



# Chilterns National Landscape

## Planning Committee

2pm, Thursday 17 October 2024

**At the offices of the Chilterns Conservation Board, The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor, OX39 4HA commencing at 2pm in the meeting room.**

Members of the Planning Committee of the Chilterns Conservation Board are hereby summoned to attend meeting at the above date, time and venue. Access to the meeting from 1.45pm. Voting (Board) members are encouraged to attend in person to ensure the meeting is quorate; voting is not permitted for remote attendees. Remote access will be available for non-voting members.

### Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair
3. Apologies
4. Declarations of interest
5. Minutes of the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and notes of the briefing 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024
6. Matters arising
7. Public question time
8. Ashridge Spatial Plan
9. SANGs Position Statement
10. Development Management Casework update
  - a. Special Paper: London Luton Airport expansion NSIP (to follow)
11. Planning Policy Casework update
12. Planning Committee work programme
13. Urgent Business
14. Dates of next and future meetings (see item 12)

**Tbc – see item 12**

Dr E. King, CEO

**Item 2                      Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman**

**Author:** Matt Thomson, head of strategy & planning, deputy monitoring officer

**Purpose and Summary:** To elect a Chairman and Deputy Chair for the Planning Committee. It is recommended that Sue Rowland is re-elected as Chair (re-presented from the papers for the meeting of July 2024).

**Background**

1. Paragraph 21 of our Code of Governance provides that each committee shall elect a chair and deputy chair from among its membership.
2. Cllr Sue Rowland (representing Oxfordshire Parish Councils on the Board) was the chair of Planning Committee in 2023/24 and has indicated that she would be happy to carry on in that position. While volunteers to take over as chair would of course be welcome, it is your officers' recommendation that Cllr Rowland is re-elected as chair for 2024/25.
3. Volunteers are also sought to take on the role of deputy chair, following the resignation of Cllr Adrian Watney (Hertfordshire Parish Councils). If more than one volunteer or proposal is received, the Committee shall vote for their preferred candidate.
4. The main role of deputy chair of the Committee is, naturally, to stand in for the chair in their absence, and to support the chair in other aspects of their role both during and outside of committee meetings, e.g. advising officers on agenda items and (rarely) on urgent matters that cannot wait until the next scheduled committee meeting.
5. Currently there is no additional "special responsibility" allowance for deputy chair of Planning Committee, but the allowance scheme is under review.
6. Your officers are of the view that it should become general practice, with regard to the Board and its committees, that more consideration should be given to planning the succession of Board and committee chairs, and that, in particular, there should be a general presumption that deputy chairs will normally be expected to succeed as chair – not necessarily after a single year.
7. Note that our Constitution is currently unclear as to whether co-opted members may serve as chair or deputy chair of a committee, only that co-opted members cannot vote and are not counted towards quorum.

**Recommendations:**

1. **That the Committee ELECTS Cllr Sue Rowland as chair for 2024/25.**
2. **That the Committee ELECTS a deputy chair for 2024/25 from volunteers proposed at the meeting.**

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

# Chilterns National Landscape

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE CHILTERNES CONSERVATION BOARD

held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at CCB offices, The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor  
OX39 4HA commencing at 10.00 AM

### Present:

Cllr Charles Hussey	Board Member	Parish Councils
Cllr Sue Rowland	Board Member – Chair	Parish Councils
Simon Mortimer	Board Member	Secretary of State
Cllr Sally Symington	Board Member	Local Authorities

### In attendance:

Lorna Coldwell	Clerk to the Board & minute taker	Officer
Mike Stubbs	Planning Advisor	Officer
Elaine King	Chief Executive Officer	Officer
Matt Thomson	Head of Strategy & Planning	Officer

Cllr Paula Hiscocks	Board Member attended remotely	Local Authorities
Paul Hayes	Co-optee attended remotely	Co-opted
Chris Hannington	Co-optee attended remotely	Co-opted

No public present.

### **24/25.1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Board member:  
John Nicholls.

### **24/25.2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **24/25.3. Minutes of the meeting 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **24/25.4. Matters Arising**

Capacity within the Planning Team, there has been feedback given that the short fixed term nature of the Planning Officer role is off putting to those considering applying for the role, it is being negotiated as to whether there is scope for a longer term contract to be offered. It was commented that Planning Officers who contract can command a high daily rate. The Head of Strategy & Planning continues to pursue various avenues.

There is no update regarding the real time planning system since the previous meeting. The Head of Strategy & Planning is unable to provide the necessary IT support, and no input has been received from committee members other than the Chair.

## Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024**24/25.5. Public Questions**

No public present.

**24/25.6. Lighting Position Statement**

The Head of Strategy & Planning, Matt Thomson, provided a draft statement for consideration by the Committee. He gave thanks to Charles Hussey, Chris Hannington and Paul Hayes for their participation in the working group that started the draft statement. It was agreed that whilst a good and extensive document, some changes were needed to avoid ambiguity in wording.

**Action:** MT to circulate to the Planning Committee the draft statement for amendments. The Working Group to resolve these and make a final version to take to the September Board meeting after discussion at the July Planning Committee meeting.

**24/25.7. New Positions: SANGs and Woodlotting**

Cllr Sally Symington declared an interest in this item, as she is involved in SANGs with Dacorum Borough Council, and one potentially may be created close to her home.

The Head of Strategy & Planning discussed the powers that the Board may have to assist with the creation of SANGs and the general impact of them within the Chilterns AONB. Whilst the current Management Plan does not use the term SANG specifically, the policies embedded throughout are positive about the principle and reducing pressure on “honeypot” sites by providing other areas to visit in and around the National Landscape. It is important that when SANGs come forward within the National Landscape, they sit well with the existing landscape character, and any associated building such as cafes, lightning, car parks and toilets must be sympathetic. Chris Hannington volunteered to join a working group working towards producing a position statement, which is wider than only SANGs to futureproof any changes. This links in to the Nature Recovery Scheme, and findings from the recent Chalkscapes project, *Co-creating Spaces for Supporting Diverse Communities to use Greenspaces and the Countryside*.

**Action:** MT to circulate the Natural England guidelines for the creation of SANGs to Planning Committee members.

**The Committee CONSIDERED the merits of a Policy Statement on SANG provisions within the National Landscape and its setting and AGREED that officers should convene a working group to produce such a Statement for recommendation for approval to the Board.**

Woodlotting is the practice of dividing an area of woodland up into “lots” for sale to the public on the expectation (however unjustified) that the land could be used for a variety of purposes. Anecdotal evidence suggests that even the most benign examples of woodlotting can result in significant harm to the woodland habitat and to its visual appearance. There are limited powers for Local Authorities and National Landscape teams to address the issue, Defra need to be made aware, and to involve the Forestry Commission if they wish to be more proactive on the issue, and to lobby Government for a change in the law.

**The Committee REQUESTED that officers undertook further research into the issue of woodlotting with a view to identifying appropriate actions, which may include a Position Statement on for recommendation for approval to the Board.**

**24/25.8. Development Management Casework Update**

The Planning Advisor, Mike Stubbs, advised the Committee of 11 new comments/objections/responses that had been made. Since January Committee meeting, 1 application was granted to which the CCB made supportive comments and 0 granted to which

## Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

an objection was raised. 2 appeals were determined, with both dismissed (refused) The CCB had raised objections to both these appeals and gave evidence.

Particular note was made of the following Appeals/Planning Applications:

- PL/21/1309/FA 44 London Road West Amersham demolition of existing buildings and erection of a food store a holding objection has been placed as there is a missed opportunity to re-naturalise the River Misbourne that runs through it.
- PL/24/0065/FA Calf Barn Fullers Hill Farm Fullers Hill Hyde Heath demolition of existing equestrian buildings erection of 7 detached dwellings an objection was submitted as there is very clear harm to the AONB with inappropriate erosion of the landscape.
- Watlington relief road a holding objection has been placed regarding the proposed lighting at proposed junction 3 which will be visible from higher ground to the south including the panorama from Watlington Hill.
- Land south of Horse and Jockey Watling Street near Markygate application for a solar farm and associated electric and hydrogen vehicle charging service station and battery storage which is a major development in the AONB and would want to see plans with greater detail.
- The application to expand Luton Airport will be determined by 10<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Further representations were made in January.

**The Committee NOTED the updates and ENDORSED responses made.**

The Planning Advisor, Mike Stubbs gave an additional update about Land East of Tring ('Marshcroft') which was refused by the Secretary of State in March 2024, despite the Inspectors recommendation to approve. It was decided that the setting would be harmful looking into the AONB, and that the "tilted balance" argument that housing shortages outweigh other planning matters do not apply in the AONB.

**24/25.9. Policy Casework update**

Since the January Planning Committee meeting, the Chilterns National Landscape team had responded to one policy document, the Halton Supplementary Planning Document. Support was given, the document recognises the position in the AONB and its importance.

The changes to the Permitted Development Rights (PDR) for Householder Development consultation was also commented on. There was a new proposal for wheelie bin and bike storage in front gardens to come under permitted development, however comments were to the National Landscapes Association for this to continue to face the normal restrictions in sensitive areas such as the AONB and remain a planning matter.

**The committee ENDORSED the policy consultations made by the Officers**

**24/25.10. Planning Committee work programme**

The Head of Strategy and Planning will continue to update the Committee on work around the Management Plan review, the future long term vision work, and the governance review which will all have a knock on effect of to the Planning Committee and its role. Following the "light touch review" the current Management Plan has been extended to the end of March 2025. The previously agreed delegation principles for the Planning Committee and Offices will be in the new Constitution, and amendments will be made as it continues to be reviewed.

**Action:** MT to keep all updated including co-opted Members of the Planning Committee; standing item on the Planning Committee agenda

National Highways A404 Junction Improvements

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

National Highways (NH) approached Officers regarding potential improvements on the A404 at Handy Cross, High Wycombe, and the roundabout at Bisham Abbey, Marlow. Both junction improvements have now been deferred to the next round of national road investment so this will now be after 2030. A good working relationship has been established with NH which can be built upon and used for discussions around Chilterns branded signage on the relevant highways.

River Chess Planning Guidance

The River Chess Smarter Water Catchment partnership programme approached the Chilterns National Landscape team about a legacy project that would prepare guidelines for local planning authorities when considering development proposals in proximity to the River Chess, based on works carried out for the River Wye in High Wycombe.

**Action:** MT to keep the Planning Committee informed of progress, and to ask the project partnership to consider the Committee as a key stakeholder.

Future meeting dates and times

The Board will agree dates for meetings in 2025 in December, following the setting by the Planning Committee in October. It was agreed by the Board that varying times and days encourages more attendance by as many Members as possible. It is difficult to maintain sufficient volunteers for the Committee, and of the correct category. Membership of committees is agreed at the Board AGM in June, Members will be invited to express an interest in membership of committees at the start of May. This will also serve as a reminder of who sits on which committee and Task and Finish Group to enable Members to make an informed decision. Members allowances will be dealt with around this time, to make the process easier and more transparent for all.

Jane McBean has resigned from the Chilterns Conservation Board, leaving a vacancy on the Planning Committee.

**Action:** MT to circulate a list of potential dates to Committee members for consideration

**24/25.11. Urgent Business**

The Planning Advisor, Mike Stubbs requested confirmation that the committee agrees for him to submit a holding objection to the recently received application Land to the East of Green St Chorleywood TRDC 24/0476/OUT and 24/0538/OUT. Cllr Sally Symington declared an interest in this matter and left the meeting.

**The committee CONFIRMED the objection had been tabled and would be discussed at the next Planning Committee meeting.**

**24/25.12. Dates of next and future meetings**

The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024, 5pm at Chinnor Office

**Future dates:**

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024, 2pm at Chinnor Office

The meeting was closed at 12.49

The Chair.....

Date.....

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024

# Chilterns National Landscape

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF  
THE CHILTERN'S CONSERVATION BOARD  
held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at CCB offices, The Lodge, 90 Station Road,  
Chinnor OX39 4HA commencing at 5.00 PM**

**Present:**

Cllr Sue Rowland	Board Member – Chair	Parish Councils
------------------	----------------------	-----------------

**In attendance:**

Matt Thomson	Head of Strategy & Planning	Officer
Mike Stubbs	Planning Advisor	Officer
Lorna Coldwell	Clerk to the Board and Minute taker	Officer

Paul Hayes	Board Member attended remotely	Co-opted
------------	--------------------------------	----------

No public present.

The Chair welcomed all present.

**24/25.1. Election of Chair and Deputy Chair**

As the meeting was not quorate, this item was deferred to be confirmed at the next meeting. However, those present including the Chair requested that officers prepared letters to be sent from the Committee to both Adrian Watney and Sally Symington thanking them for their contributions to the Committee.

**24/25.2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Board members:

Charles Hussey – Parish Councils member  
Cllr Robert Carington – Local Authority member  
Colin Courtney – Secretary of State member  
Cllr Paula Hiscocks – Local Authority member

Apologies received and accepted from Officers:

Elaine King – CEO, Chilterns National Landscape

**24/25.3. Declarations of Interest**

None declared.

**24/25.4. Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

The confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held in April will be confirmed at the next meeting, due to not being quorate.

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024**24/25.5. Matters Arising**

None, all items covered in the agenda.

**24/25.6. Public Question Time**

None in attendance.

**24/25.7. Lighting Position Statement**

At the Planning Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024, the Committee resolved that the Lighting Working Group should be reconvened to review the Lighting Position Statement before submitting the final version to the September Board meeting for approval. The previous committee meeting had noted the need for greater precision in the document, Michael Stubbs, Planning Advisor has spoken with all members of the working group individually. Following this a new draft version has been produced, split into the Model Lighting Policy and the Technical Appendix. Comments were made regarding language to be altered, and recommendations to make the document clearer in parts. Officers were requested to continue working up the Position Statement, taking account of any further views from the Working Group and the Committee by email, for a final version to be signed-off by the Chair in advance of approval by the Board in September.

**Action:** The briefing instructed the Head of Planning and Strategy to seek financial resources for graphics for the policy document from the Chief Executive Officer

**Action:** Michael Stubbs, Planning Advisor to email to the Committee the Technical Annex

**24/25.8. Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit**

An online toolkit has been produced to help Parish Councils developing their Neighbourhood Plans. Feedback has been given from local Planning Officers, and some material will be updated with their suggestions in time. Those present offered observations on the Toolkit and supported officers in keeping its content under review.

**24/25.9. Development Management Casework Update**

Since the April Planning Committee meeting, the Board has made 14 new representations. 2 applications were granted which supportive comments were made, 2 were refused which objection comments were submitted, 1 was granted that the Conservation Board had objected too. 3 appeals were determined and were all dismissed and included mentions of AONB policy when balancing planning issues. There is still no date for the planning appeal at OS Field 7141, Latimer Road, Chenies (unauthorised chicken farm).

Particular note was made of the following Appeals/Planning Applications:

- Land East of Green Street and North of Orchard Drive Green Street Chorleywood Herts objections as there is clear harm to the AONB and clear conflict with NPPF policy.
- Land adjacent South Side Marlow Road and A\$)\$ Junction Westthorpe Park Little Marlow Bucks (Marlow Film Studio) which was refused by Buckinghamshire Council and would impact the visual setting of the AONB including when viewed from Winter Hill.



## Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024

- Little Sparrows Sonning Common (now called Widmore Park Phase 2 by the applicant) objections have been submitted regarding the planned materials to be used.

SANG's Casework – Potten End Hill

A discussion was held around the potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at Potten End Hill, near Great Gaddesdon in Dacorum BC. SANG provisions are designed to remove excess visitors from “honeypot” sites, such as the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Conservation Board does not yet have its own SANG Policy, however there is a clear policy in the Management Plan although not specifically relating to SANGs. There is yet to be a clear strategic standpoint from partners regarding them, and whilst in principle supportive of SANGs they need to be considered strategically. Natural England requires a SANG to be “perceived as semi natural with a variety of habitats.” In the case of this particular SANG, it is unclear which housing site is being mitigated, and until this is resolved Michael Stubbs, Planning Advisor suggests a holding objection to be submitted to the Local Authority. An interim statement on the position towards SANGs will be presented to the Committee in the future.

Endorsement of this quarter's consultation responses will be deferred to the next Committee meeting. Those present supported officers in submitting a summary holding objection on the Potten End SANG proposal, with a detailed response to be submitted in due course.

**24/25.10. Policy Casework Update**

Since the last Planning Committee meeting, there has been no involvement in any policy consultations. The strengthened section 85 duty is being closely monitored, although no interim guidance has yet been provided as promised by Defra. The change in Government will have impacts on the planning system, and the works carried out by Officers.

**Action:** MT to forward to the Committee the draft National Planning Policy Framework when it is available, likely next week

**24/25.11. Planning Committee Work Programme**Committee Membership

Following the Board meeting and AGM in June, there have been alterations to Committee membership:

Local Authority members	Cllr Paula Hiscocks (Herts County Council) Cllr Robert Carington (Bucks Council) Cllr Louise Price (Three Rivers District Council) Heather Wallace (Bucks Council)
Secretary of State members	Colin Courtney Simon Mortimer Joe Stewart (tbc)
Parish Council members	Cllr Charles Hussey (Bucks Parish Councils) Cllr Sue Rowland (Oxon Parish Councils)

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Co-opted members	Chris Hannington Paul Hayes
------------------	--------------------------------

It was acknowledged that there may be a “bedding in” period for the new members until the meeting dates for 2025 are finalised.

Recruitment

Additional resources have been approved by the Executive Committee and the Board therefore the Planning Officer role is being readvertised with more flexibility on salary and as a 2 year contract.

Future Committee Dates

Chairman suggested that 10am on a Thursday preferred for the Committee and asked for any other observations on times. The Chairman asked for the dates to be circulated to Committee members as soon as possible.

**Action:** MT to send a note to all Committee members asking preferred timings, to be firmed up at the next meeting

**Action:** MT to approach various people from partner agencies regarding attending Committee meetings as observers

**24/25.12. Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

**24/25.13. Dates of the next and Future Meetings**

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024, 2pm at Chinnor Office

The meeting was closed at 18.58.

The Chair.....

Date.....

**Item 6                    Matters Arising**

**Author:** Matt Thomson, head of strategy & planning, deputy monitoring officer

**Purpose and Summary:** To address issues outstanding from the July 2024 committee meeting not determined at that meeting due to it being inquorate.

**Background**

1. It is unusual to produce a paper for 'Matters Arising', which usually relates literally to matters occurring to officers and members arising from the minutes just approved, but which are not covered by the rest of the agenda.
2. For this meeting, the Deputy Monitoring Officer has determined that an appropriate means to ensure that matters put to the July 2024 meeting of the Planning Committee, but which could not be determined due to the meeting being inquorate, are appropriately addressed, without needing to completely reissue all of the papers and present them again.
3. Members' attention is therefore drawn to the agenda and papers for the July 2024 meeting that were circulated by email by Eloise Small on Thursday 18 July 2024 at 17:15. The papers can also be accessed here: <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Agenda-and-Papers-Planning-Committee-Meeting-25.04.24.pdf><sup>1</sup>
4. Officers shall produce and circulate before or at the meeting a summary list of matters not otherwise addressed on this agenda that require consideration at this meeting.
5. Any further matters arising will also be considered as usual.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the Committee NOTES the contents of this paper, and
2. Makes such determinations from the papers for the July 2024 Committee meeting as are necessary in relation to the summary paper to be circulated.

---

<sup>1</sup> Remember that public (non-confidential) papers for all CCB Board and Committee papers can always be accessed through our website, by selecting "About Us" then "The Conservation Board" and scrolling down and clicking on "Board meetings": <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/about-us/conservation-board/board-meetings/> Planning Committee meetings can be found below the list of Board and Executive Committee meetings.

**Item 8                    Ashridge Spatial Plan**

**Author:** Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy and Planning and Michael Stubbs, Planning Advisor

**Purpose and Summary:** To seek the Committee's observations on the National Trust's Ashridge proposals linked to the long-term protection of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) following the Planning Committee site visit on the morning of 17 October 2024.

**Background**

1. At the October 2023 Planning Committee meeting, the National Trust's Chris Miller (General Manager) and David White (Project Manager) at the Ashridge Estate presented their initial work on the NT's 'Ashridge Gateways' project. As a courtesy, the NT shared some plans and details that were not for wider consultation at that time. However, following their autumn 2023 and spring 2024 public consultation exercise (under the banner 'Protecting Our Roots') the NT has worked up these proposals. They are now widely in the public domain and available on the project's website, updated to May 2024 at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/essex-bedfordshire-hertfordshire/ashridge-estate/protecting-the-future-of-ashridge-estate>. The planning committee appreciated this courtesy to the Chilterns Conservation Board. No actions were minuted.
2. The Protecting Our Roots project is allied to the wider SANGs strategy (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) for Dacorum BC and Buckinghamshire Council – Aylesbury area. This is very prescient for the CCB as many SANGs applications are being submitted within and outside the AONB as housebuilders strive to unlock housing allocations, otherwise halted due to the absence of proposals designed to protect the SAC, of which Ashridge is a significant part. Linked with this SPA policy umbrella, the NT will receive a funding stream via SAMMs (Strategic Access Management Measures) to pay for access management within their land ownership, essentially to prevent their own visitors from directly damaging the SAC through trampling the habitat, eutrophication from dog faeces and path erosion and fires (barbeques). A recent example is the natural fencing to control access to the Dockey Wood SSSI. As the CCB's Head of Strategy and Planning mentioned at the October 2023 meeting and as discussed by the committee, a joined-up approach is needed, including a measure of public education (website content on the prohibitions needed when visiting Ashridge) and the overlap between SANGs (i.e. avoidance of visits) and SAMMs (i.e. control within or near to the SAC and application of 'avoid'-'mitigate' 'compensate' as the hierarchy of an approach).
3. The NT has embraced the master planning approach discussed at the October 2023 meeting. The NT is promoting something of a triple-track approach within the estate (your officer's encapsulation) involving:
  - i) The short-term (2025) development of a 134-space interim car park at Meadley's Meadow, adjacent to the current visitor centre, to remove parking from Monument Drive, which is wholly within the SAC, badly damaged by parking and visitor movements.
  - ii) The medium-term development of 2 new visitor hubs at Ward's Hurst Farm in the Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury) area and Hill Farm in Dacorum BC area.

- iii) The longer-term development of a further visitor hub at Pitstone Quarry (subject to its restoration and land transfer to the NT) and the implementation of a master plan for the delivery of SAMMs funding as new housing comes forward within the 12.6 km zone of influence around the SAC, which captures this funding. That funding will implement management strategies to control access in and around the SAC. The NTs closure of some of its 25 smaller informal car parks is, we surmise, a longer-term objective linked to this. Other related matters link to widening access and promoting more sustainable travel to Ashridge.
- 4. In advance of the cancelled site visit scheduled for 23 September 2024, the NT shared their most up-to-date presentations, and the link to these documents was shared with the Committee by email on 19 September. That link is reproduced here:  
<https://chilternsaonb.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/ChilternsConservationBoard/Shared%20Documents/Planning%20Committee/POLICY%20CASEWORK%20-%20LIVE/240923%20NT%20Ashridge%20site%20visit%20materials?e=5%3a960e9e654b3b46248e93707f0f31ed0c&sharingv2=true&fromShare=true&at=9>
- 5. The Committee may want to consider several matters following the site visit on the morning of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024. To assist in this, officers are mindful of several matters including the timeframes proposed, the design and layout of the hubs (all within the National Landscape AONB), the nature of a temporary parking arrangement and the deliverability of the Pitstone Quarry proposal, which is outside the NTs ownership and may be the subject of a longer-term restoration prior to any transfer. Officers anticipate that further details on timescales will be made available during the site visit before the planning committee meeting, which may be updated. Officers are grateful that the NT continues to engage with the CCB and has shared some pre-application engagement over the temporary car parking proposal (in May 2024).

## 5. Recommendations:

1. That the Committee **OFFERS OBSERVATIONS** on the National Trust's Ashridge Gateways proposals and **AUTHORISES** officers to continue with further liaison, as deemed appropriate, regarding the three gateway sites at Ward's Hurst Farm, Hill Farm, and Pitstone Quarry, the temporary car park proposals at Meadley's Meadow, and the development of the master plan, and
2. That the Committee **THANKS** the National Trust for their site visit and for engaging the Chilterns Conservation Board in the development of their proposals for Ashridge.

**Item 12                    SANGs Position Statement**

**Author:**                    Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning

**Purpose and Summary:**    To inform the Committee about the progress with a potential CCB statement on Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs).

**Background**

1. The Committee will recall two agenda items on SANGs at the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 meeting (item 7) seeking to clarify CCB's strategic position on SANGs, and at the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 meeting (item 10) seeking endorsement of a draft holding objection to the proposed Potten End SANG (Dacorum BC ref 24/01239/FUL). This item briefly updates on the principles being developed.
2. At the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 planning committee the Head of Strategy and Planning promoted a strategic approach (at paragraph 22 of the report) in that existing *'policies and proposed actions of the Management Plan support the principle of SANGs within the National Landscape and its setting, but also provide sufficient safeguards'*, and that, in its conclusions (paragraph 22) that *'The need or desire for a further policy position on SANGs design or SAMMs funding (i.e., what it should be spent on) is a matter for discussion and reflection. The Board may benefit from having a policy stance on this, and a discussion of the merits and disadvantages of such a policy are welcome'*.
3. That paper also set out the relevant policies of the current Management Plan which support the provision of SANGs in principle, while not explicitly using the term. Those policies are reproduced in Annex 1 to this paper. Officers are considering whether to include a specific reference to SANGs in the relevant policies as part of the ongoing Management Plan Refresh in order to clarify the matter.
4. Note that the Management Plan seeks a strategic context to the provision of SANGs, which is currently lacking on a landscape-wide basis. Some local authorities have their own SANG strategy, but it is worth noting that only one local authority (Dacorum) has, to our knowledge, sought to involve CCB in the preparation of such a strategy.
5. The minute (24/25.7) recorded that *"The Committee considered the merits of a Policy Statement on SANG provisions within the National Landscape and its setting and AGREED that officers should convene a working group to produce such a Statement for recommendation for approval to the Board"*.
6. Officers have been discussing a proposed strategic approach with officers at Natural England, sharing ideas. This and other work, including the merits of current SANGs applications on which the CCB has been consulted, has led to some draft guiding principles on which the Committee's observations are sought (see below).
7. A key issue for the Chilterns is that the legal and national policy requirements for SANG provision place significant constraints on the types and locations of sites that will be considered suitable as a SANG. When combined with land ownership and cost constraints, the outcome is that few sites are both suitable and available for use as a SANG, meaning that there is little opportunity to question the selected location for a proposed SANG or to require the consideration of alternatives. Increasing the choice of available sites is part of the reason for local authorities producing SANG strategies and including calls for SANG sites in their local plans. Currently, however, many SANGs are being sought, in advance of such strategies and local plans, in order to unlock the

development of housing sites that were consented before the requirement to provide a SANG was enforced – such sites lack the benefit of any strategic consideration, and this is the reason for the quantity of ‘speculative’ SANG proposals currently being pursued.

8. It would be counter-productive for CCB to oppose SANGs proposed to support already-consented development sites, since doing so would undermine the local authority’s five-year housing supply, resulting in the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, leading to an increase in speculative housing proposals that could cause greater harm to the natural beauty of the area. CCB’s focus needs to be on influencing the strategic selection of SANG sites where possible, but otherwise making sure that SANG proposals that are put to us further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area (in line with statutory duties and the content of the Management Plan), rather than objecting to SANG proposals in principle.
9. Natural England have prepared some draft text for them to use when responding to consultations on proposals for SANGs in the National Landscape and its setting. The current draft of that text is included in Annex 2 for information only. A key element of Natural England’s guidance is that they strongly encourage applicants to engage constructively with the Conservation Board in the preparation of their proposals.
10. While discussions so far have tended to focus on SANGs required to assist with the management of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC at Ashridge, our position statement will need to be equally applicable to SANGs proposed in relation to other SACs across and near to the National Landscape, including the other Chilterns Beechwoods sites near Tring, Risborough, Marlow and Chinnor; and other SACs at Burnham Beeches, Hartslock Wood and Aston Rowant.
11. The proposed guiding principles for the position statement are as follows:
  - The existing policy context set in the Management Plan (see annex to this paper).
  - Alignment with Natural England’s template response.
  - Providing more detail with regard to interpretation of Natural England’s requirements/criteria, in particular relating them to the natural beauty and special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape.
12. Volunteers are sought from the Committee to contribute to the agreed working group to progress the statement, which is likely to include officers from CCB’s Landscape team and/or from Natural England.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the Committee **ENDORSES** the principles put forward in paragraph 11 as the basis for the production of a more detailed Position Statement, and
2. That, in advance of the production of the Statement, the Committee **DIRECTS** officers to respond to proposals for new SANGs in terms of the Management Plan policies in Annex 1 and Natural England’s draft text (or any revised version issued by them) in Annex 2.

**Annex 1: Management Plan content of relevance to the provision of SANGs**

The following policies and actions contained in the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 (extended to 2025) provide clear support for the principle of providing SANGs, including within the designated area itself, and a context for how the design of such provision should be considered.

- . Policy NP13 (p.40): “Help visitors to discover and enjoy wildlife in the Chilterns while not harming or disturbing it.” Supporting text adds “There needs to be a carefully planned and strategic approach to managing visitors, targeting areas with the capacity and infrastructure to accommodate additional use in order to protect the more sensitive sites from damage.”
- a. The Key Action associated with this policy (p.41) commits to creating “a visitor management initiative to assess which areas are robust for recreational pressure and which are likely to be vulnerable, and to promote recommendations for future management and promotion.”
- b. This is also reflected in policy EP11 (p.62 – “Develop and secure support for a visitor management strategy for the Chilterns”) whose supporting text states “Increased recreational use of the Chilterns countryside must be managed in order to protect vulnerable sites” and recognises the need to “address the uneven spread of visitor pressure in the Chilterns”.
- c. Policy EP12 (p.62), which seeks to “Ensure the Chilterns benefits from new and improved access and green space provision linked to new built development.” The supporting text refers to “new housing and infrastructure developments on the edge of the Chilterns that will affect countryside access and the rights of way network”.
- d. A Key Action (p.63) associated with both these policies commits to developing a “visitor management initiative to provide new and improved access while protecting the most vulnerable sites” including identifying “priority sites for new greenspace and new access links, to create recreational space close to where people live.”
- e. Policy DP6 (p.77) expresses support for “sustainable farming and forestry, nature conservation and facilities for visitors appropriate to the special qualities of the AONB”.
- f. Policy DP10 (p.80) seeks to ensure that “all development that is permitted in the AONB or affecting its setting delivers a net gain for the Chilterns by:
  - i. on-site improvements for biodiversity, landscape, the rights of way network, AONB visitor facilities, and/or
  - ii. financial contributions, secured through s106, CIL, or offsetting schemes, towards wider green infrastructure projects that enhance the AONB by meeting the aims of this AONB Management Plan.”



## **Annex 2: Natural England's draft text for SANG proposal consultation responses**

The proposed SANG site is located within / in the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape (legally referred to as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or AONB). The statutory purpose of the National Landscape is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within National Landscapes and will apply in the determination of any eventual planning application for this SANG alongside landscape policies set out in the local development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

[Section 245](#) (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities (including local authorities) in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in AONBs in England, to seek to further the aforementioned statutory purposes of the area. This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Natural England strongly advise that you review the [Chilterns AONB statutory management plan](#) and consult the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) to discuss the design of this SANG site and take into account any landscape advice they may give. Their local knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the management plan, makes them well placed to identify appropriate enhancement opportunities and actions through the design of the site.

The design of the SANG should be informed by a site specific landscape technical assessment and written report carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced landscape professional which:

- identifies opportunities and constraints for the design of the site
- Reviews the baseline landscape character of the site with reference to the relevant [National Character Area](#) profile, [Chilterns Landscape Character Types](#), [local Landscape Character Assessments \(LCAs\)](#) and [historical maps](#) /character assessments
- includes baseline site photographs at mapped view point locations, including any key views or sensitive views / edges to the site

The key landscape characteristics relevant to the site and its historic evolution should be identified within the report and suitably addressed within the site design.

The landscape design of the proposed SANG should:

- Seek to reinforce the key characteristics of the local landscape / special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape and implement the relevant design and management guidelines outlined within the local Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) / AONB Management Plan covering the site. LCAs and other local guidance may advise on the vernacular tree, scrub and hedgerow species that are locally appropriate.
- Identify synergies between features contributing to landscape character that also provide important ecological opportunities, to aid decision making and prioritisation for site features to conserve, restore or create more of, in the right places.
- Identify opportunities to enhance landscape character through revealing, restoring or re-creating historic features, such as hedgerows, orchards and ponds, where feasible and appropriate to do so.

- Locate any hard surfaces, such as car parking in the least visually prominent area of the site, often at a topographical low point and use existing mature vegetation or new planting to screen views, in particular sensitive views from the wider landscape.
- Identify other opportunities to enhance local landscape character through the design of the SANG, e.g. by screening or filtering views towards existing built development or overhead power lines.

**Item 10                      Development Management Casework****Author:** Michael Stubbs, Planning Advisor

**Purpose and Summary:** To inform the Committee about and seek approval of the responses made under delegated powers in connection with the planning applications as listed and to update the Committee on any outcomes. This is followed in a similar fashion to the previous format, with a summary of all comments, objections and representations on live applications and appeals since the last planning committee.

**Background**

1. In summary of the outcomes of previous **planning applications**, the Board has made **8** new comments/support/objections/representations. Since the July Committee, **no** applications were granted, to which CCB made supportive comments, and **2** were refused, to which we had objected. **One** was granted, which we had opposed. **One** was refused to which we made comments. **None** were supported.
2. **2** planning appeals were determined, and both were dismissed (refused). At the Secretary of State's request, an additional response was sent to Luton Airport (Luton Rising), addressing questions about the new 'duty to further'. The National Trust subsequently contacted the CCB to express thanks for including points dealing with the impacts upon Ivinghoe Beacon and the Duncombe Terrace (NT's Ashridge Estate).

<b>Summary.</b>	<b>Outcomes and Updates since July's Planning Committee.</b>
Applications granted to which CCB commented = <b>0</b>	0
Applications granted to which CCB had objected = <b>1</b>	1. CCB had objected to the development of 9 houses at land to the south of <b>Finings Road Lane End</b> on the grounds of harm to the AONB and Ancient Woodland. This site is allocated in the WDC Local Plan, which CCB opposed. Outline planning permission was granted by the BC-West planning committee. It was accepted in the officer's report that some harm would follow to the adjoining Ancient Woodland.
Applications refused to which CCB had objected = <b>2</b>	CCB had objected to two applications ( <b>Newlands Wood</b> near Tring) for a new forest road/track, which DBC refused on AONB grounds, and at Land West of Field Cottage ( <b>Buslin's Lane</b> ) Chartridge nr Chesham for a variation to a previous consent to create a manage and stables, refused by BC-West planning committee as these variations were considered to result in an ' <i>incremental erosion</i> ' of the AONB.
Applications refused to which CCB had commented = <b>1</b>	Land NE of <b>Wandon End Solar Farm</b> (NHDC). CCB commented on the weight to be given to the forthcoming boundary review consultation produced by Natural England. The refusal principally dealt with Green Belt harm.
Applications supported = <b>0</b> .	0
Planning appeal decisions issued = <b>2</b>	One allowed ( <b>Frithsden Vineyard</b> , replacement dwelling, DBC), where the Inspector concluded there would be no adverse impact on the AONB and at <b>Gomm Valley</b> (BC-Wycombe, major housing allocation) where the Inspector only refused permission on grounds of traffic modelling and no landscape or design matters. CCB had commented on the

	setting of the AONB and views to and from this protected landscape.
Planning appeal decisions outstanding = <b>2</b>	<b>Latimer Chicken Farm</b> (enforcement Inquiry, with a date still to be set, in BC-C&SB).  <b>Luton Airport Expansion</b> NSIP/DCO now anticipated January 2025 (please also see applications update)
New applications/appeals since July's planning committee = <b>11</b>	Appeal representation = <b>1 (at Luton's NSIP/DCO)</b> . Comments on applications = <b>4</b> Objections = <b>4</b> (two being a holding objections) Support = <b>0</b> Pre-application = <b>2</b>

3. Since the last Planning Committee, two appeals have been determined at Frithsden Vineyard (replacement dwelling ref 3327060) and the Gomm Valley allocated site to the east of High Wycombe (599 dwellings within the wider setting of the AONB, PINS 3332257). **At Frithsden** (Dacorum BC) the Inspector was clear, when dealing with objections raised to the increased size of development that (paragraph 10), *'Due to the specific characteristics of the appeal site I see no reason why the increased height, area and materials are harmful. Moreover, while the boundary screening may fade in winter when trees are not in leaf, I have concluded that the design would not be harmful regardless. As such, it follows that this increased permeability of the site in winter months would also not be harmful. Additional planting is proposed to be secured by condition and while this is not intended to hide the property, it will further aid in the integration of the new dwelling in its location'*. **At Gomm Valley (Buckinghamshire – Wycombe)**, the Inspector commented on the boundary extension (paragraph 94). *'Finally, any potential changes to the boundary of the Chilterns National Landscape (referred to as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) have not been progressed to adoption. The appeal site does not fall within the current Chilterns National Landscape and the appeal has been assessed on the basis of its current boundary. I concur with the main parties that the scheme would not have a discernible impact on the Chilterns National Landscape, and the findings of the ES, that there would not be a significant impact on its setting'*. Of note, the Inspector accepted a 15-metre separation buffer to the ancient woodland within this site and not the 50-metre yardstick promoted by the Woodland Trust. The Inspector did not address views to and from the AONB, which we had raised in our representations, whilst not expressing an outright objection to the principle as this is an allocated site in the Wycombe local Plan.
4. The appeal at **OS Field 7141, Latimer Road, Chenies** (unauthorised chicken farm) (PINS 3312263) is still listed for an appeal date, but no date has been set yet. We have no information as to why this is being delayed.
5. **New CCB responses on planning applications since July's planning committee are listed in Appendix 1**, and current live casework is in **Appendix 2**. Applications within Appendix 1 to be presented to the committee include **Chartridge House**, 352 Chartridge Lane Chesham Bucks (BC-Chiltern, PL/24/2305/FA), Land to the north and west of **Pangbourne Technology Centre** Whitchurch Hill (SODC,P24/S2309/FUL), **Luton Airport expansion** (NSIP/DCO, TRO0001) and the **two SANGs applications** at Potten End (DBC,24/01239/MFA) and **Missenden Abbey** (BC - Chiltern, PL/24/1909/FA).
6. The Planning Adviser will provide reflections on the outcomes of CCB representations, and present information relating to developments arising since the preparation of this paper.

**London Luton Airport Expansion NSIP**

7. On Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September CCB officers received a further “Request for Information” from the Examining Authority considering the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project proposal for the expansion of London Luton Airport (see also Appendix 1). The request relates to the application of the strengthened s.85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023), and is reproduced here:

“Without prejudice to the final decision and subject to the above, Natural England, the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Applicant are invited to set out what, if any, further enhancement measures they agree could be brought forward, should it be decided further measures are necessary to assure compliance with the amended duty.

“If agreement cannot be reached, the Applicant, Natural England and the Chilterns Conservation Board are invited to set out their respective views on what is needed to resolve the concerns.”

8. The deadline for receiving responses was given as Sunday 13 October. Given the nature of the request, and the complexity of the issues, to say nothing of the need for internal sign-off, your officers have asked for an extension (as, we understand, has the Applicant). At the time of writing we have not received confirmation of any extension.
9. Officers have had discussions internally, with Natural England and with the Applicant (separately, so far), and with other stakeholders.
10. A more detailed briefing on the issues and a suggested way forward will be circulated to members in advance of the meeting, as a special paper (item 10a). We are looking into the need for and/or means of achieving internal sign-off for any agreement (or, if necessary, a submission on a proposed way forward without immediate agreement) under the Board’s urgency procedures, which may include approval by Planning Committee. In any event, Planning Committee’s observations on the matter will be sought at the meeting.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the Committee **NOTES and ENDORSES** the responses made in connection with the applications listed in Appendix 1, and 2.
2. That the Committee **OFFERS OBSERVATIONS** on, or if appropriate, **APPROVES** the proposed approach to the London Luton Airport “Request for Information” presented to the Committee.

**APPENDIX 1****New CCB Responses on Planning Applications since Last Planning Committee**

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Chartridge House, 352 Chartridge Lane Chesham Bucks.	Buckinghamshire C&SB reference:  PL/24/2305/FA	Construction of eleven residential dwellings with associated landscaping following demolition of the existing property.	Pending	<p><b>CCB Objection</b></p> <p>The landscape character along this AONB/settlement limb and 'edge' includes many deep gardens, redolent of the original inter-war development patterns that took hold within this part of the 'Metroland' Chilterns. The layout of Chartridge House reflects this, with its sylvan and verdant curtilage, which melds into the Chilterns landscape beyond, acknowledging that it pre-dates many neighbouring buildings.</p> <p>A far better design solution is to keep the existing building and work within that frame, including the setting relationship to the Chilterns and indeed enhancing that relationship as is now required under the provision of the amended '<i>duty to further</i>' introduced in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2012 at its section 245).</p> <p>The loss of the heritage asset would run counter to the NPPF at 209 and also the AONB Management Plan policy HO 1 (amongst others) to, '<i>Better protect the Chilterns historic environment, both formally designated and unprotected heritage assets</i>'.</p>	6 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2024

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
At Land Between Watling Street and Millfield Lane, Markyate Herts.	<p>Dacorum BC &amp; Central Beds DC (joint).</p> <p>DBC reference: 24/01606/MFA</p> <p>(previous application 23/02955/MFA)</p> <p>CBC reference: CB/24/02069/F ULL</p> <p>(previous application CB/23/03583/O UT)</p>	Proposed Solar Farm and associated access and infrastructure	Pending	<p><b>CCB Comments.</b></p> <p>Once matters of planning principle are established, then we seek:</p> <p>(i) A detailed plan of far greater planting around the PV footprint, with a commensurate shrinking of the development footprint to allow this.</p> <p>(ii) That each of the resulting 3 fields of solar arrays are contained within their respective fields and do not form a continuous or contiguous array.</p> <p>(iii) Harnessing the point made in the supporting planning statement at 3.8 that contributions to community projects may be considered, presumably subject to the tests of conditions and/or obligations. We made the point in the previous application that it is regrettable that this part of the AONB is materially despoiled by fly-tipping. If this application can assist in its avoidance, we welcome the thoughts of the applicant and LPA.</p> <p>(iv) We support the points made by the Chilterns Society (CS), which address the design, layout and mitigation of the public rights of way and with commendable detail. As stated by the Chilterns Society, any diversion of a PROW will require separate approval. These proposed revisions are supported by the AONB Management Policy EP3 (<i>'Support initiatives to improve the accessibility of rights of way and countryside sites'</i>). The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) at its 2.3 promotes <i>'embedded mitigation.'</i> and these revisions as promoted by the CS are reasonable and very considerably supported by the new <i>'duty to further'</i> as incorporated into the revised section.85 duty in the CROW Act.</p>	11 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2024

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Land to the north and west of Pangbourne Technology Centre Bozedown Drive Whitchurch Hill Oxfordshire.	SODC  P24/S2309/FUL.	Installation of ground-mounted photovoltaic solar panels and a battery energy storage system to supply electrical power to Pangbourne Technology Centre; associated plant, plant enclosure, and cabling; access driveway; landscaping; and ancillary works.	Pending	<p><b>CCB Comments.</b></p> <p>Once matters of planning principle are established, then we seek:</p> <p>(i) Greater use of the proposed native hedgerow to buffer the boundaries between the proposed structures and the existing mature vegetation around the site's outer boundaries.</p> <p>(ii) Some use of existing built curtilage, such as the car park area, as the transport plan under consent P19/S4248/FUL takes effect.</p> <p>(iii) That these native hedgerows also assist in the promotion of ecological and biodiversity benefits, as discussed in the ecological assessment. Further, this additional planting should be located to assist in screening the modest use of security fencing, which is not required across the entire site.</p> <p>(iv) The landscape strategy should also be used to assist in relocating and/or screening the battery storage area. This facility's ultimate location needs to be concealed from a wider view, and an element of 'bespoke' landscaping or its repositioning next to the car park is required.</p> <p>(v) We have assumed that no CCTV is proposed and that the proliferation of additional structures should be avoided within such a highly valued landscape.</p> <p>(vi) Appropriate planning conditions will be required to control the need for further structures, such as modest use of security fencing, CCTV columns and lighting, as well as a condition to deliver and manage the landscape and ecological proposals</p>	28 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2024



Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Luton Airport (Luton Rising)	Secretary of State / PINS reference: TRO20001.  Consultation seeking comments from the applicant and all interested parties (dated 23rd August 2024).	Planning Act 2008 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 Application by London Luton Airport Limited ("the Applicant") Seeking Development Consent for the Proposed London Luton Airport Expansion ("the Proposed Development") .	Pending	<p><b>CCB Further Comments.</b> (23<sup>rd</sup> August call for Interested parties to comment).</p> <p>In response to Q5, the Applicant believes that no further enhancement measures should be brought forward because the project already complies with the '<i>duty to further</i>'. To demonstrate this, the Applicant considers it helpful to fully set out its interpretation of the amended duty and how the project complies with it.</p> <p><b>CCB Comment.</b> Their expressed view on section 85 is at odds with their acceptance, in their closing, that</p> <p><i>'..... the Proposed Development does not strictly protect or enhance the AONB'</i> (cited above and paragraph 9.10.27 of their closing submissions, document 8.191).</p> <p><b>CCB Comment.</b> The applicant's point is that '<i>to seek</i>' does not equate to '<i>must deliver</i>'.</p> <p>The new duty requires the decision-maker to undertake a proactive process. The CCB has not seen evidence of the applicants undertaking any such proactive process, and this is underlined by the applicants not having unilaterally approached the CCB to discuss the potential impacts of the proposal, their mitigation or any compensatory measures for those impacts since the passing of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 or the commencement of the parts relevant to the strengthened duty on 26th December 2023.</p> <p>We included an extract from Baroness Jones' address in the House of Lords,</p> <p><i>My Lords, first, I remind noble Lords of my interest in the South Downs National Park. I add my welcome to that of the noble Lord, Lord Randall, for</i></p>	6 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2024

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				<p><i>government Amendment 9, which fulfils the commitment that was made on Report to take the rather weak phraseology of public bodies "having regard to", which we knew in practice was not working, to a much stronger phraseology—that public bodies should "further the interests and statutory purposes" of national parks. It sounds technical, but it makes a big difference in practice. The fact that that is linked to management plans and the targets and so on really helps make sure that those processes will work in tandem and will be in force (Hansard, Vol 832, 21st Sep 2023).</i></p> <p>The applicant's assertion that this duty 'does not require any particular outcome' infers an entirely open-ended outcome. We prefer Baroness Jones' learned opinion.</p>	
Land to the South of Missenden Abbey High Street,  Great Missenden Bucks.	PL/24/1909/FA	Change of use from informal open space to formal Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) along with associated alterations.	Pending	<p><b>CCB Comments.</b></p> <p>The key development management question here will be whether the proposed change in character is compatible with its Historic Parkland and National Landscape (AONB) status. The Buckinghamshire 2023 SANGs guidance and the LPAs' alignment with the Dacorum strategy are relevant. We strongly promote a '<i>joined-up approach</i>' to housing growth and its implications for appropriately mitigating recreational impacts upon the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation.</p> <p>The principal issue for the Chilterns National Landscape (AONB) is the impact on the special qualities of the Chilterns. This includes heritage. Any SANG here, should this be considered favourably by the LPA will need to:</p> <p>(i) Ensure the RP&amp;G delivers the tests in the NPPF at 205 (significance) and 207 (harm) and then,</p>	27 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2024

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				<p>(ii) That this results in a meaningful SANG that delivers the LPA's guidelines and, finally,</p> <p>(iii) It is governed by a management plan that also delivers management objectives for the historic environment (historic conservation). These objectives must enhance the historic landscape with tangible and measurable goals following a detailed heritage assessment and a discussion of appropriate conservation outcomes.</p>	
Nettleden Road Potten End Berkhamsted Herts	DBC reference 24/01239/MFA	Change of use from agricultural land to Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANG), together with a vehicular access, car park, paths, fencing and landscaping.	Pending	<p><b>CCB Holding Objection</b></p> <p>Relevant material planning considerations include the resulting landscape character and its perception, as well as improvements to conserve and enhance the AONB, consistent with the s85 duty and the new '<i>duty to further</i>' the conservation and enhancement of the AONB, Local Plan Policy 97, the NPPF 183 and the AONB Management Plan.</p> <p>The applicants seek to enhance some historic field patterns, introduce new meadows and woodland planting, reintroduce some woodland planting in the southeastern corner and create a circular walking route with interpretation, signage and viewpoints/vistas, with benches and interpretation to highlight those benefits. Other detailed aspects, following the Natural England guidance, include a circular or suitable walking route of 2.3 km, signage/interpretation, a designed landscape that is perceived to be safe, the avoidance of nuisance (visual intrusions, noise, pollution), maintenance of paths and the delivery of a management regime.</p> <p>In assessing these individual elements within an AONB location, we would promote a '<i>holistic</i>' assessment of the AONB's landscape character, and the perceptual landscape experienced. In that</p>	9 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2024

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				<p>assessment, the resulting AONB landscape would have to conserve and enhance the existing site, be naturalistic and deliver a long-term sustainable landscape improvement. The key test (combining the s85 duty with the Local Plan 97 and NPPF 183) is to assess the delivery of an improved AONB landscape instead of just 'nil harm'.</p> <p>The planning applicant must, therefore, demonstrate how that is achieved. The proposed biodiversity and ecological improvements, partial landscape restoration (southeast corner) and tree planting and meadow grassland habitat creation all contribute towards this crucial test. The applicants say that the land is a 'ready-made SANG'; however, that requires the delivery of a robust SANGs Delivery Framework Document as a critical prerequisite, and we have commented on that as above. The car park location does not satisfy this test, resulting in landscape harm in this proposed location.</p>	
<p>Southeast Strategic Reservoir Option</p> <p>Application by Thames Water Utilities Limited</p>	PINS Ref: WA010005	Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and Infrastructure Planning Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations)	Pre-application Scoping	<p><b>CCB (Chilterns National Landscape) Scoping Comments</b></p> <p><b>Scoping Summary &amp; Key Point on Landscape</b> – The CCB has assumed that this project does not impact the Chilterns landscape, taking a landscape perspective exclusively. However, it does impact the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. We would seek reassurance on this point within the landscape contents, currently section 9 of the Scoping Study.</p> <p><b>Scoping Summary &amp; Key Point on Hydrology</b> – The CCB has assumed that this project does not generally impact the Chilterns chalk streams, their catchments and hydrology. We would seek reassurance on this point within the water environment and nature conservation contents, currently</p>	11 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2024

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				(in part) section 9 of the Scoping Study.	
Widmore Park Phase 2 Blounts Court Road Sonning Common	SODC reference: P24/S0960.  Amendments (July 2024)	Reserved matters application in relation to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping pursuant to planning permission (P22/S3921/S 73) for the erection of 60 assisted living units. (Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on application P19/S4576/O for the addition of solar for 73 assisted living units within a "village core" building with ancillary communal and care facilities, gardens, green space, landscaping and car parking areas and residential blocks B1- B4; and (ii) An outline application (all matters reserved except access) for up to 60 assisted living units with ancillary community space, gardens, green space and landscaping	Pending	<p><b>CCB Comments</b></p> <p>To assist the LPA, we are able to update our original comments of 9th April 2024 as:</p> <p>(i) Landscaping. We welcome additional details that will improve the landscape buffer. This is important from an AONB standpoint as it assists in defining the development and drawing a distinction between this site and the surrounding AONB.</p> <p>(ii) Ancient Woodland enhanced buffer zone. We welcome the additional details, which assist in creating a functioning buffer to the woodland.</p> <p>(iii) Materials / Detailing (as below). The revised Materials Schedule (rev PO1 dated 17/7/24) still refers to flint panels, which are (in the description) noted as '<i>prefabricated flint blocks to be matching flint walls</i>'. To maintain best design practice, as supported by the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and flint technical note, we recommend the use of a planning condition similar to that applied to the ) Highlands Farm (Henley) housing scheme (please see condition 12 attached to consent P19/S2646/FL which stated that, '<i>The flint work on the exterior of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed using traditional knapped flint, individually laid as part of the construction</i>'. Justification for this condition included CSEN1 (AONB policy) and is a matter also supported by AONB Management Plan policies.</p>	29 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
High Scrub Wood, near Tring	DBC  24/01953/AGD	Prior approval under the General Permitted	Prior approval	<b>CCB Objection.</b>	23rd  Sep

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		Development Order that planning permission is not required for a forestry building.		<p>This site is wholly within an ancient woodland.</p> <p>In this case, the siting, design, external appearance, and means of access, while of scant detail, are unacceptable because they are located within this highly sensitive location. This application is contrary to the Dacorum Local Plan policy 97, the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 policy LP8 (<i>'Ensure there is no net loss of woodland and no loss of irreplaceable ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees within the AONB'</i>) and the NPPF at 186 c) which states that <i>'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons'</i>.</p> <p>Planning permission is required and, if subsequently made, should be refused.</p>	2024
Rosefield Solar Farm, near The Claydons (Vale of Aylesbury)	<p>Secretary of State</p> <p>Pre-consultation NSIP under the Planning Act 2008.</p>	Solar Farm of 771 ha (40% solar cover)	Pre application on scoping.	<p><b>CCB: No Comments to offer.</b></p> <p>The Chilterns Conservation Board has reviewed this consultation, including the applicant's Statement of Community Consultation (4th September 2024 version) and the Preliminary Environmental Information Report, including its Chapter 11 content on landscape.</p> <p>The Chilterns National Landscape (AONB) is around 20km from the proposal, measured from the Claydons (north Aylesbury Vale) to the escarpment at Ivinghoe, near Tring. We recommend that you continue to consult us about the progress of this NSIP/DCO. Currently, with the information available, it is unlikely that this proposal directly impacts the AONB landscape or its landscape setting.</p>	<p>25<sup>th</sup> Sep</p> <p>2024</p>

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Berkhamsted Hockey Club, Cow Roast Nr Berkhamsted	DBC 24/01794/FUL	Install x 2 illuminated Padel Courts	Pending	<p><b>CCB Comment (holding objection, seeking revisions)</b></p> <p>(1). <b>Lighting design.</b></p> <p>The Design &amp; Access Statement sets out to deal with ILP lighting zone E2 due to the rural location. This is a material error as this location is within zone E1 (relatively uninhabited rural areas, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, IDA buffer zones, etc.).</p> <p>There is no mention of compliance with the ILP guidance GN08 Bats and Artificial Light. The supporting planning statement is silent on further discussion of AONB issues, and the NPPF sections on the AONB are entirely missed.</p> <p>(2). <b>Ecology.</b></p> <p>The bat survey concludes that this area is used as a foraging resource and that (at 5.2) the impact on barbastelle activity (which is reported to be at a low activity) will be significant and is recorded as <i>'likely to affect'</i>.</p> <p>Our recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All illumination must be deleted; this facility is for daylight use only.</li> <li>• The surfacing should be green and not blue, and the fencing design should be subject to conditional approval to ensure a <i>'lightness of touch'</i> in its design impact.</li> <li>• A condition that all fencing is green to reduce wider visual impacts</li> <li>• A condition to enhance the field boundary and screen planting, as may apply.</li> <li>• We could not see a response from the Hertfordshire Ecology consultee, and we noted that it would interest us.</li> </ul>	25 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2024

**APPENDIX 2****Current Live CCB Planning Application Casework.**

Location	LPA	Ref number	Development	Deadline
Pirton Water Tower, Pirton, Herts	PINS	APP/X1925/W/24 /3348028  24/3348028	Demolish Water Tower and replace with new dwelling.	17th Oct 2024
Land to the West of Leighton Buzzard	PINS	APP/A1910/W/24 /3345435	Planning Inquiry following the refusal of planning for 390 dwellings and a 70- bed care home.  CCB's response dated 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024	15 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2024 (Inquiry Opens)



**Item 11            Planning Policy Casework Update**

**Author:** Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning

**Purpose and Summary:** To update the Committee on planning policy casework and seek retrospective endorsement of submitted responses.

**Background**

1. This paper provides information on live planning policy casework, and responses submitted on planning policy matters during the last quarter (July-September 2024).
2. Please note that a fuller paper was intended for this Committee, but the Request for Information for the Luton Airport Expansion NSIP has taken up considerable capacity in the time originally set aside to prepare this paper.

**National Planning Policy Framework consultation**

3. We reported on the nature and content of the re-badged Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) consultation on “Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system”<sup>1</sup> to the Board meeting on 19 September, as this was an expedient means of securing members’ observations in advance of the closing date of 24 September. Our paper on that issue may be viewed in the Board agenda pack, accessible as ever from our website, here: <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/about-us/conservation-board/board-meetings/>
4. The Board discussion was detailed and very helpful to officers. It had been our intention to set out in this paper an explanation of how the Board discussion was interpreted for the response, but this has not been possible, due to the capacity constraints noted above. We are also intending to produce a “news” piece on our submission for the website and CCB’s eNewsletter.
5. A key element of the debate at the Board, which is worthy of relating now, related to the position taken in the NPPF towards renewable energy proposals. The proposed NPPF policy was that local planning authorities “should support planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon development”, implying a very strong presumption in favour of such developments, with no consideration of any potential harmful local impacts or of other NPPF policies, other than the general exhortation in NPPF para 3 that the Framework “should be read as a whole”. The Board was split on whether the nature of the climate emergency was such that all renewable energy proposals should be accepted, that no renewable energy proposals should ever be considered in a protected area, or whether a more nuanced approach was necessary. A similar division had been evident in discussions between officers of the different National Landscapes in southern England. Ultimately, both our submission and that of the National Landscapes Association (NLA - on which we drew heavily) has come down on the side of a nuanced approach that balances need with harmful impacts, since this aligns with existing approaches, including our own Management Plan and Renewable Energy position statement, and also represents a significant change from the “embargo” towards onshore wind generation that had been embedded within the NPPF. The NLA’s approach also

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

supported genuinely community-led renewable energy proposals, which would normally be of a nature and scale that could be accommodated in a protected landscape.

6. The Board also considered the question of how the consultation response was framed, since the online submission questionnaire, that was very strongly recommended by MHCLG, did not include space for high-level or general comments on the NPPF, or on matters not included in the proposed changes. Rather than attempting to shoehorn such comments into the consultation questions, or submit a response by email outside of the questionnaire format, it was determined to focus on responding to the consultation questions, and use other channels to make wider points and request additional changes.
7. A copy of the submitted responses to the consultation questions will be circulated separately in advance of the meeting. Members are strongly encouraged to read the submission alongside the consultation document<sup>2</sup>, which includes the full questions and the rationale for the proposed changes (some of the submitted responses make little sense without that context).

### **Central Bedfordshire Local Plan**

8. Central Bedfordshire Council launched an online questionnaire to kick off engagement on their new local plan late in July, closing on 23 September. The questionnaire was very high-level and clearly aimed at residents and perhaps small businesses, rather than stakeholders and planning or development professionals. We chose to respond with a letter offering to assist the council with the development of their spatial strategy and policies relating to the Chilterns National Landscape in the context of the strengthened s.85 duty and the ongoing boundary review. The letter was copied to Cllr Philip Spicer, CBC's representative on the Board, and a copy can be circulated to members on request.
9. Central Bedfordshire Council have not yet made a direct approach to CCB to discuss this local plan.

### **South Oxfordshire Local Plan**

10. On 1 October South Oxfordshire District Council published its "regulation 19" or "publication" draft of the Joint Local Plan 2041 (joint with Vale of the White Horse). The consultation runs to 12 November 2024. Officers have not yet had the opportunity to review the draft plan.
11. South Oxfordshire District Council have not yet made a direct approach to CCB to discuss this local plan.

### **Dacorum Local Plan**

12. This week officers received news (through unofficial channels) that Dacorum Borough Council is taking a revised draft of their local plan through its committees. We were anticipating the plan being re-published for further consultation during the Autumn of this year, so this is not unexpected. Early indications suggest that the Council is proposing to continue with the quantum of growth that had caused considerable controversy during its last iteration, and that the proposal to develop land east of Tring (known as "Marshcroft") may have been retained in this draft of the plan, despite CCB's opposition to its

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

allocation, and the lengthy and resource intensive appeal on the same site that was dismissed earlier this year.

13. Dacorum Borough Council have not yet made a direct approach to CCB to discuss this local plan.

### **Reading Transport Strategy**

14. In the last few days, again through unofficial channels, it has come to our attention that Reading Borough Council are planning to take their Transport Strategy to the Council for adoption early next week (15<sup>th</sup> October). CCB responded to a statutory consultation on the strategy in 2020, following a discussion at Planning Committee in July that year. The Committee resolved:

“to make an objection to the proposals relating to the North Orbital Road and the Third Thames Crossing due to the following concerns:

- the proposals would adversely impact visually on the Chilterns AONB;
- the proposals would increase traffic through the AONB with consequent damaging impacts to settlements, tranquillity, air quality and biodiversity; and
- the third bridge was unnecessary, in the context of current and anticipated changes in patterns of working and travel, which should also reduce the pressures on Caversham.”

15. It was also noted that “the Reading Transport Strategy as a whole has many merits, in particular the deeply embedded support for active travel and for public transport. The Committee also recognised the high traffic flows, congestion and air quality issues that affect Caversham and the surrounding area, but considered that solutions needed to be identified that were less harmful to the Chilterns AONB and its setting, especially in the context of the climate emergency and the post-Covid ‘new normal’. The Committee also raised concerns about the lack of details relating to these proposals as set out in the Strategy.”

16. Our response also made detailed commentary.

17. Officers have not had the opportunity to check the draft of the Strategy being put forward for adoption next week to see if any of CCB’s concerns have been met. However, we note that Reading Borough Council undertook a further consultation on the Strategy late in 2023, to account for the time that had elapsed since the previous statutory consultation. We have found no record that Reading Borough Council approached CCB at the time of that second consultation.

18. Officers are considering submitting a letter to the CEO and leadership of RBC pointing this shortcoming out, in the context of the strengthened s.85 duty and the fact that the strategy impacts land in the Chilterns AONB, as well as its setting. We are also surprised to note that South Oxfordshire District Council – whose land is also affected – also do not appear to have contacted CCB about the strategy.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **1. That the Committee**

- a. **NOTES the updates in this paper, and**

- b. ENDORSES the response submitted to MHCLG on the NPPF consultation (circulated separately).**

**Item 12            Planning Committee Work Programme****Author:** Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning**Purpose and Summary:** To update the Committee on progress with various other initiatives that are part of the Committee's work programme.**Background**

1. This paper provides information on a number of matters relevant to the Planning Committee's work programme not dealt with in detail elsewhere in the agenda.

**Committee membership**

2. Following the September Board meeting, the membership of Planning Committee for 2024/25 is now approved as follows:

Local Authority members	Cllr Paula Hiscocks (Herts County Council) Cllr Robert Carington (Buckinghamshire Council) Cllr Louise Price (Three Rivers District Council) Cllr Heather Wallace (Buckinghamshire Council)
Secretary of State members	Joe Stewart Colin Courtney Simon Mortimer
Parish Council members	Cllr Charles Hussey (Bucks Parish Councils) Cllr Sue Rowland (Oxon Parish Councils)
Co-opted members	Chris Hannington Paul Hayes

**Recruitment**

3. Advertisements for our part-time Planning Officer post have been published on CCB's website<sup>1</sup> and in The Planner (the Royal Town Planning Institute's journal and website)<sup>2</sup>, with a closing date of 4 November. Interviews are planned for week commencing 18 November. We are offering a 2-year contract at £23,400 for 3 days per week (£39,000 FTE). The salary has been benchmarked against similar roles in the public sector, and is competitive. The advertisement has also been promoted on social media channels, and members are strongly encouraged to share it through their own networks.

**Lighting Position Statement**

4. In September, the Board approved the Lighting Position Statement, and authorised officers to progress the statement to publication, subject to strengthening references to biodiversity impacts of lighting developments. While officers have authority to make those changes without further reference to the Board or to the Committee, it is proposed to run the changes past the Working Group (Charles Hussey, Paul Hayes and Chris Hannington) and the Committee Chair prior to finalising the draft for publication.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/jobs/planningofficer/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://jobs.theplanner.co.uk/job/41524/planning-officer/?LinkSource=PromotedJob>

### **Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit**

5. As reported to the July briefing, the Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit produced through the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs partnership project was published online in July.<sup>3</sup> The Toolkit is now linked from the main website.
6. Mike Stubbs, planning advisor, launched the Toolkit with a presentation to town and parish councils at a conference organised by Bucks and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils and the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust on 16 September (deferred from a date in June due to the General Election), and we also provided a stand with a demonstration of the toolkit staffed by Anna Foster and Fran Crowther from Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. Twenty-four parish councils attended the event.
7. Further promotional events are planned with other stakeholders and town and parish councils, including one with Chorleywood Parish Council on 15 October.
8. We are working on some enhancements to the Toolkit further to post-publication feedback, and would always appreciate any observations on the Toolkit, including suggestions for further enhancements, from Committee members.

### **Future Committee dates**

9. Normal practice is for Committees to select meeting dates for the following year at their last meeting of the year (for Planning Committee this will be on 17th October), for agreement at the Board meeting in December. This year the Board and its Committees have experimented with varying meeting times and days to spread their accessibility to members from different backgrounds. The outcome of this experiment was that the variations in times and dates proved to be unpopular and ineffective in achieving their stated objective.
10. In advance of the meeting, the Head of Strategy and Planning circulated a brief survey seeking members' views on holding future Committee meetings at the traditional or standard time of 10am on a Thursday morning, offering the following choices of dates:
  - Thu 23<sup>rd</sup> January
  - Thu 17<sup>th</sup> April, Thu 24<sup>th</sup> April, or possibly 1<sup>st</sup> May due to Easter
  - Thu 24<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup> July
  - Thu 23<sup>rd</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> October
11. The outcome of that survey will be reported back verbally. Any decisions on preferences for dates and times made by the Committee will be taken to the Board in December for approval.
12. We would also like to seek views on the number of Planning Committee meetings held each year. Before 2022, the Committee met three times a year, and this was amended to four meetings to align with the numbers of Board and Executive Committee meetings and to facilitate quarterly reporting. On reflection, officers are finding it difficult to resource this number of meetings, and there is some evidence to suggest that some members find it hard to balance meeting attendance with other commitments. It is therefore suggested that the Committee considers reducing the number of meetings to two regular meetings (in April and October, which could support annual and mid-year reporting), with the option of a third meeting or site visit whose timing could be determined by circumstances.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/neighbourhoodplanning/>

**Recommendations:****1. That the Committee**

- a. NOTES the updates in this paper,**
- b. APPROVES the principle of meetings being held on Thursdays from 10pm on the selected dates, and**
- c. DETERMINES the number of meetings to be held each year, and selects from the dates set out in para 10 the dates for regular meetings of the Committee to be submitted to the Board for approval.**