

Meeting minutes

Chilterns National Landscape Review Group Meeting 34

Meeting date 16th October 2024
Meeting location Teams Meeting
Meeting time 10:00 – 12:30

Attendees:

Members (Those who make the quorum of the forum)	Attendees (presenters/additional attendees)	Apologies
(TH) – DfT Chair	SM – EKFB	
(NJ) – Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB)	(DP) – ALIGN (DF) – ALIGN (JW) – ALIGN	
(GP) – HS2	(VL) – HS2	
(MT) - Chilterns	(FJ) – HS2	
(LB) - Natural England (LA) – Natural England		
(SA) – HS2		
(AB) – Buckinghamshire Council		
(CP) – Grimshaw		
(LL) - Bucks		

Signed
Chair
Date

Tom Hinds

1 Introductions

1.1 All those present introduced themselves.

2 Review of Minutes and Actions

2.1 Minutes from the last meeting were accepted without comments.

2.2 GP will upload the accepted minutes to the digital team.

2.3 Discussion moved to Action Tracker

2.4 LL mentioned ongoing work regarding mitigation gaps.

3 Contractor update - EKFB

3.1 SM presented the following:



1MC12-EKF-SE-PRE-
CS03-000026.pdf

3.2 Expression from panel members to go to site

3.3 TH offered any more questions, none from the panel

4 Contractor update – ALIGN

4.1 CP presented an update on plans for the flint wall at Amersham vent shaft:

4.2 Acknowledged the complexity of the design and need for contractor input

4.3 Recap of Schedule 17 design approach

4.4 DF gave a general update to the panel

4.5 LL explained that the conservation group have sent letter to ALIGN regarding Leather Lane, ALIGN confirmed they will be responding in due course.

4.6 LL asked: will they be using slip roads on A25 rather than roads through Bucks?

4.7 DF confirmed slip roads will remain in place. FJ from HS2 confirmed

- 4.8 NJ observed that in the South Portal, evident erosion due to weather and asked if it is Hydro seeded?
- 4.9 DF said that there is huge amount of drainage inserted into the ground, not sure about hydroseeding

5 Ongoing Project update

- 5.1 NJ gave update received from Sustrans regarding their route.

Route is nearly complete but finalising highway connections. Connections at Cobblers Hill and Dunsmore Lane expected to be completed this year. Aylesbury Road works are more complex; construction scheduled for next year. Opening date for Sustrans route remains unclear

- 5.2 Summary of work done on the landscape and biodiversity connectivity project, secured through additional project funding:
- 5.3 £111,000 of additional funding secured, matched with landowner contributions.
- 5.4 Various contributions: £5,000 in-kind, £26,000 from HLF funding, £3,000 from Rothschild Foundation
- 5.5 Significant works undertaken include:
 - 5.5.1 4.6 kilometres of hedge planting.
 - 5.5.2 2.1 kilometres of hedge coppicing.
 - 5.5.3 Small amount of hedge laying and protective fencing.
- 5.6 Identifying areas for further project funding applications.
- 5.7 Discussing the work to develop proposals under the Landscape and Biodiversity Connectivity Project by Landowner and Farming Engagement Officer.
- 5.8 They help identify proposals and arrange contracts.
- 5.9 Their involvement on-site has aided funding effectiveness

6 Chilterns AONB strategic opportunities and enhancement

- 6.1 VL introduced herself as the lead urban designer at HS2 Ltd, and explained she covers urban areas from Birmingham to Euston and focuses on regeneration and placemaking.
- 6.2 VL emphasized the importance of strategic opportunities and interested in engaging with local persons and identifying opportunities.
- 6.3 Aim to understand wider aspirations at the interface with HS2. Refers to opportunities outside HS2 work scope and not related to HS2 mitigation.

Discussion of potential collaborations with local plans and that ideas may emerge from local plans.

Encouragement for parallel discussions on emerging policies. Importance of further information and high-level discussions.

Acknowledgment of potential lack of funding and defined plans.

Need to ensure all parties are joined up for discussions.

Valid discussions about land strategy.

In touch with the Land and Property team as a point of contact and ongoing discussions about easement fees for maintenance access strips.

Recognition of opportunities for biodiversity and landscape enhancements.

Interest in early discussions involving local stakeholders.

Collaboration with staff knowledgeable about local farmers.

Discussion on maintenance access strips.

- 6.4** Access gates related to potential to use some of the Maintenance Access Strips when developing the North Link and Wendover link proposals.

Retrospective design leads to increased costs

- 6.5** LB expresses support for the approach and welcomes VL's work.

- 6.6** Mth comments on Chilterns management plans and their relevance to the current.

The existing management plan for Chilterns has been extended from 2019-2024 to 2025.

References to HS2 will be updated due to evolving circumstances since 2018.

Public consultation on management plan changes is planned for later in the year.

7 Budget update

- 7.1** Total allocation of £3 million

- 7.2** 1.6 million has been allocated, with £1.3 million remaining

- 7.3** Breakdown of allocated funds:

7.3.1 The Chilterns Conservation Board for Landscape and Biodiversity: £500,000

7.3.2 Ridgeway: £136,000

7.3.3 Wendover Canal: £291,000 and £380,000

7.4 Wendover Canal Trust discussions

7.4.1 Recollection that further funding had been requested for connectivity on the canal and that they had been advised to seek funding from CEF. It seemed that this approach was bearing some fruit.

7.5 SA updated group that request for an increase of the additional mitigation fund in line with inflation considered unlikely to be approved.

7.5.1 Admin fund estimates received from CCB

7.5.2 Closing out this week to seek uplift

7.6 Following variation process due to project delays. Variation process for funding requests requires agreement by both parties.

8 AOB

8.1 Next meeting date: week of 13th January 2025