

Suffolk Holistic Water Management Project

www.greensuffolk.org/hwmp

Felixstowe Peninsula Group – Landowner meeting

Notes from meeting held on 8th February 2016 at Kirton

Attendees:

Tim Darby (ESWAG)
Paul Bradford (Consultant)
Jane Burch (SCC)
Karen Thomas & Giles Bloomfield (IDB)
Jonathan Thompson (EA)
Steff Jones (SCC)
Graham Hall, Prime Irrigation

Landowners

Michael Paul
Mike & Stuart Hollingsworth
Patrick Jolly
Bruce Kerr
James Wood (for Walton Farms/Trinity College)
Neal Smith (for Home Farm Nacton/Andrew Williams)
James Foskett
David Adams

1. **Welcome and introductions**

TD welcomed everyone to the meeting and did introductions.

2. **Setting the scene**

JB reminded the meeting of the Holistic Water Management Project, of which this is one sub group and the background to this work. Details about the project can be viewed on www.greensuffolk.org/HWMP

Having previously discussed many aspects of this project the aim of the meeting was to landowners' views on various principles before proceeding further.

It should be noted that the data/figures presented are the best available at this stage and they should be taken as an indication of the scale of things rather than absolutes.

3. **Story so far**

PB presented various aspects of the project indicating headline costs and benefits; supply and demand profiles; various design considerations - including sizing and siting of holding reservoirs, pipework and on-farm storage and other considerations that will inform the options considered for taking forward. Flow monitoring is still ongoing and until this has been completed (May 2016) we will not know exactly how much water will be available for abstraction throughout the year. This will have a significant bearing on design, costs and viability. Paul's presentation and the supporting reservoir cost assumptions based on Cranfield's work, can be viewed on www.greensuffolk.org/hwmp/felixstowe

4. **Questions and discussions**

A number of questions/comments/decisions were raised:-

- All landowners supported the progression of the project.

- The capital and operation costs of the scheme will need to be covered by revenue over the scheme lifetime. Key principle agreed.
- Agreed that the best business model would be for Water Management Alliance/IDB to act as the managing body. They would become the 'water company' and have ability to take out public sector loan to cover capital investment. Discussions will need to follow about details of decision making re sharing water, rights, obligations, easements....

If anybody has any alternative ideas/proposals for a business model please raise it as soon as possible.

- There will need to be an annual charge to cover years when there is no demand for water.
- EA confirmed that this is additional water and will not affect any existing licences.
- We are currently paying the IDB to remove water but might then be paying to get it back! Will also be paying EA abstraction charges. Needs to be considered when deciding value of water.
- Balance to be considered in terms of size of holding reservoir, costs of pipework and on-farm reservoir capacity. At one extreme could have small holding/balancing reservoir that supplies water via high capacity pumps as it become available to on-farm reservoirs, or a large holding reservoir with separate pipeline to supply water direct to farm when it is required. Preference was for largest possible holding reservoir. Very approx. cost £2-2.5 million.
- Consideration of pumping capacity and pipework size will greatly influence costs. Approx 1/3 cost will be reservoir, 2/3 pump & pipework.
- Use of existing irrigation pipework to move water from holding reservoir to farms will only be possible in winter. It was agreed that there will need to be an additional system to allow movement throughout the year.
- Suggested a main pipeline, owned by the operating company with meters where farms connect to it – similar to Spanish system. Most likely a non-pressurised system (requiring small on-farm balancing reservoirs) but could be pressured for irrigation.
- It may be possible to work alongside the EAOW pipeline to reduce costs of laying pipes – if timing can be compatible. Could reduce costs of crossing roads, etc.
- All agreed that any available water can be made use of (if price is right). Cropping does not make great difference to demand. There is more land available that could benefit from irrigation if water was available. Currently only about 20% of suitable land has irrigation. This could be critical in discussions with potential funders who will be seeking economic growth and business opportunities.
- Would it be possible to pump available water to an alternative catchment to compensate for hands off flow? (eg. to release winter water upstream of the Bucklesham Mill HOF to free up water further up the Bucklesham Mill River?)
- Can water be moved through open channels rather than pipes? Unlikely due to possible saline contamination. IDB is investigating levels in marsh dykes to check feasibility of transporting water from point of discharge to balancing/holding reservoir.
- Would be useful if the system allowed water to flow in both directions to allow better sharing between users.
- Key considerations that will determine precise sizing, siting, etc of holding reservoir will include availability of clay (could also look at alternative supplies such as HS2);

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archaeology (most of the area being considered will have high risk of archaeological finds);
landscape (AONB); ecology (how much fresh water needs to flow into river for bird); etc.

5. Next Steps

With the support of the landowners present it was clear that there was a desire to progress this project as quickly as possible.

Results of flow monitoring will be available in May and associated modelling will be available in June – at which time the various options can be appraised and shared with the group.
JB/TD to convene meeting in June

Other landowners who may be interested include:

Jimmy Taylor

David Parken

Chris Mayhew

Richard Haywood

TD will contact them to ask if they are interested in the project

Landowners who have not already done so need to provide TD with map of on-farm reservoirs and pipework. This will help to inform the options.

Funding is being sought from a range of sources to cover the options appraisal work. If there is a shortfall, landowners may be approached to contribute.

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