**NOTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP MEETING ON 13TH MAY 2020**

**ATTENDING**

* PIWG members: Brendan Costelloe, Matt Darby, Mike Dean, Liz Hodges, Graham Hopkins, Cate Le Grice-Mack
* Lead officer: John Mills
* Supporting officer: Mandy Pressland

**AGENDA ITEM 1: NEW CHAIRMAN**

* Exec Committee members (i.e. MD, GH and CLGM) not normally eligible to be chairman of working groups.
* MD felt unable to put himself forward as a candidate for PIWG chairman at the moment due to other commitments.
* BC already chairman of another working group.
* LH agreed to be PIWG chairman, with immediate effect (but asked that MD take over the role in future if his commitments enabled him to do so).

**AGENDA ITEM 2: NEW PIWG MEMBERS**

* All PIWG members and officers introduced themselves, explained their interest in PIWG and outlined their aspirations for the group.

**AGENDA ITEM 3: PIWG MEETING ON 8th JANUARY 2020**

* Reviewed status of action points from meeting on 8th January 2020.
* Outstanding actions:
  + Incorporate local authority feedback into revised draft consultation criteria – *the consultation criteria will be updated and included in the draft Planning & Development Position Statement, which should be going out to consultation in June 2020*. (**ACTION – JM**).
    - Discussion of how to secure response from those local authorities (LA) that didn’t respond to the consultation in autumn 2019.
      * **ACTION** – JM to pro-actively seek response from these LAs when the consultation criteria are consulted on again as part of the Planning & Development Position Statement; this should include asking the relevant LA Board appointee to help secure a response from their LA.
  + Write to Highways England re Important Noise Areas, prioritising M5 near Upton St Leonards. (**ACTION – JM**).
  + Arrange meetings with relevant local authorities to discuss Local Plan and planning application consultation responses – *not set up yet, apart from meeting with officers at Cotswold District Council, due to Covid 19 lockdown but (online?) meetings will be arranged ASAP*. (**ACTION – JM**).

**AGENDA ITEM 4: PIWG TERMS OF REFERENCE**

* Decided to come back to this agenda item after discussing agenda items 5 and 6.
* Having discussed those agenda items, it was agreed that a number of changes would need to be made to the Terms of Reference to take account of the key policy changes and trends (Agenda Item 5), including the Landscapes Review (Agenda Item 6),
  + **ACTION:** JM to draft and circulate revised Terms of Reference.
* Discussion of economic drivers that affect the AONB and the potential benefits of engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).
  + **ACTION:** JM to discuss current and potential LEP engagement with Andy Parsons and James Webb (Partnerships and Fundraising Officer).
* Compliance with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act
  + **ACTION:** JM to compile and circulate summary of relevant planning decisions made in 2019/20 and the extent to which they addressed AONB issues.
* Monitoring overall impact of development in the AONB.
  + Discussion of the value of compiling data on housing permitted in the AONB (e.g. NAAONB / CPRE housing report in 2017) – would be useful but could be very expensive and time consuming.
* Discussion of whether the Board should pro-actively support some planning applications (e.g. provision of affordable housing). JM cautious about doing so because of (i) time implications (only have time to engage in those planning consultations that might adversely affect the AONB) and (ii) Board support could be used by developers to justify other similar, but potentially harmful, developments. However, JM is increasingly acknowledging the positive aspects of planning applications / local plans that we comment on, even if where we are objecting.
* Discussion of engagement on (strategic) transport issues – JM has recently engaged with a number of Transport Plan consultations and will continue to do so.

**AGENDA ITEM 5: KEY POLICY CHANGES AND TRENDS**

* JM outlined the key policy changes and trends that he had identified in Annex 1 of the agenda (i.e. climate and nature emergency, net-gain, Landscapes Review and the Board’s focus on positive, value-added partnerships and building great relationships with local authorities).
  + Climate change:
    - BC – once the UK is out of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy, a lot of land management funding will focus on addressing climate change.
    - Discussion of whether we need a Climate Change Position Statement (not just renewable energy) and whether we should provide more guidance on how to achieve ‘net zero’ in an AONB context.
      * **ACTION:** JM to discuss with Mark Connelly how PIWG can best contribute to the work of the Climate Change Working Group in reviewing the Board’s Climate Change Strategy, etc.
    - Biodiversity net-gain:
      * CLGM – need to frame ‘net-gain’ in the context of halting and reversing declines in biodiversity.

**AGENDA ITEM 6: LANDSCAPES REVIEW**

* JM outlined the paper that he had circulated to PIWG on the planning-related proposals and recommendations of the Glover Review, including how the Board should address these.
* Discussed implications of statutory consultee status, including current discussions with Natural England / Defra and the importance of keeping a record of all the planning applications that we are consulted on, the Board’s response to these consultations and the time allocated. JM noted that he has been keeping a more comprehensive record since the start of April 2020 (previously just kept record of consultations that we had responded), although the extra time spent on this is having a knock-on effect on other, more pro-active areas of work, such as finalising the draft Position Statements. CLGM suggested having a more ‘personal touch’ when dealing with planning applications (e.g. phoning case officers to discuss relevant planning applications).
  + **ACTION:** JM to consult PIWG on planning consultations that match the Board’s draft consultation criteria – and Local Plan / Transport Plan consultations - as soon as he receives them. The group agreed it would help JM if members did not respond to every consultation but targeted their efforts on applications where they had local knowledge or a particular interest or expertise.
  + **ACTION:** JM to provide update on the record of planning application consultations as a standard item at future PIWG meetings.
* BC queried the practicalities of producing a single, statutory local plan for the whole of the protected landscape (e.g. Who would produce it? How would this process work across so many local authorities?, etc.).
  + JM highlighted the Arnside & Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document as an exemplar of an AONB-focussed Local Plan document (albeit at a much smaller scale), which puts the purpose of AONB designation at the heart of the planning process.
  + The group agreed that this would be a long process and that endorsement of the Planning & Development and Housing Position Statements would provide a good starting point.
* CLGM suggested that it would be useful to benefit from the experience of other local authorities, such as South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).
  + **ACTION:** JM to look into setting up a meeting with SDNPA, potentially in conjunction with Chilterns Conservation Board.
* PIWG endorsed the proposals / recommendations in JM’s paper.

**AGENDA ITEM 7: WORK PROGRAMME RELATING TO THE PIWG TERMS OF REFERENCE**

* No time to discuss. However, a summary of consultation responses between January and May 2020 was circulated to the group just before the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 8: OTHER BUSINESS**

* No other business.

**AGENDA ITEM 9: DATE OF – AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR – NEXT PIWG MEETING**

* **ACTION:** JM to circulate doodle poll with potential dates for next meeting.