**BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19 QUARTER 3 REVIEW**

AGENDA ITEM 7

**Summary:** To review progress in Quarter 3 of the financial year 2018/19.

**Recommendations: That the Quarter 3 Review be noted.**

**Officer Ref:** Simon Smith, Project Development and Business Planning Officer
(01451 862031)

**Background**

Process

1. The management team undertook a review of progress against the work programme on 14th January 2019. This review identified areas of significant progress or where things have developed differently. It does not focus on areas of work which are performing as originally expected in the business plan.
2. This report does not attempt to celebrate the role or work of the Board. That task is achieved through updates, the annual review, press releases and digital media.

Financial Outcome

1. Following changes in personnel the office team have worked very hard to catch up with financial data entry. This report now includes up to date detailed financial information recorded on the Sage financial package.
2. For the first time since 2012/13 the Board has secured over a million pounds in income. In order of significance this improvement in income is due to funding secured for the Glorious Grasslands project, the hare trail and a spike in contributions to Caring for the Cotswolds. This income has mainly been transferred into ear-marked reserves for spending over the next few years.
3. The Board’s current forecast (green) is now predicting a surplus of £34,929 compared to a budget of £11,535, an improvement of £23,394. This is mainly due to savings in central staff costs and also an improvement in the portion of hosting costs the Board is able to claim for LEADER. The detailed variances and their causes have not significantly changed since the quarter two report and are described in notes following the table in **Appendix ‘A’**.
4. The Board’s reserves are now at £276,000 which is above the requirement of the Board’s reserves policy to maintain reserves of £130,000. This improvement is due to advance payments for projects and this money will all be spent over the next 3 years.
5. Project balances have been included in an additional table. The projects where the Board is choosing to invest cash from its core funding are the Sustainable Development Fund and Rural Skills (primary through the hedgelaying competition).

Operational Progress

1. Areas of significant progress or deviation from the original work programme are outlined below.

CONSERVING AND ENHANCING

Landscape

* The hedgelaying competition took place in November at Woodlands Farm, Chedworth.33 competitors took part, the largest number to date. The beginners and beginner’s pairs classes were also well attended with 6 competitors coming from our hedgelaying courses.

Rural Land Management

* Defra have confirmed that 1 of 3 Board ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme) test and trials proposals has been successful - Researching and piloting the need for local payment rates and options to achieve outcomes in the Cotswold. The Board is also collaborating with FWAG to identify Cotswold farmers willing to test new farmland bird guidance with Natural England. It is also resubmitting its earlier proposal to test the combining of ELMS with a rural development component, applying its learning from LEADER.

Development and Transport

* The Board has responded to two local plan consultations: Tewkesbury Borough Plan Preferred Options, South Worcestershire Development Plan Review - Issues and Options.
* The Board has secured approval for the Cranham Common and Pitchcombe (Phase 1 - church / village) undergrounding schemes, which are forecast to cost £299,241 and £24,243 respectively.
* The Board issued a call for projects for the National Grid’s Landscape Enhance Initiative focussing initially of the pylon line with the greatest landscape impact, running from Upper Coberley to Alderton. 5 expressions of interest were received & one enquiry for a future call.

UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYING

Tourism Access and Recreation

* Explore the Cotswolds by Public Transport was published in November with a print run of 12,000 copies.
* The Caring for the Cotswolds visitor giving scheme committed over £11,300 to 7 projects including; woodland management for pearl bordered fritillaries, a charcoal kiln, interpretation boards, grassland management and a new access route survey.

Health and Wellbeing

* Our guided walks recently included a group from a London based urban community and a group of female walkers from the Muslim community in Gloucester.

CROSS CUTTING

Strategic Economic Plan

* The LEADER programme is aiming for between 50 & 60 projects with a total grant allocation of £1.75 million. 36 projects are contracted 24 of which have spent their grant. A further 18 full applications are in the pipeline.

Management Plan

* The 2018-2023 AONB Management Plan was published in December 2019

Communications Strategy

* There were 18,920 first time visits to the Board website.
* A film about the pilot project run with Young Gloucestershire for Prince’s Trust Teams has been released. It can be viewed on the Board’s Facebook page here; <https://www.facebook.com/CotswoldsAONB/>
* Issue 40 of the Lion (January to June) was published in December. 35,000 copies were printed with 33,500 distributed straight away. It raised £2,500 in advertising.

Governance and Financial Management

* The Board submitted a detailed response to the 24 Glover questions with a supplementary submission focused on the Cotswolds National Park discussions. This included the position statement, FAQs and media article.
1. This quarter has also seen a change in personnel:

Starters:

Lioba Erwert LEADER Programme Assistant October

David Shelmerdine Finance Officer PT November

10. In quarter 4 we welcome:

Harvey Sherwood Glorious Grasslands Project Officer February

Anna Field GG Assistant Project Officer PT February

**Supporting Paper(s):**

**Appendix ‘A’ - 2018/19 Quarter 3 Finance Report**