

## Meeting to discuss an holistic approach to Water Management in Suffolk, held on 19 February 2014 Melton.

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<b><i>The following are part of the group but sent apologies to this meeting:</i></b>			
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### 1. Introductions and Aims:

MH opened the meeting explaining the need to use this meeting to decide the outline of the future of the project.

## **2. Options consultation responses:**

Presentation on [www.greensuffolk.org/HWMP](http://www.greensuffolk.org/HWMP)

PB summarised the consultation process and responses received. In addition to more general responses, key organisations had provide detailed feedback and ideas.

The project received very strong support, with respondents equally concerned about flooding, water resources and the environment. This gives a clear steer that the project is worth pursuing. It was made clear that the options were not mutually exclusive and it was likely that any project would result in a range of actions to achieve a range of benefits – flood alleviation, increased and more secure water resources (for agriculture and public water), improved water quality and environmental enhancement.

It is worth noting that ‘river channel improvements’ was interpreted in different ways by respondents – from dredging to naturalisation.

PB discussed the support and ideas for each of the high level options and where existing or planned activities are taking place to support the option this was noted:-

### **1. HEADWATERS STORAGE RESERVOIR**

Upstream of Debenham. Good support for this plus associated local channel improvements. Would need to be c 200,000 cu m to withstand 1 in 10 year flood with sufficient freeboard to allow storage that could be used to enhance low flows in the river during the summer.

Unlikely that this alone will allow additional abstraction.

There will be water quality issues to address – need for shading/aeration before releasing water into river.

Main issue will be availability of land and cost in relation to benefits. Could be several smaller storage areas rather than one bigger one.

**Action:** EA taking forward hydraulic feasibility modelling and cost-benefit analysis for this option as part of flood alleviation project for Debenham – reporting May 2014.

### **2. STORAGE RESERVOIR IN IDB AREA**

Two possible locations – Shingle Street area on the north side of the river or in the King's Fleet area on the south side. The latter looks like the most feasible option, and it is in this area that there is an unmet demand for irrigation water. Several farmers have indicated a clear interest in a storage reservoir including possible investment.

GB suggested that the availability of other storage space – by enlarging ponds and existing channels behind the defences – could be considered, which might reduce the size of reservoir required. LiDAR survey data might help to establish suitable areas.

IDB pumps at Kings Fleet and Falkenham both in need of refurbishment. Kings Fleet requires relocation due to environmental damage. This gives greater flexibility to link up with storage or ASR options. Water would be pumped from drainage areas into multi-user reservoir. One use could be for ASR after treatment.

**Action:** IDB beginning pre-feasibility study for relocation of Kings Fleet pump in April 2014 (funded by flood levy). GB will arrange meeting with AW and PY to consider scope of this study in the light of wider interests

SC outlined Anglian Water's interest in this option combined with ASR – located in the area near the Bucklesham WTW (see presentation). Any investment would be beyond 2020. PB crude estimates (using data from Cranfield University) suggest a clear economic benefit for a 400ML reservoir – but more work is needed to confirm this.

Key challenges will be to find suitable location for reservoir; planning and consents; agreement re use, operation and maintenance and conservation management. Should also consider possible amenity benefits.

Question raised about whether AW would accept an artificial lining. **SC to check**

### **3. AQUIFER STORAGE & RECOVERY (ASR)**

AW very interested in considering this with or without storage reservoir as a possible option to re-use of water from Ipswich STW.

There will be quality issues and water likely to need to be treated before injection into the aquifer.

**Action:** AW to undertake feasibility work on this option with reference to IDB and ESWAG

Other options include ASR into unconfined aquifers at the till/gravel boundary or crag (e.g. at Woodbridge airfield or between river valleys). Difficult to quantify benefits for abstraction benefits but would certainly enhance small river flows.

**Action:** ESWAG/EA will be undertaking modelling of the crag in relation to possible pre-agreed trading agreements.

### **4. RIVER CHANNEL IMPROVEMENTS/FLOOD ATTENUATIONS/CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT**

Earl Soham to Ufford stretch of river failing WFD. 14 structures impassable to fish and many quality issues including diffuse pollution and siltation. The EA support boreholes at Debenham and Earl Soham help manage worst effects in dry years.

EA is keen to take forward work to replace/modify structures to deliver WFD benefits and reduce ongoing maintenance costs. Work very dependent on owners' co-operation.

Brandeston School Weir in need of repair. Would be suitable place to consider modification and illustrate the sort of improvements the project is trying to achieve. Not likely to be contentious and could be quick win for the project.

**Action:** EA has geo-morphologist available until October 2014 who could be employed to assist in deciding best options and GB offered help with telemetry if required.

Possible option to utilise land for flood alleviation – would be acceptable only if alternative winter grazing was available or agri-environment funding support available.

Other options include re-routing channel, dual channels, rural SuDS, buffer strips and tree planning. ESRT leading on this work, alongside the CSF officers/NE.

Natural flood management/ river channel improvements not likely to deliver measurable benefits to abstractors, although any natural infiltration must enhance the river and groundwater levels.

## 5. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Good support for pre-agreed trading within local area – which ties in with Defra Abstraction reforms. Project could test the ideas in the proposals prior to legislation.

Licensed and abstracted volumes suggest that on 52% used in average year and 60-70% in dry year, so there appears to be the capacity for trading.

On Sandlings on north side of the river, most licensees are linked by distribution mains thus minimising physical movement of water and local impacts. Would be suitable area to begin pre-agreed trading.

**Action:** ESWAG/EA will be undertaking modelling in relation to possible pre-agreed trading agreements.

Planning and consenting for reservoirs. BP suggested a model similar to the Coastal Concordat could be tested locally where all regulators agree a simplified process. He is willing to discuss further with his planners.

### 3. Next Steps:

**THE HOLISTIC WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT** will be a combination of the above options, which together should achieve a range of benefits across the catchment. Whilst different strands of work will be led by different organisations and at different timescales, all will be done with reference to the other work on the catchment under the umbrella of the HWMP. Most options should be synergistic, but the overarching project will manage any potential conflicts.

In the short-term SCC will manage the project but will not have the resources to take on the full project management role. Funding will be sought for a Project Manager.

Funding to take the project forward is the main concern. There will be a need for a range of technical and specialist consultants to support the ongoing development of the options. External funding may be needed for the additional work that is not already been taken forward.

**MH will co-ordinate discussions with SCC, EA and NE funding teams and the LEP**

PB has contacts with other similar projects – but most of these are focussed on delivering a strategy rather than practical measures. They may be a useful source of information about funding.

**ESRT is taking forward HLF bid to support their work on catchment improvement matters** but this source of funding is unlikely to support the work to deliver economic benefits and additional water resources.

**Paul Bradford will continue to act for the Project in the short term to produce a project scope and timelines. He will confirm current and planned actions by various group members and quantify likely contributions in kind** – which will be used to support any funding bid. SCC will contribute some further funds for Paul's work but other contributions needed if possible.

It was proposed to approach Cranfield University to see if they would be interested in supporting some of the technical work. They have links to Knowledge Transfer Programme which provides

additional funding. MH to work with PY/PH to get a meeting with Jerry Knox or other relevant person from the University.

Communications will be important to keep the project in everyone's mind and to encourage interest from other relevant groups and individuals.

JB will update website with latest project information and provide group members with a short article for use in any appropriate newsletters.

Further meetings of the group will be arranged when needed. Meanwhile a number of small sub-groups may form to take forward particular aspects of the project as above.

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