Dorset Strategy Group Meeting

Minutes of Meeting  
26th September 2016  
Brooklands Farm, Forston, Dorchester.

Name                  Initial  Representing
Ruth Barden           RB       Wessex Water
Fiona Bowles          FB       Chair Dorset Catchment Partnerships
Jo Diamond            JD       Environment Agency
Ben Rayner            BR       Environment Agency
Andrew Pollard        AP       Dorset Wildlife Trust
Jon Bass              JB       Wessex Chalk Streams & Rivers Trust
Nicola Hopkins        NH       Catchment Coordinator
Lorraine Isgar        LI       Catchment Strategy Technician

Apologies; Bruce Stockley, Ian Rees, Tom Munro, Ken Buchan, Scott West, Paul Cottington

1. Apologies, minutes and actions from the last meeting.

Summary table

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<td>Action AP and TM</td>
<td>to progress the WDR&amp;CS steering group</td>
<td>Agenda item</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action NH</td>
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<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
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**Action; brief for West Dorset Rovers and Coastal Streams. See point 4**

AP and IR met to discuss. Key partners would be DWT, AONB, FWAGSW, EA and NE. There is a plan for the development of a new Landscape Partnership project focussing on the Marshwood Vale and Brit Valley. The suggestion of a pilot area around the Fleet (TRAC) was discounted. Other partners that should be part of the development of the new partnership approach were discussed; important to include the Dorset Coast Forum, National Trust, the Bridport local food group and parish council representatives; the involvement of parishes would be needed once a strategic direction/steer was agreed because they would be key delivery partners.

**Action AP and TM; to progress the WDR&CS steering group**

**Action RB; Table for funding opportunities was circulated to the group.**

**Action all; All to send in table with their grant timetables to NH/RB? For completion by Friday 7th October.**

Other actions arising from the last meeting were on the agenda.

### 2. Wessex Diffuse Pollution Reduction ‘Ways of Working’ JD

Since its inception the WDPR plan has now transferred responsibility from Giles Bryan to Judith Crompton within the EA. During 2016 there has been a review of the governance and structure of the plans objectives and it has now become a ‘ways of working’ document. A steering group is currently convened by the EA. The aim is to develop integrated projects at catchment (local) scale with support from the Catchment Partnerships. The proposal is now:

- to promote local ownership of the ways of working ie the Catchment Partnerships (CP) coordinating delivery
- EA setting the targets in terms of WQ standards.

There are/is a task and finish group discussing aspects of the reduction of diffuse pollution targets. Each CP will be represented on the WDPRSG by the catchment project officer and the EA coordinators will attend on a rolling programme.

Role of the CP is to provide an understanding of; what is currently being delivered locally identification of priorities; delivery of multiple benefits and project development. In addition, as part of the closer working relationship between the Defra bodies there will also be the creation of a Defra 1 team (EA, NE, Defra)

Discussion points raised;

The involvement of the CPs will promote projects that deliver diffuse pollution reductions with multiple benefits. There is some discussion required of how the targets would be decided, the EA is developing new KPIs for improvements delivered under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) moving away from reporting element improvements that are set at a national level to kilometres of rivers improved. Targets are still a work in progress. Question of how the CPs can measure improvements or how they would like to see them measured. Could this include changes in land use? Number of buffer strips? Adviser visits? Hectares of reversion? There is a need for the various land management advisers to know what it is that land managers are being asked to do and whether, if the change was not achieved, if it would result in a Water Protection Zone (WPZ)

All CPs are in different places in terms of their position and progress. There is new work on agricultural engagement in the Somerset Level and Moors with plans for a new farmer led group where there is a combined effect of working on diffuse pollution (DP) and flood management, as well as showing the improvement to farming productivity and efficiency. Their farmer group has a task arising from each meeting e.g. signing up to the maize charter.

It is important to ensure that there is efficient use of government money to deliver multiple benefits without watering down the message. New report shows that the investment in the reduction of diffuse pollution through measures or grants is resulting in between 7 – 10 % benefits but this does not include any measurement of voluntary measures, those delivered outside grants. Nitrate Vulnerable Zones are estimated to provide a 10%
impact on reductions. From the agricultural perspective it is not known what the picture is and it is needed to allow the message of targets to gain traction. There was some doubt over whether the CPs have the expertise and resources to define the targets or monitor where the catchment is with reductions in DP.

**Action NH; to circulate the agenda and minutes of the Diffuse Pollution Meeting to the Strategy and Delivery Groups.**

**Action JD; to circulate the draft Governance Structure to the Dorset Strategy Group**

### 3. Dorset Mapping Tool

The Mapping tool proposal has been discussed by PHCI and in outline with the SCI. Feedback received from the delivery groups is that the mapping should enhance the selection of the priority areas for delivering measures which will provide multiple benefits in the catchments. There are already established mapping systems that the partners are using. E.g. nature on the map, Dorset explorer and in house systems (WW, EA, NT etc), so there are decisions to be made to optimise compatibility. The full process in the Bristol Avon (using the Westcountry River Trust methodology) brought together information from a variety of sources using a working group to agree outcomes.

There are currently several funded projects for mapping in the Wessex catchments; the Natural Flood Management mapping (EA) is currently waiting for national guidance on mapping. Current projects include: WRT/WCRT mapping on the Stour; Bournemouth water mapping on metaldehyde risk; DCC flood risk. There is a CaBA package of information layers available to partners for each catchment, plus locally developed layers. Previous mapping on the PH catchment included Biodiversity opportunity mapping and there are new national layers for sediment risk mapping. Options for consideration include;

- Development of layers for partner’s use
- Development of a GIS set
- Provision of maps (printed)
- Analysis of the layers to develop opportunity mapping report

The project was originally conceived as an in-house one but given the interest a contractor may be required to deliver the project.

**Discussion points raised.**

Any mapping package should allow the identification of the areas where maximum benefit can be achieved. There is a need for the right question to be posed; what the mapping needs to achieve? For example; Where would you need to place measures for NFM? What are the keys areas for the reduction of sediment transport to rivers? What areas are prioritised for achievement of WFD? Where can the most be achieved for least cash? The benefit of mapping allows a range of strategic partners to see where the benefit is to their organisation and so encourage a funding stream with recognised outcomes. They could integrate the knowledge about expiring agri-environment agreements to promote schemes for example pollinators, after expiry of agreements. Need to ask advisers what knowledge is needed prior to advising land managers. A contractor could use the existing data to provide a technically valid desk based first stage. This would contribute to prioritisation and the production of aligned projects? The Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is producing a county wide ecological network map in partnership with the Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC). It was agreed that partners would find it useful to have a ‘Catchment Issues’ layer/s developed for use with their in house systems and for the prioritisation of action plans and projects both within and between catchments in Dorset. Technical standards should be developed and agreed with partners. Members of the T&F group were proposed.

**Action NH; organise a mapping task and finish group meeting date in October**

**Action NH; Find out from local advisers what information they need on a mapping tool**

**Action FB; update mapping brief with clear specification for the T&F group**

### 4. West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams (TM)
A project brief for the WDR&CS will be provided by Ian Rees; DWT and AONB will discuss focus areas and a wider brief. TM confirmed that IR will have the capacity to deliver this. This will use the £15k contribution from the Catchment Partnership Fund to utilise existing capacity.

**Action IR; circulate project 2 pager for the WDR&CS**

### 5. Projects updates and discussion

**European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF);** The government has guaranteed funding where EU fund applications have been submitted prior to the autumn statement. The sustainability team strands include promotion of the low carbon economy and aim to; stimulate the market and increase demand and new markets. Priorities include the community energy support and public sector leadership (demonstration projects). The biomass sector, strengthening supply chains and technical support and renewable energy. Funding allocation is for 60% match funding and 40% ESIF.

Discussion; is there a role for CPs in screening applications to ensure holistic catchment benefits? A there will be a project officer looking at the applications and there is a draft of an ESIF handbook produced by IR.

**Action IR to circulate draft ESIF handbook**

**AONB, National Grid and Ofgen;** Powerline project provides a grant fund with 2 elements: the landscape enhancement and the major project undergrounding powerlines. (Corton to Winterbourne Abbas) Biodiversity opportunity map has been developed for the Weymouth- Ask- Charminster area and Bincombe and NW of Weymouth. West Dorset area is identified as a priority. The application for the first tranche of bids will be looking for a common theme and see what opportunities there are for biodiversity benefits. There are tenuous links between the Ofgen objectives and water quality or rivers but there would seem to be opportunities for multiple benefits to be achieved through land use change.

**Action; TM to circulate link to application site**

**Fisheries Improvement Programme.**

The first tranche priority was for in-channel work and the second for projects or plan development. It is thought that because of the short timescale that the deadline for completion of projects submitted under tranche 2 could be being extended to beyond this FY.

**Projects**

Tranche 1; WRT and FP&WDRA. Barrier to fish migration river Hooke and a weir warden. Funding decision made by EA local teams

Tranche 2; There have been 3 projects submitted for this funding including one by the RSPB for work on swims at Radipole Lake. A second involves engagement with the landowners in the Mannington Brook and Upper Stour on fish passage and the third is on the river Allen to develop fisheries improvement plans, it is hoped that if a plan is developed landowners would seek funding to complete the work required. Funding decision made by EA national teams.

**Catchment Fisheries plan**

Funding of £1800 was provided through the underspend on the Redd counts in 2016 at 60% with match. SW will be chairing the project group and using GIS to map data and review the Salmon Action Plan. There is no funding for delivery. The Fisheries group would feed into the PH Strategy group and the next steps are;

- the meeting of the group in October
- the identification of the wider consultees and stakeholders that may be able to fill gaps in data.
- increasing the representation of course fisheries
- Source funding for phase 2

The spread of representation in Dorset was recognised to be narrow with an over representation of Salmonid interests and a lack of course fishing and wider angling interests
**Interreg sediment project.** The French partners have been identified and the deadline for the submission of the application is 12th October which will be challenging. The focus of the bid will be the impact of sediment on the marine and estuarine environments.

**Saltmarsh recreation project, Borough of Poole.** There has been a halt to plans because the MMO has indicated that the dredging that were planned to be used were considered waste and so could not be used in this project. There was some concern expressed that there would be a substantial amount of nitrate (as well as other contaminants) in the sediment and the project would result in resuspension of these.

**WFD TRAC funding.** Ring fenced fund to fund research into the changes required to improve the status of the estuarine habitat. One submission from Dorset and this failed to secure funding.

**Action BR:** to find out if the Trac funding was one off for 2016 or will become available each year.

JD reported that the EA propose that EA funding streams will be aligned to become a single fund. EA funding programmes will include a project development and prioritisation process based on strategic targets that deliver the catchment action plans. This will ideally have a five-year business case, although the projects within it may still be approved on a yearly basis. Catchments are currently bidding for either very big (Interreg) or smaller projects which covers partners’ day to day delivery. There are not really any projects in between to pick up the bulk of the catchment actions. The EA funds will require other contributions as match funding.

Both PH and Stour CPs need to develop a series of bids for programmes of work which will deliver catchment actions for 2017/18 and beyond. These can be used to bid for funding by the EA, Wessex Water (business plan) and other grant streams. There needs to be a clear vision of what is needed to be achieved in the short (12months) medium (3 years) or longer term (10 years). For example, a programme for the reduction of diffuse pollution with projects that deliver the measures should be packaged as a series of 1 year projects. EA need to be confident that they can make a business case for the funds from DEFRA. PC provided an example of this being achieved through a workshop with c50 stakeholders. However, the mapping project would provide evidence for prioritisation of locations and multiple benefits.

The EA are reviewing the existing project mandate forms and will provide one for CPs to submit project bids. Bids for 2017/18 are needed shortly. FB asked that the Win project which is at a waterbody scale could be funded from this year’s funding.

**Action BR:** discuss with Jake Dew re the funding of the Win project
**Action all:** RB requested proposals for work by Wessex Water for the next Business plan.
**Action PC:** to circulate the East Devon project development list

DONM 8th December

Footnote- SCI delivery group has identified a series of priority projects to develop bids for EA to trial the proposed process (29/09/2016)