiting South Portal