

# Suffolk Holistic Water Management Project

[www.greensuffolk.org/hwmp](http://www.greensuffolk.org/hwmp)

Meeting held on Friday 13 May 2016, 0930-1200  
at Burness Parish Rooms, Melton

## MINUTES

### Attended:

Abi Singleton, EA (AS)	Peter Youngs, DEP (PY)
Bruce Kerr (BK)	Rob Wise, NFU (RW)
Chris McArthur, ESRT (CM)	Steff Jones, SCC (SJ)
Giles Bloomfield, IDB (GB)	Steve Moncaster, AW (SM)
Jane Burch, SCC (JB)	Tim Darby, ESWAG (TD)
Johnathan Thompson, EA (JT)	Will Todd, EA (WT)
Katy Anderson, CLA (KA)	Will Akast, EA (WA)
Matt Hullis, SCC (MH)	Will Robinson, ESW (WR)
Paul Bradford, consultant to HWMP & ERST (PB)	

**Apologies:** Bill Parker, CMT; Karen Thomas, IDB; Simon Amstutz, SCC; Paul Hammett, NFU

### 1. Welcome and aims of the meeting

JB welcomed the group and noted apologies. There is a lot of work being undertaken toward this project and the meeting aims to share information, identify any tasks not done and any duplication, and identify 'next steps' particularly regarding funding to progress activities.

### 2. UK Water Partnership - Sustainable Food, Farming and Water Workshop

PB reported back on the NERC-sponsored event which took place 10<sup>th</sup> March. BK was the main contributor to [a film covering the Felixstowe Peninsular project](#) which was shown at the opening of the event as an example and promotion of co-operation between various parties and a forward thinking project. There were 120 delegates including TD, and PB who delivered a breakout session on the Felixstowe Peninsula scheme. Recommendations included: the importance of partnerships; the importance of sub-catchment partnerships; lack of research and evidence on schemes; managed aquifer recharge, easier access to funding, water markets and trading; and public understanding. No concrete options for funding to support these recommendations were outlined and it was felt that agricultural representation / levels of understanding about agricultural water demand were not high. The Workshop Report can be accessed [HERE](#).

### 3. Updates from sub-groups

#### a. Felixstowe Peninsula

GB reported that there is now one year's worth of flow data from the Kingsfleet pump and almost a year from Falkenham. Initial indications suggest there is plenty of water available but EA modelling work will need to be completed before a decision to proceed to the next stage of the project can be made. Conductivity sensor data have raised some concerns about levels of salinity around the Falkenham pump, possibly resulting from connecting with surge tide picking up saline water. The aim is to intersect non-saline water. GB recommends investing further in salinity testing at different point before proceeding. He advised need for £20-25k to collect additional data from the area over next three months. JT agrees this work needs to be progressed, and if this and flow modelling is

acceptable the EA should be able to report to the Project its findings. A decision can then be made whether to proceed.

Action – GB to proceed with salinity testing. JB to confirm funding  
- JT proceed with flow modelling and report ASAP

TD reported further data is being gathered on demand and timing of demand, pipework, etc. Meetings took place with landowners in February and all remain on-board with the project and are keen to progress. Some additional landowners are yet to be contacted. The siting and size of a reservoir and pumps have been discussed and landowners are very co-operative. Discussions about how best to move water around a network are proceeding as are discussions on possible governance and financing models for the shared reservoir/pipework.

There seems to be no existing model for joint public and private sector governance in the UK. PB highlights that there are some good case studies from South Africa and Spain and there are existing shared reservoir models in Suffolk that can be utilised. The concept of the IDB being the lead authority was met favourably by landowners. The IDB has existing mixed public / private membership and thus accountability, and can provide a mechanism for financing the capital through public sector loans. The group agrees this is how we will aim to proceed.

JB confirmed the East Anglia One cable goes across the area. If HWMP work coincides/can be timed correctly there is the possibility to utilise their trenches to install pipework. No adverse impacts have been highlighted for either party. It is possible to work under the cable in future.

MH has identified a European Green Investment Bank opportunity whereby a pitch could be made to investors looking for environmental and long-term economic benefits in order to gain funding and technical support to undertake the work now needed to proceed as well as the capital investment.

JT and GB have liaised with Natural England regarding bird surveying and are likely to engage a bird expert to confirm surveying outcomes, indicate sensitivity and to identify a potential reservoir location that could deliver environmental gain.

RW reports that NFU have received feedback from Defra officials regarding reservoirs as a flood risk management tool and the potential for funding to support in the future. Something to keep an eye on and pursue in due course.

Regarding drought, GB notes that there is a lot of focus on flooding but not on drought. SM highlights that Anglian Water are focusing on drought and a document 'Guiding Principles for producing a Water Resources Management Plan' will soon be released, and although not a statutory requirement will encourage broader work around resilience to drought, long term planning and partnership working.

BK reports that most local sites are unlikely to have clay for the reservoir construction, but that a potential source has been identified. GB and IDB can provide guidance regarding waste licences needed to store suitable material.

#### **b. Debenham Flood Risk Management Project**

WT provided some background to the EA work on the Debenham flood risk management project. In Spring 2015 a meeting was held in the village to highlight to landowners the benefits of natural flood risk management, not only to deliver flood risk benefits but also wider environmental benefits e.g. reducing phosphates and silt, as well as creating new wetland habitats. This resulted in some landowners identifying where small storage features could go, and hydraulic modelling was undertaken to quantify benefits for Debenham village. The modelling showed positive results for the village. However, these alone only provide benefit in the smaller, more frequent flood events. Therefore larger scale storage features on the three main tributaries, and the creation of a downstream two-stage channel, have also been investigated. Whilst the technical case is good for

larger storage features, construction costs are very high and unlikely to attract sufficient grant in aid to be deliverable without significant local contributions.

The outline business case is currently being progressed and a hybrid option is likely to be pursued (involving a mix of interventions including improvements to the flood warning service and natural flood management features). A public consultation is being planned for end of July. As a result of natural flood management measures being included in the outline business case, individual elements could be delivered by partners in advance of the wider project and still contribute to the wider business case benefits.

The group discussed Grant in Aid processes which are defined and focussed on flood risk management and WFD outcomes, and do not account for wider considerations including water flow, amenity features and water use in upper catchment. There seems to be a lack of appreciation for the group's holistic approach to water as a resource. GB highlights there are some funding streams available for activities delivering wider benefits e.g. North Suffolk and Norfolk Broadland work with the Broadland Catchment Partnership. For individual farms flood risk benefits don't stack up but working in collaboration can increase potential benefits.

**Action – GB to share learning about these approaches.**

CM/WT/JB taking forward further discussions with landowners re the natural flood management features and maintenance and upkeep agreements. The Rivers Trust may be willing to take on this responsibility. Other ways to overcome these issues include transferring powers between flood risk management organisations using public sector co-operation agreements.

PY reports on the newly formed Sand Lands Facilitation Group. The group is involving all landowners on the Bawdsey peninsula who have now funded the employment of a project officer to facilitate grants for environmental schemes. This could be seen as a pilot and learning and resources could be shared for Debenham. WT and WA report a facilitation group will hopefully be established in the upper catchment next year and this may help lead the way for Debenham. Exemplars are needed to attract funding.

### **c) Mid-river restoration/ WFD works**

CM and WA report on a successful example of partnership working with the Catchment Partnership for East Suffolk. A project officer was employed over 9 months including working on river restoration and in-river woody debris. The project was successful, gained funding from EA and learning was gained.

JB highlighted the need to raise the profile locally of such good work and educate landowners – particularly changing mindset away from dredging watercourses as a way to maintain flows.

**Action – SJ to map HWMP work.**

CM reports that the ESCP has 12 projects bidding for funding from the EA, including projects in the upper and lower Deben. A decision is to come soon from EA. This will contribute to the NFM features upstream of Debenham if successful.

At Ufford CM/WA developing ideas to improve WFD status, building on work already undertaken by the landowner. Aims to trial lowering the Sink Farm sluice to see how the river responds. If this is successful then fish passage can be improved. GB raises issue of nearby abstraction point – this will be taken into account.

Further down at the twin bridges further work is being considered by the IDB to improve flows and fish passage. A gravel riffle may be needed

**Action –Re-convene Ufford sub-group. SJ to fix meeting.**

GB raises re-connecting river with flood plain and the deliberate flooding of land by reducing river width and lowering banks – both as flood management and also to improve water getting into the aquifer. Agreed that aquifer recharge downstream of Wickham Market likely to deliver significant benefit to water supplies – but would need to be monitored to quantify effectiveness. The group discussed that it would be good to pursue this idea (aquifer recharge was one of the original aims of the group but parked as too difficult).

PB notes that landowners are hesitant as wanting financial compensation for loss of economic activity. RW suggests working this up into a case study to take to Defra and feed-back the difficulties of delivering Countryside Stewardship Schemes (CSS). KA notes that a CSS option exists to re-connect rivers with floodplains. SM is conceptually interested in discussions around this, particularly benefits to public water supply. BK raised concerns about water backing up and the need for this to be modelled.

**Action – Convene a sub-group meeting to explore this option. SJ to fix meeting.**

#### **d) License trading and reform**

The group discussed abstraction license reform which is driven nationally by Defra – focussing initially on achieving sustainable water use prior to further focus on trading. It is hoped that the reform will eventually improve opportunities for trading but it is felt that the direction of national reform may not take account of regional differences (e.g. drought conditions here vs abundant water in north).

JT notes that the EA has written to licence holders inviting unused licence volume to be revoked – with some success to date.

WR notes that unused water company licences are being revoked to ensure regional differences are accounted for. WR to keep HWMP group updated on situation and also to feed-back any feedback from the group about the reform.

SM reports that Anglian Water are also having licenses scrutinised and are pursuing more collaborative approach to share best practise.

**Action - WR to keep HWMP group updated on license reform situation**

#### **f) Reservoir planning and consents group**

JB reported that since the last meeting progress has been made with the archaeological service. Although the area has been identified as archeologically high risk it is beneficial to have this information upfront.

PB reported that in East Suffolk, consents for reservoirs (under Permitted Development) were now being issued subject to archaeological surveys being carried out before construction rather than requiring the survey before consent was issued. This is a big improvement and very helpful for developers.

NFU submitted a consultation response to the Rural Planning Association on the Rural Planning Review (embedded here) with strong recommendations re reservoirs.



NFU consultation  
response to the Rural

**Action - Any difficulties experienced regarding reservoir creation and consents please report to MH**

PB suggests using NFU's work as a basis for guidance for district and borough councils and for a sub-group to re-engage on this matter.

**Action – JB to share this information with planners.**

The conditions for Defra reservoir grants continue to cause concern. Grants are only given on the basis of creating water savings but RW believed there is some progress on changing this.

#### 4. Water Resources East Anglia and links to this project

SM provided an update on progress.

Mott Macdonald and Atkins have been procured to undertake technical work including water resources, aquifer storage, hydro-ecology, agriculture and decision-making support. These will feed into a simulator.

The project will then run for ~18 month. The 'Leadership Group' is due to meet 23<sup>rd</sup> May to carry out a scoping exercise. An initial vulnerability assessment (looking at things like drought and natural variability) is expected January 2017. A draft strategy for the region is expected May 2017 with a full strategy to follow in September 2017.

The simulator is at a very strategic level and the challenge will be connecting this work with the smaller scale local catchment activities. The technical report contains six case studies from different organisations utilising opportunities for collaborative working from the strategic level to catchment level in order to balance environmental and economic needs. One case study details Hydroecology work on the Black Sluice which might be template for work on the Mill River.

Anglian Water welcome project proposals for scoping work around reliability of flows for which there is funding available.

Lot 5 (Stakeholder Management) also has funding available for stakeholder engagement work. Jerry Knox, Cranfield working with ESWAG case study.

**Action – SM to share technical report and look for opportunities for WREA/HWMP projects to work closely together.**

#### 5. Project funding and research

MH provided an update on funding to progress the project.

There has been a hiatus on EU funding; now LEADER and LEP funding are upcoming. Funding for feasibility work is needed to progress the Felixstowe peninsula project. This is challenging because uncertainty is involved and funding streams are not well-suited. If the project does go ahead it will be an easier task to attract the capital needed.

£100k of LEADER funding is available (must be 60% matched) and can be a public applicant. The new draft of funding guidance has a targeted element specifically around reservoir construction. Although the priority is around water savings and efficiency, and although there are some exclusions (such as the criteria for good ecological status which would exclude many areas) it is felt that a submission could be worded to meet the criteria, for example to decrease the likelihood of further deterioration from abstraction.

AS has kindly agreed to lead on establishing a small funding sub-group focussing on the Felixstowe peninsula.

The Green Investment Bank (also discussed in 3a) is an opportunity to attract funding and international professional expertise. Funding is available for projects over £1m. There can be a mix of loan and grant support, depending on the decision of the investors.

**Action – a sub-group to develop an expression of interest (potentially SM, MH, AS, Karen Thomas and Paul Mackie). SJ to fix meeting.**

AS highlights the Corporate Social Regulation that is in place and aims to investigate the possibility of attracting small amounts of funding to get things going, for example by working with the Co-op who engages with farmers. AS also reports that a new 'Plan for Water' is being established.

WR notes that there is potential funding to support JT and GB's bird survey work discussed in 3a.

TD highlights the potential for future investigatory work to be undertaken by ESWAG and Cranfield University.

## 6. Priorities and timelines for next stages

Next steps were discussed throughout the meeting. Timelines for next stages are dependent on the availability of funding.

## 7. Communications and wider engagement

Opportunities to promote this work were identified: potential to hold the Anglian Water Summit in Suffolk; ESWAG July event; the Integrated Waster Resource Management conferences; notifying the Farming and Water Advisory Group.

Action – All to notify JB of any opportunities to promote HWMP work

Action – All to double-check their mailing lists are up to date

Action – SJ to invite updates from HWMP members every 3 months to be compiled into a newsletter to be circulated

## 8. Project Topsoil

PB updated the group about two Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust projects. One project is with Essex and Suffolk Water and is a £90k project over three years at the Abberton reservoir. The second is a £90k managed aquifer recharge project over three years in the East Suffolk Crag and is directly related to the aims of the HWMP. It is a costly process to build reservoirs so using natural aquifers should reduce costs and land use. The soil column can be used as a means of cleaning and storing water. This has been trialled elsewhere but not in Suffolk Crag. The project is a desk scoping study to identify locations from Felixstowe to Walberswick and to investigate injecting, removing and cleaning the water. The aim is then to identify a suitable pilot site by 2017 to undertake a small field-scale trial, use a temporary license to inject water and attempt abstracting in summer 2017. In addition to the £60k secured an additional £30k is required.

<b>Actions</b>	
Item reference	Action
3a) Felixstowe Peninsula	GB to proceed with salinity testing. JB to confirm funding JT proceed with flow modelling and report asap.
3b) Debenham	GB to share learning about Norfolk slow the flow and other collaborative approaches
3c) Mid-river restoration/ WFD works	SJ to map HWMP work  Re-convene sub-group.
3d) Debenham Flood Project and associated work with landowners	Convene a sub-group meeting to explore / see if possible to pursue
3e) License trading and reform	WR to keep HWMP group updated on license reform situation
3f) Reservoir planning and consents group	Any difficulties experienced regarding reservoir creation and consents please report to MH

4. Water Resources East Anglia and links to this project	SM to share WREA technical report
5. Project funding and research	Convene a sub-group to develop an expression of interest
7. Communications and wider engagement	All to notify JB of any opportunities to promote HWMP work  All to double-check their mailing lists are up to date  SJ to invite updates from HWMP members every 3 months to be compiled into a newsletter to be circulated