**Minutes from Tyne Catchment Partnership Meeting**

**26th February 2016**

**Rainton Meadows, Durham Wildlife Trust**

**Present**

Graeme Hull (EA), Emma Craig (Northumberland Wildlife Trust), Michelle Hogg (South Tyneside Council), Tony Baines & Clare Deasy (NWL), Lynne Dunleavy Lynne Dunleavey (Regional Flood Coastal Committee), Hugh Clear-Hill (Northumberland County Council), Lucy Mo (EA), Peter Shield (Gateshead Council), Jim Cokhill (Durham Wildlife Trust), Susan Mackirdy (Tyne Rivers Trust), Abi Mansley (Tyne Catchment Co-ordinator)

**Apologies**

Lindsay Bramwell (Newcastle City Council), Derek Hilton-Brown (Newcastle City Council), Sarah Tooze (North Pennines AONB Partnership), Hugh Clear-Hill (Northumberland County Council), Andrew Miller (Northumberland National Park Authority), Peter Bell & Clare Ross (Gateshead Council), Steve Lowe (Northumberland Wildlife Trust), Clare Jewson & Andrew Berwick (Sunderland Council), Monique Speksnyder (Natural England)

**Welcome and introductions**

And thanks to Durham Wildlife Trust for hosting the meeting.

**News items from the Environment Agency**

Graeme Hull’s presentations are circulated with the minutes.

1. Highways England (formerly Highways Agency) Fund - the budget that is allocated to environment schemes. This relates to the strategic road network and in the Tyne includes the A1, the A19 and the A69. The 5 year investment strategy (to 2020) was produced last year and identifies some ring-fenced investment funds, on existing routes. Highways England are asking for ideas to build into a programme of projects by April 2017. One of the fund strands includes ‘environment’ and links to flooding, impact on biodiversity, habitat, SUDS etc. The detail is in the biodiversity action plan (see especially outcome 4 in the link below). A particular target is grasslands (verges) and pollinators but the target exceeds the area of land that they manage. The request for project ideas has to date included the wildlife trust and (through Defra) the EA and possibly Natural England. The regional EA team submitted a list of ideas which the EA National Team short-listed, which is then being co-ordinated through Defra (14 of the 40 shortlisted schemes are in the NE). One idea included the Ouseburn. There is something between £2million and £10million enhancements in the north-east. **All please consider the list that Graeme circulated and consider adding detail to the ideas or put forward further ideas** and be ready to provide further evidence if required. Action **Graeme** to invite a representative to a future partnership meeting.

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/441300/N150146\_-\_Highways\_England\_Biodiversity\_Plan3lo.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441300/N150146_-_Highways_England_Biodiversity_Plan3lo.pdf)

1. Medium Term Plan Process - (and WFD grant in aid). An announcement is anticipated in March. The message is that partners should continue to prepare project bids and look for partnership projects where possible. A prioritisation process has been done by the EA ranking projects in order a) where needed to match flood risk b) flood risk and WFD c) issues around no protection, protected sites, HLF (which includes Land of Oak and Iron), d) ranked projects up to £400k and finally e) a category where projects are unlikely to be affordable (circulated at the meeting). This list had been reviewed by the WFD Liaison Panel. Note, not appearing on the list is also funding to address issues relating to the mines / minewaters (diffuse metals) in the S Tyne, however this is a separate strand to the WFD grant in aid. Tony Baines asked for an overview of all the investment projects in the region. Action **Graeme Hull.**
2. Supplying evidence to the EA investigations team: in the past this process has been informed by EA internal evidence e.g. sampling data. Partners are being invited to send evidence to the EA catchment co-ordinators during January to April each year (though evidence sent at other times will be recorded). It may be a photograph, riverfly information, anything related to fish, a discharge, and the shape of the channel - no limits. These will be collated and where they are linked with a waterbody being investigated (including upstream) they will form part of the evidence for the investigation. A process has been set up where EA colleagues are particularly asking for information between Jan - April every year.

**Tyne Catchment Partnership Action Plan**

Susan introduced this item by reflecting what the Tyne Catchment Partnership has achieved in the past 2 years. **Action** Abi circulate Susan’s A3 update from Liaison Panel meeting with the minutes.

Abi has produced a draft Action Plan based on updated information from in the Tyne Catchment Plan. We need to put flesh on the bones of the actions that we are committed to, and put to the side actions that no partner is actually taking on. The plan has to be deliverable and focused with clear outcomes. Partners are urged to add more information, particularly where they are helping (or would like to) help with delivery. Consider: is it realistic, what is its timeframe, does it link to other actions, can some actions be removed or put as a longer-term goal? Actions that need some partnership impetus or funding can be looked at again, at a future meeting, to see what joint solutions can be found. The Partnership can also comment on the intro / terms of reference draft that was circulated.

We all annotated the draft, printed as A3. **Action Abi** Type up the changes to the action plan. **All** send thoughts on the ‘intro’ section (at start) and ‘terms of reference’ section (at end).

This will be turned into a targeted Action Plan for the Tyne Catchment Partnership.

This is likely to be kept quite brief and high level, though with detail behind it, so it can be shared with external organisations to give them a good idea of what the Partnership’s priorities are and what it is working on.

**News / updates**

1. Susan reported that the Coastal (and estuaries) group - which is led by Northumberland Rivers Trust - met recently. Some of the estuary waterbodies are no longer being reported on under the WFD. Actions for the group include looking at what monitoring does exist, and identifying the gaps. The EA are tasking some students with this over the summer. (At the moment the geographical range of this group is just Northumberland and Tyne).
2. Whole catchment management – flooding - Susan has been keeping an eye on research, policy etc. coming out of the recent floods. A proposal to use the S Tyne catchment as a landscape-scale ‘natural flood management’ project is being developed by Tyne Rivers Trust, Newcastle University and the North Pennines AONB Partnership. The aim would be to research how landscape-scale interventions in the uplands can help reduce flood risk to communities downstream. Northumbrian Water are also interested in the project and it is already gathering a lot of support. It would be a 10 year project followed by 10-15 years of monitoring. Links to diffuse metals, Borderlands demonstrator project. If anybody is interested in more information then let Susan know. There are links to the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee – it was reported the Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) is likely to be supportive. **Action Hugh Clear-Hill to set up a meeting between the RFCC Chairman and Susan.**
3. Ouseburn update and Ouseburn facilitation fund - a meeting took place (including George F White, the agent for some farms in the upper catchment) on the topic of the agricultural measures. George F White are making an application to Natural England’s Facilitation Fund to deliver measures on the farms (which will be informed by the Evidence & Measures project) and bring farms into stewardship. They are likely to extend the area in to the Pont which links to Catchment Sensitive Farming. The agents have asked for a letter of support for the facilitation fund under the new stewardship. Susan will circulate a draft letter. Natural England have been liaising with Northumbrian Water on a ‘flagship’ project to address agricultural pollution (which may not be the Ouseburn, and may not be the Tyne).
4. Clare Deasy is going to Defra’s urban diffuse pollution workshop - any Tyne partners please let Clare know anything to mention. She will take the Ouseburn briefing note. Action **Clare** to speak to E&M consultants beforehand too.
5. Still no news regarding the funding of the host role for the catchment partnership. Susan is determined that Tyne Rivers Trust will continue to facilitate the Tyne catchment Partnership, as so much has been achieved in the last 2 years, but resource constraints may mean changes, for example meeting only twice a year. Susan will be on maternity leave from July - January although a replacement cover will be recruited.