

<h1>Meeting Notes</h1>		Meeting: Water Environment Governance Group	
Attendees: Richard Powell (Chair), David Alborough, Barry Bendall, Graham Dale, Clare Deasy, Laura Kennedy, Melissa Lockwood, Mike Madine, Stephen Thompson, Kim Wallis		Date: 17/12/20	Location: MS Teams
Apologies: None		Distribution: Attendees and Apologies	
Note: A full set of documents is available in the Water Environment Governance Group Teams Site			
No.	Agenda Item and Notes		
1	<p>Introductions</p> <p>RP welcomed attendees to the meeting. It was shared that Natalie LeBrun has left the group as she has begun a new role with the RSPB. Natalie is helping to find another representative from Blueprint for Water.</p>		
2	<p>Review of Actions</p> <p>There were two actions from the previous meeting for review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the Water Environment MS Teams area – all to contact the team if any assistance in accessing the site. • NWG meeting with Anglian Water – KW to continue to meet with Anglian in line with ongoing liaison activities, with an additional strategic meeting to be arranged at an appropriate point in the New Year. The group were happy with this approach. 		
3	<p>Progress Update</p> <p>CD led a progress update for the project – see also presentation pack in the MS Teams area.</p> <p><u>Mapping portal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mapping portal has now been launched to partners and shared as part of stakeholder communications. <p><u>Catchment workshops</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five workshops have been held in the NW region. A recording of the Tees meeting is available on request. • Three workshops are planned for the ESW region – Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. • A short survey for feedback on the approach is being circulated following the workshops. 		

- The workshops for ESW will include awareness raising of NWG Water Resources and Catchment Team activities, to provide a wider view of AMP7 catchment work being undertaken.
- A high-level summary of the discussions at the workshop can be shared, along with the outputs of the survey, in January.
ACTION: CD to include Catchment Partnership workshop feedback in the January Presentation Pack
- Willingness of partners to share pipeline projects was discussed. The project was received well, however not many have yet shared information following the workshops. The potential impact of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the link to this approach was discussed.

Customer communications and engagement

- The survey shared via social media had a relatively small response.
- Some opportunities have been identified, with around 40 now mapped and some others expected from the Explain surveys, but this was not the volume that was hoped for. Discussions around the reasons for this have taken place to inform future activities.

Customer research

- Outputs from over 500 of the planned 800 surveys have been received so far and further opportunities have been identified as a result of this.
- The proposed locations for focus groups were shared – a total of nine focus groups will be held. CD shared the reasoning behind the current list of proposed locations and welcomed feedback on this. Discussion points included:
 - Many of the proposed locations are in areas where we already have projects and relatively good levels of engagement. Do we want to use this opportunity to reach out to areas where we don't have such a strong existing presence? This would enable a wider customer spectrum to be reached. This was supported by the group, with the suggestion that the Ouseburn could be replaced with a different area due to overlap with the EA Citizen Jury planned for the Ouseburn in January.
 - Great Yarmouth was queried and it was suggested to remove this from the list as the area is often covered by other customer research. This would make the list the required length (9 groups, split 6 NW and 3 ESW).
- Further input and suggestions were welcomed via email however the list needs to be confirmed by the 18th December.

Candidate project template

- Changes have been made to the template following feedback received, including the addition of a GIS map of the accessible water environment and changes to the indicators and justification tables and recognition of potential negative environmental impacts.

Progress update

- NW – 162 longlist projects, 63 assessed projects
- ESW – 23 longlist projects, 16 assessed projects
- The scorecard has been expanded to include funding information as suggested by previous feedback

4	<p>Principles of Water Environment Improvements</p> <p>An updated version of the principles document has been circulated to the group, including with a coversheet for document control as ongoing changes are expected.</p> <p>Points to be finalised include the regional / catchment approach and project prioritisation method, along with the required level of NWG support.</p> <p>The group congratulated the Team on capturing the principles so far in this document.</p> <p>Feedback on the principles document included the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of categories that the above and beyond element of projects need to meet was discussed – GD queried whether projects should meet two categories as above and beyond, or can one of the categories be from existing baseline NWG commitments? CD and RP clarified that the initial thinking behind the project and the approach as it was presented to Ofwat was that it would be one extra category as above and beyond, allowing the multiple benefits approach for exiting projects in the plan, and building on baseline improvements to deliver additional value for customers. • It was queried how the benefits from above and beyond activity were illustrated or whether it was total benefit shown, as we need to be careful that benefits aren't claimed that wouldn't have been delivered anyway (e.g. through WINEP). CD clarified that benefits shown are total, and it would be complex to split the benefits down in the indicators table. ML how projects could demonstrate they are different from what would be done already; CD explained that Water Environment Improvements is a new measure relating to accessible water environment, and only accessible areas are eligible for recording of improvements. • Branch Out was discussed, showing that there is both a core, above and beyond element to this scheme, as two strands are associated with WINEP (INNS and Priority Habitats). • There was discussion around the need for outputs and outcomes to be measured to assess impact and inform future projects. Should expected and delivered outputs and outcomes be included in the document? MM stressed that the approach cannot be dependent on measuring outcomes; the project is taking an outputs approach in delivering improvements to the wider water environment, and the timescales and ODI and financial constraints do not allow for monitoring of outcomes. • RP noted that as the project is in its early stages, it is important to move forward with schemes and enhance the principles with time and experience. • The potential requirement for third-party assurance was raised and is to be picked up at a future date. • The group discussed its view of a potential conflict with ensuring the NWG can adapt and embed the approach within its plans, with ensuring that the ODI can be robust and beneficial for customers in such a way that Ofwat agree it should be taken up by all water and wastewater companies. • BB has additional comments on the principles which he will email to CD. <p>ACTION: BB to share principles feedback with CD</p>
5	<p>Year 1 Projects for Formal Approval</p> <p>RP steered discussion on projects for approval. It was noted that the comments received have already been included in review and the candidate project forms have been updated accordingly.</p>

	<p><u>Kielder</u> The reward to be reinvested value was queried – the team will update the table with the correct value and also add text that clarifies that only 2km of the Kielder project contributes to reward due to the 10km performance commitment for Year 1. ACTION: Water Environment team to update Kielder reward table and text.</p> <p>It was suggested that there could be work done by other groups (such as the NWG Environment Strategy Group) to review the full picture of the impact of this approach and others across the business. This discussion will be returned to in future meetings.</p> <p>An approach to making customers aware of improvements carried out in their area was also discussed – it was suggested this could be through an annual report of delivered projects.</p> <p>DECISION: The group formally approved Kielder – Year 1 as a water environment project.</p> <p><u>Carlton Marshes</u> After discussion, the group accepted the changes to the updated form and justification for the project.</p> <p>DECISION: The group formally approved Carlton Marshes as a water environment project.</p>
6	<p>Evidence for Sign Off</p> <p>Due to time constraints in the meeting, the proposed sign off documents will be circulated by email to the WEGG for comment.</p>
7	<p>Candidate Projects for Discussion</p> <p><u>Whitelee Moor</u> ST queried which length to measure for the project, which is an upland peat restoration project. The group supported using the length of footpath.</p> <p><u>Blue Carbon</u> Project focuses around establishing oyster reefs, kelp forests and sea grass. These would be offshore habitat improvements for water quality and biodiversity, but alongside accessible beach environments. Blue Carbon itself is a project is at an early stage and is seeking match funding from NWG. The team queried whether this would be an eligible project – whilst the group felt this would be a good project, some felt it was not a good fit with the current ODI project, and others raised concerns around its complexity. The suggestion was to focus on clear principles for the project which would allow it to be developed and communicated.</p> <p><u>ESW project queries</u> Due to time constraints in the meeting, these queries will be circulated by email to the WEGG for comment.</p>

	<p>ACTION: KW to circulate for documents for comments via email.</p> <p>BB remained in the meeting and provided comments on the call:</p> <p><u>Waveney Valley</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KW shared details of the proposed project – query is around eligibility of scheme. • Could access to the waterway count? (not just footpaths – a canoe trail in the Waveney itself). • BB – in principle, could count access beyond paths but need to consider detail of length that can be claimed. Assess how far up/down the river people would use, measure between entrance and exit points? Access should be free and available to all. • RP – agreed with the above points, an opportunity worth exploring. <p><u>Bocking Mill</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of Essex Fish Migration Roadmap – larger strategic project but primarily biodiversity improvements. • Request for £12k match funding to remove barriers to fish migration. Aim to deliver project in March 2021. • BB – all objectives equally weighted, doesn’t have to be all around access. However, need to ensure two categories are met. If so, then supportive of proposal. Discussion around length of footpath that can be claimed to be associated with fish pass – needs to be clarified. • RP – supportive of proposal, need to ensure benefits across categories. This is a project that may not happen otherwise, so good for scheme, and there is a need to invest to be able to re-invest. • There was discussion around whether footpaths need to be the measure – however improvements must be accessible to customers to count because of the new measure linked to accessible water environment, not just customer benefits. • ACTION: Water Environment Team to develop accessible water environment beyond paths approach further and bring back to WEGG for discussion. <p><u>Oulton Broad</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Trust proposal to create two new scrapes (£20K requested) • Carlton Marshes is adjacent to Oulton Marshes – is this too close or will this be suitable to build upon work in the area? • BB – would this come out as a priority when looking at longlist of projects? Possibly not. • PR – encourage project to be directed towards Branch Out instead. Doesn’t feel a good fit for the Water Environment Improvements project. • Agreed to seek feedback from others as suggested.
8	<p>WEGG Membership</p> <p>Not discussed at this meeting</p>

Make our meeting effective



9	AOB None raised due to time constraints
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