

Holistic Water Management Project

Board Meeting – 1st October 2014

NOTES (updated version)

Attendees:

Jane Burch, SCC
Paul Bradford, project consultant
Giles Bloomfield, IDB
Sarah Castelveccchi, AW
Jonathan Thompson, EA
Will Akast, EA
Peter Youngs, ESWAG
Paul Hammett, NFU
Haidee Stephens, AONB/DEP
Chris McArthur, ESRT

Apologies:

Matt Hullis, SCC
Bill Parker, SCDC
Bruce Kerr, landowner
Maisie Jepson, CLA
Will Todd, EA
William Robinson, E&S Water

1. Introduction

Haidee Stephens, the new Suffolk Estuaries Officer was introduced to the group. She is representing the AONB and estuary groups.

PB reminded the meeting of the background to the project and gave a brief overview of the 5 strands of the project to be discussed at the meeting;-

1. Debenham flood alleviation: EA/SCC
2. Channel morphology and WFD improvements: EA/ESCP/ SCC
3. Felixstowe Peninsular reservoir/ASR: ESWAG/IDB/EA

Regulatory Changes, including.

4. Licence trading & abstraction reform: EA/ESWAG
5. Reservoir Planning & Consents streamlining: SCC/AONB/PB

2. Feedback from the CIWEM Natural Flood Management (NFM) Conference, Sept 2014. (PB)

The conference included presentations from speakers across the UK, looking at practical examples of NFM and forthcoming guidance. Papers of particular interest to the group were:

- *'Achieving multiple benefits through sustainable catchment management'* Alastair Driver, EA. -A collection of "killer facts" gleaned from dozens of NFM schemes from upper catchment to estuary. This paper is likely to be particularly useful in preparing bids or proposals.
- *Headwaters and Flooding*, Dr Paul Quinn, Newcastle University. - demonstrating the value of small, low cost flood management interventions at the catchment micro-scale.

These and other papers presented at the conference are available at;
<http://www.ciwem.org/events/events-outputs.aspx>.

3. Feedback from the East Suffolk Catchment Partnership (PB)

The ESCP is hosted by the Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust. Catchment partnerships were set up under a Defra initiative to take a collaborative approach to the planning, funding and delivery of good ecological health of rivers and their catchments.

To date, the Partnership has developed a series of ecosystem opportunity maps with the support of the West Country Rivers Trust. These identify areas where interventions have the potential to benefit the greatest range of ecosystem services. Final drafts of these maps will be approved at the next Catchment Partnership on 11 November.

The Partnership has also drawn up a long-list of 30 potential intervention measures to enhance and improve delivery of ecosystem services within the catchment. Projects include physical interventions (such as tree planting and saltmarsh creation) from headwaters to the sea, and societal initiatives such as help for first time STWs.

The Partnership has bid for small scale funding from the EA (£10k WFD funding) to prioritise these interventions and to start developing further funding bids (from Defra CRF) to implement the projects.

4. Updates from HWMP sub groups

4.1 Debenham flood alleviation

JB outlined the aims of this group. The project will incorporate two strands:

- Upstream of Debenham; flow attenuation features. Discussions have been held with key landowners who have confirmed that they are happy with small features. Further modelling is underway to establish impacts even further upstream. Details regarding location and funding to follow. Although it was hoped that it would be possible to retain water for release in summer, it is looking unlikely that the features will hold sufficient water to make this practical.
- Downstream, at confluence of 2 watercourses; dual channel creation and removal of redundant structures: An initial meeting has been held with landowners potentially affected - they are happy in principle. Design details have still to be worked out. Schemes are likely to be low cost – key issue may be disposal of material dug out. The dual channel will be designed to improve access for maintenance and tree planting. Several 'orphan' sluices and structures have been identified. Original purpose was to create 'pond' to provide water for firefighting. Ownership to be clarified and permission to remove them will be sought.

Project timings: The additional modelling and costs/benefits work on these options will be progressed in 2015/16 with funding from local levy. Subject to approval and local funding contributions being secured, implementation is unlikely to commence until 2016/17.

4.2 Channel improvements and WFD improvements: CM, JB)

There are a large number of in channel structures causing habitat, channel morphology, water quality, fish passage and flow issues. Most of these structures have no apparent purpose and ownership is uncertain.

Funding has been secured to replace Brandeston Weir (Interreg, EA WFD and flood Levy funding).

Naomi Drown (EA Asset Management) has written to landowners affected by the Brandeston weir, explaining the proposal.

Project Timings: It is hoped that this project can go ahead within the next 12 months.

Actions Required: Landowner agreement is needed. A meeting needs to be arranged with landowners to secure their views and agreement.

JB/WA to chase Naomi Drown to get this in place asap

Local dredging and vegetation clearance work has been agreed at Wickham Market Mill. EA work to commence in October. This intervention will help secure long term 'good will' for the project and better ways to manage this structure.

A significant barrier to removing in channel structures is the time taken to engage with landowners. A survey is required to identify potential other sites for structure removal and identify interested landowners.

The group suggested the following solutions to engage with landowners and interest groups (see also item 6 Further engagement):

- A number of individual landowners who could have an interest were identified.
- PH agreed that there may be opportunities to raise the issue in the NFU magazine.

PB/PH/JB to action

- The Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust (and ESCP have a role and will continue to engage people) **PB to liaise with the ESCP.**
- The EA could help provide training for volunteers. (WA)
- Exemplar schemes are available on the Chelmer and Brett. WA offered to show these as demonstrator schemes for interested parties.
- Reinstating old ponds can help greatly in managing flooding and water. As yet insufficient details about the new Environmental Land Management schemes to know if this will provide a useful mechanism to achieve this. Meanwhile need to promote this as a way landowners can help.

CMcA and PB to take forward with the ESRT

4.3 Felixstowe Peninsula: (ESWAG/EA/IDB)

The IDB has funding earmarked to undertake the studies needed to secure the replacement of the Kingsfleet pump. Funding will include the additional cost of flow monitoring and a level survey required to develop the reservoir scheme further. GB has identified a supplier who is able to install Magflow meters at favourable terms. Flow recording is expected to start at the end of October.

With respect to the holding reservoir the landowners are happy in principle, but without knowing best site/size discussions cannot progress yet.

Environmental concerns may be a potential sticking point. The EA, IDB and NE met to discuss this during the summer. There is a potential adverse impact of relocating the pump on wading birds. The Deben estuary is a Natura 2000 site so an 'appropriate assessment' may be required. It is possible that a pumped residual freshwater flow will be required at Kingsfleet. This would further increase capital and running costs. It was noted that pumping mostly takes place at night when birds are roosting elsewhere.

Eel Regulations are also significant for any new pumps. Pumps must be 'fish friendly'. The IDB is building a fish friendly outfall at Sudbourne – but needs NE advice.

Natural England to provide formal advice re birds and eel requirements asap. JT/JB to pursue.

SC reported that Anglian Water retained an interest in the scheme but were constrained by the AMP planning cycle. Offwat has approved the Water Resource East Anglia (WREA) project which may release funding for research into this project.

SC to provide an update.

Governance of the new reservoir will be an issue. The IDB is happy in principle to own the scheme assets and manage distribution of the water but is not clear how the financial model would work. Anglian Water has sponsored some work with CPSL on this. Cranfield also carried out research project for Defra; *Efficient supply of water for agriculture: exploring collaborative approaches and use of on farm storage - WU0135*.

Other similar schemes include:

- Lincoln water transfer (Trent Witham Ancholme?)
- Benacre Estate
- Fosdyke Canal/British Waterways? (PB)
- Blakeney shared scheme.

PY has established the demand for water from landowners totalling c 800 ML. He has also established where existing licenses may be surrendered if a new and secure source of water was available. Estimate of available water is 1500ML, thus some could be available for AW or the environment.

Cranfield has expressed an interest in using this project as an Integrated Study Assignment (ISA). This is a 6 week assignment, run as a consultancy project by a consortium of 6 MSc. students. It is likely to be appropriate because work is carried out in a short space of time and results are generally consistent because a number of students are involved.

JT,PY,GB to scope up a suitable project/projects for Cranfield by end Dec.

Timeframes:

- 2014-15, Flow monitoring (existing pumps) and modelling - EA agreed to assist with modelling. Appropriate assessment and any supporting information requirements for consents (abstraction licence, planning, reservoirs act etc.) determined.
- 2016 -2017 Civil engineering works to be carried out.

4.4 Regulatory Issues

4.4.1 Licence trading (ESWAG/EA)

The EA Abstraction Reform team is also very interested in this project as it provides a test bed for resource management issues that the reform programme will need to deal with. They may be able to offer support for this and groundwater modelling for the ASR part of the project.

JT/PB to maintain links with AR team.

EA and ESWAG have met to discuss licence trading. The EA Abstraction Reform team is keen to offer support to this project also. PY and P Westrup (farmer) have identified some potential 'pre agreed trades to put to the EA.

PY has asked the EA to attend the ESWAG AGM in early November to outline the project and hold a Q and A session for members.

JT and PY to agree to AGM presentation.

4.4.2 Reservoir Planning and Consents Group (SCC/AONB/SCDC)

The group met over the summer. It established that it was necessary to identify the decision making processes that go on behind the regulations. Various flow diagrams and guidance is available to show what regulations and consents are required, but they do not show what the farmer needs to demonstrate or what conditions need to apply to allow the reservoir to be constructed. A map of this process will allow the group to eliminate duplication and hopefully identify a set of pre-conditions which could allow a reservoir application to follow a prior notification route (or alternatively set out what further investigations are required for consent). A concept of co-operation between regulatory bodies, similar to the Coastal Concordat, is envisaged. JB has tasked PB to develop a map of the decision making process.

PB to action for next meeting in December/January.

HS commented that reference to the HWMP (agricultural reservoirs) was included in the Deben Estuary Plan. This was going to public consultation pre-Christmas after which it would become an official part of SCDC planning policy.

PH recently had opportunity to raise the issue of the barriers associated with on-farm reservoirs, with the Secretary of State, Liz Truss MP. NFU is continuing to liaise with government on this matter and will keep the group informed of any relevant progress.

5. ASR

Currently there is no work pursuing the concept of ASR – especially on the east of the Peninsula - but the group agreed this must not be forgotten.

SC/JT agreed to investigate whether this was a possible student project, based around comparisons with the catchment drought management plans for the Wissey.

JT/SC to investigate.

6. Funding

In Matt Hullis' absence, JB reported that the KTP funding was on hold and no details about how to access LEP funding was currently available.

LEADER funding was however, a strong possibility. This is subject to the Suffolk Heritage Coast Strategy being signed off. **MH to continue to pursue this option.**

JT reported that the EA had put aside up to £5k for local water resources projects identifying multiple benefit (such as the HWMP).

JT to confirm bid/application requirements.

7. Communications and further engagement

The Project will continue to be overseen by the current group. Natural England and SCDC essential members, but both poor attenders at meetings.

JB to seek better commitment from NE and SCDC.

JB asked whether the Deben Estuary Partnership should be included, but it was thought that representation via Haidee Stephens should suffice.

Wider Engagement.

The group felt that this was an appropriate time to start wider engagement. There was an immediate requirement to recruit landowners for upper catchment and in-channel interventions. ESWAG had little data on landowners upstream of Easton. Fram Farmers could be useful source of information as is the CSF and RPA databases (via EA) and Abstraction licence holder database (EA)

PB/CMcA to create list of key landowners using all available sources asap.

Other communication channels to be used included:

- **PY would include an update in the ESWAG newsletter**
- Local Papers: **JB to ask John Grant/Sarah Chambers, EADT to do features on the project**
- The Deben Estuary Partnership **PY to ask for their help**
- Liaison with Catchment Sensitive Farming Events **WA to progress**
- **SC to provide list of delegates at the recent Innovation meeting. Basic update/link to website will be sent to them.**

It was felt that an improved Holistic Water Management website homepage would be useful and that a single page update should be produced asap. **Action JB**

Partners wished to include links to/from the HWMP website.

6. Any Other Business

WA reminded the meeting that this work feeds into the requirement that there must be no deterioration in WFD status as result of abstraction reform.

The consultation on the updated River Basin Management Plans (WFD) will commence 10 October for six months. Relevant issues from this project should be included.

The large development proposal at Martlesham will require management of surface water, possibly through the use of a SuDS basin. Local landowners have expressed an interest in whether an alternative positive discharge for on-farm use was possible. **SCDC planners need to make this link stronger before the opportunity is missed.** Similar links may be possible elsewhere, although the impact of the surface water not penetrating into the groundwater may need to be considered.

Next Meeting

JB to fix next meeting for March 2015, with the expectation of email updates and further sub-group meetings in between now and then.