

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE		Report No. 15
Date of Meeting	24 th July 2008	
Title of Report	Support for the Cotswolds Conservation Board	
Portfolio	Built Environment – Planning and Leisure & Economy - Economic Regeneration	
Link to Corporate Priorities	All	
Key Decision	No	
Executive Workplan Ref	B400	
Public Report	Yes	

Summary of Report

Report requested by Councillor Peter Doyle on whether or not it would be appropriate to support the Cotswold Conservation Board in its discussions on future funding arrangements.

The report concludes that support should be given to CCB's claim that the work of the Board in improving the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is underfunded but that this Council should write in support on the basis that the funding criteria should be published to ensure that a fair financial settlement is transparent to all parties.

Officer Recommendations

That the Executive:

1. **Endorses the Cotswolds Conservation Board Report entitled 'Comparison of purposes and resources between Conservation Boards, AONB Partnerships and National Park Authorities; and**
2. **Expresses its view to Natural England, Defra, the relevant Secretary of State and the MP for North Wiltshire, that the criteria for applying funding to the Cotswolds Conservation Board in exercising its responsibilities for the stewardship of the AONB be made clear and transparent and that funding provision for the Cotswolds Conservation Board should be made fair in comparison to other AONBs, whether constituted as Partnerships or Boards.**

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
No	None	Yes	None	None

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report considers Councillor Peter Doyle's request that this Executive should support the Cotswolds Conservation Board in its work with its funding partners in securing a fairer financial settlement.

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 The options are either to support the recommendation proposed, to propose an alternative recommendation or to decline to comment.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 Councillor Peter Doyle requested that, in respect of his work with the Cotswold Conservation Board, this Executive may wish to consider that Board's recent concern that there is an inherent unfairness in the distribution of funding from its major funding partners. A copy of the report is attached in Appendix A.
- 3.2 The Executive may wish to note that approximately 20% of the funding of the total core work of the Board (the total is approximately £180,000 per annum) is funded by the 17 local authorities that presently make up the extent of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. Officer Comments

- 4.1 The basis of the report in appendix A is to undertake a comparison of the funding received and how it is distributed across England. It is suggested that the CCB receive less than a fair share if considered against the total population that is covered by their work or the geographical area involved.
- 4.2 It is clear from an initial assessment of the information gathered and presented in that report that there is no obvious "formula" followed by the funding partners. It is however difficult to justify a funding arrangement based upon population and/or size of geographical area as this may be no better a method of ensuring fairness. It may not, for example, be related to the extent of work that is required to meet the Board's objectives. Nevertheless, it is clear that without a transparent method of assessing how funding should be distributed, it is difficult not to conclude that the CCB may not be receiving its "fair share"
- 4.3 The recommendation to the Committee is therefore as set out above.

5. Community & Environmental Implications

- 5.1 Supporting the role of representative on this Board is important in establishing and maintaining effectiveness in promoting issues affecting the community.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for this Authority.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There are no major risks associated with this report.

Appendices:	Appendix A: Report to the Cotswolds Conservation Board – Spring 2008.
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	None

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
None		