

Meeting to discuss an holistic approach to Water Management in Suffolk, held on 19 November 2012 in Melton.

Name	Initials	Title/Organisation	email
Jane Burch	JB	Flood and Coastal Policy Manager, Suffolk County Council	jane.burch@suffolk.gov.uk
Matt Hullis	MH	Head of Environment Strategy, Suffolk County Council	matt.hullis@suffolk.gov.uk
Giles Bloomfield	GB	East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board	giles@wlma.org.uk
James Mason	JM	Partnership & Strategic Overview Manager, Environment Agency	james.mason@environment-agency.gov.uk
Jonathan Thompson	JT	Water Resources Manager, Environment Agency	jonathan.thompson@environment-agency.gov.uk
William Robinson	WR	Essex & Suffolk Water	william.robinson@nwl.co.uk
Richard Pipe (for Peter Youngs)	RP	East Suffolk Water Abstractors Group	eswag@tiscali.co.uk puffa@awmfarms.co.uk (RP)
Nick Collinson	NC	Manager, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB	nick.collinson@suffolk.gov.uk
Trazar Astley-Reid	TAR	Suffolk Estuaries Officer	trazar.astley-reid@suffolk.gov.uk
Paul Hammett	PH	National Water Advisor, National Farmers Union	paul.hammett@nfu.org.uk
Stephen Langlois	SL	Partnership & Equivalence Manager, Anglian Water	slanglois@anglianwater.co.uk
Steve Moncaster	SM	Supply & Demand Strategy Manager, Anglian Water	smoncaster@anglianwater.co.uk
Sarah Wilson	SW	Norfolk & Suffolk Manager, Natural England	sarah.wilson@naturalengland.org.uk
<i>The following were not at the meeting but will be included in invites to future meetings:</i>			
Iain Dunnett		LEP Green Economy Pathfinder	iain@suffolkchamber.co.uk
Bill Parker		Suffolk Coastal District Council	bill.parker@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk
Maisie Jepson		Country Land & Business Assoc.	Maisie.jepson@cla.org.uk
John & Bruce Kerr		Kerr Farms	john@kerrfarms.com
Sarah Castlevecchi		Anglian Water	scastelvch@anglianwater.co.uk
Will Akast		WFD Manager, EA	Will.akast@environment-agency.gov.uk
Archie Ruggles-Brice		Essex & Suffolk Rivers Trust	EssexSuffolkRT@gmail.com

Key abbreviations used:

AW	Anglian Water
CAMS	Catchment Abstraction Management Plans
CFMP	Catchment Flood Management Plans
ESWAG	East Suffolk Water Abstractors Group
ESW	Essex & Suffolk Water
EA	Environment Agency
IDB	Internal Drainage Board

<i>LEP</i>	<i>Local Enterprise Partnership</i>
<i>NFU</i>	<i>National Farmers' Union</i>
<i>NE</i>	<i>Natural England</i>
<i>SuDS</i>	<i>Sustainable Drainage</i>
<i>SCC</i>	<i>Suffolk County Council</i>
<i>WFD</i>	<i>Water Framework Directive</i>

Apologies:

Bill Parker, Suffolk Coastal District Council

Introductions and Aims:

JB opened the meeting explaining the many strategies and policies that are driving the need for a joined up approach to flood risk, water resources and water quality management:-

- Local Enterprise Partnership Green Economy Pathfinder
- Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Management Plan
- Suffolk Climate Action Plan
- Catchment Abstraction Management Plans
- Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans

Everyone introduced themselves and outlined their roles in water management and aims for this group:-

- ❖ SCC: Leading Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership and focussing on surface water management. Will become SuDS lead when Schedule 3 of Flood & Water Management Act comes into force. Also lead the Suffolk Coast Forum. Supporting the LEP to deliver the Green Economy Manifesto¹ that includes a specific action on water storage.
- ❖ Essex & Suffolk Water: water resource planning over next 25 years – mainly in north east of the county. Need to reduce demand and increase supplies
- ❖ AW: Water resources and waste water management. Enabling sustainable development. Keen to promote SuDS in both urban and rural situations for both drainage and water resources.
- ❖ EA: Flood risk management (CFMPs), water resource management (CAMS) and licensing; WFD; river and environmental restoration.
- ❖ IDB: Land drainage. Many pumps at tidal interface. GB also working in Norfolk on river restoration and environmental projects.
- ❖ ESWAG: Group of local farmers abstracting water for irrigation. Worked on efficient use of water and links with EA to ensure sustainable abstraction. Many agricultural reservoirs. Will be need for more water to support growth in agricultural production in future. Important to ensure tidal and estuarine flood defences are maintained to support the IDB pumps and abstraction points. Flexibility of abstraction licenses key for sustainable use.
- ❖ Estuaries Officer supports local groups on all the estuaries, many working on ways to maintain local flood defences and support agricultural production and the local economy alongside issues such as tourism and environmental enhancement. Work underway on the Deben to create holistic management plan.

¹ Link to [Green Economy Manifesto](#) – relevant action Page 10, Priority Objective 4.

- ❖ AONB: Adaption to climate change a key issue. Recently completed project with NFU looking at adaption in the farming sector – water resources and flood management are key issues. Fresh water environments are important landscape features in the coastal area.
- ❖ NE: Maintaining the quality of water dependant environmental sites. Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative – working with land managers to improve water quality in rivers and ground waters.
- ❖ NFU: PH recently promoted to national water specialist but still based in East Anglia. This is recognition of the importance of water for continued agricultural production. National food security is becoming a key government platform, with suggestion that 60% more food will be needed in the next 50 years. This will require security of water supply for agriculture. Working on lessons learnt from this year's drought.

The Pilot Project:

The discussion then looked at what a pilot project in Suffolk could achieve and how it might be undertaken.

It was agreed that the principle aim of the group was to deliver a local project with a both a practical outcome and ways of working/learning that can be replicated. Suffolk has a history of small-scale innovative projects that lead to policy changes and scaling up to a bigger scale. This project should be no different.

The following issues were discussed and noted to inform the development of the project:-

- ❖ Both agriculture and domestic use will increase over time – even with efficiency measures. Thus there is a key need to increase available supplies to support development in all sectors.
- ❖ Is there evidence that water supply is restricting housing and economic development?
- ❖ Any project needs to ensure continued focus on efficiency of water use – in all sectors alongside increasing supplies.
- ❖ Water dependant environments are a vital part of Suffolk's biodiversity and landscape. Must ensure any project considers this as a key driver. The environment is an important partner in any investment in water resources.
- ❖ More fresh water is pumped out to sea by IDBs than used locally for agricultural irrigation. Can we retain this water both to avoid the cost of pumping, increase water resources and for environmental benefit? Suggested that 12 million m³ pumped to sea (excluding Hollesley). This is considerable resource equivalent to supply to Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth.
- ❖ Most agricultural abstraction in Suffolk is from groundwater. Can we use excess surface water to replace all or part of groundwater abstraction?
- ❖ Storage reservoirs are key. Need information on numbers and capacity of existing agricultural reservoirs. EA will have this data for large ones. ESWAG could get it for smaller ones. This will help identify need for further storage.

- ❖ Cost of reservoir construction high – and many difficulties experienced around consents. Need to consider ways to fund multi-use reservoirs that support farming, economic, water company and environmental demands.
- ❖ Are existing abstraction licenses and storage capacity being utilised to the full? All users have 'contingency' – can we ensure security of supply whilst utilising this?
- ❖ Reform of abstraction licensing – greater flexibility and trading between sectors should be considered. Pilot could inform policy changes underway.
- ❖ Water quality requirement for agricultural use is less stringent than for drinking water. This may have bearing on sources available for different sectors.
- ❖ Water companies are considering the value of network of smaller, local reservoirs rather than fewer big ones. This pilot could help to inform future resource planning. The cost of transporting water and the inherent carbon footprint are becoming increasingly important for water companies.
- ❖ Can we use groundwater aquifers to move water? Above ground movement of large quantities of water is expensive and requires energy.
- ❖ Slowing water down in the upper catchment – i.e. rural SuDS with aim of increasing groundwater supplies. Current approach is to consider SuDS as a drainage tool, but needs to link up water resource issues too.
- ❖ AW has trialled groundwater recharge through deep borehole but there are issues with clogging and thus high maintenance costs. A better option would be to utilise a storage basin.
- ❖ Uncertainty over sea and estuary defence maintenance in the long term which threatens existing sources of water. Vital to link flood defence spending to water resource management. Could a new multi-use reservoir generate funds for flood defence maintenance?
- ❖ Funding of any project will be challenging but working in partnership and delivering multiple benefits opens up new funding sources. Possible sources include the Local Enterprise Partnership, water company funding, WFD funds, flood defence funds, developer and private investment. LEP support will be crucial.
- ❖ Should use the Catchment Management Pilots as a framework for the pilot, but with water resource and flood management as primary drivers rather than water quality.
- ❖ Pilot project must cover both urban/development and rural area i.e. upper and lower areas of preferably the same catchment.
- ❖ The area where a possible pilot project should be focussed was discussed – ideas included Newbourne Stream, whole of River Deben catchment – to include Martlesham development; Kingsfleet.
- ❖ It was decided that a desk top study to identify the best location to deliver widest possible range of objectives was needed before a decision could be made.

Desk Top Study

EA (JT) agreed to lead the work on this desk top study, looking at all Suffolk's rivers/estuaries to identify suitable catchments for a pilot project that achieves the widest range of objectives. The group will consider the result of this study to inform the development of the pilot project.

Utilise existing catchment pilots (e.g. Welland) to be used as a basic framework to scope the study.

Scope should include

- agricultural area and an area of development (housing and/or economic) - should help to link with LEP support for sustainable development within the Green Economy Manifesto
- issues in both upper and lower catchment. Should be in same catchment.
- water resources are an issue (all sectors)
- flood defence issues (all sources of flooding) and thus possible link to partnership flood funds
- consideration of existing infrastructure
- water dependant environments and possibility of enhancements
- WFD issues

Next Steps agreed:

JT will email around outlining scoping of the desk top study for consideration by the group. Aim to do this by Christmas. **All** to reply promptly to him.

JT will estimate cost of this study. All partners will consider what contribution they could make to it.

Study to be completed within 6 months maximum

MH will talk to LEP Green Pathfinder (Iain Dunnett/Marie Finbow) to see if funds could be available both for this study and subsequent pilot.

Need to expand the group to involve the LEP (**MH to approach**) and Suffolk Coastal D C planners (**JB to approach**).

Need to do an audit of existing data and agreed to share it as appropriate. **All partners** will provide JT will list of what is available by Christmas.

Audit of existing infrastructure (e.g. agricultural reservoirs) – **ESWAG** to try to collate this.

JB will co-ordinate all activities and act as the hub for information exchange and setting up meetings as appropriate.

Involvement of politicians and wider estuary groups/public will be essential once the catchment and initial outline of the project has been agreed. **JB** will lead this work.

JB to circulate notes from the meeting and include contact details.

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