

Tyne Catchment Partnership

Notes of Project Development Workshop

Friday 14 October 2016 at EA offices, Tyneside House

Attendees

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| Hugh Clear Hill | Chair, Tyne Catchment Partnership |
| Douglas Philips | Interim director, Tyne Rivers Trust (TCP host organisation) |
| Graeme Hull | Catchment coordinator, Environment Agency |
| Vicky Cairns | Northumbrian Water Group – Water Rangers project lead |
| Clare Deasy | Northumbrian Water Group |
| Emma Craig | Northumberland Wildlife Trust |
| Michelle Hogg | South Tyneside Council |
| Peter Shield | Gateshead Council |
| Angus Collingwood-Cameron | Northern Farmers and Landowners Group |

Notes of workshop / discussion

HCH welcomed those attending the meeting and noted that a large number of apologies had been received from partner organisations, including some on the day due to transport and other last minute issues

Graeme Hull gave an **overview of key national and regional activity** relating to the catchment based approach. Key points:

Highways England potential funding

- Bids have been requested by HE by 23/11/16
- Currently few priorities for HE in the north east
- Potential project opportunities in TCP area relating to Ouseburn, Team; Don; in vicinity of Acomb
- Noted that TRT work on fish easements on A69 crossings has been well received and TRT looking to develop suite of projects for 2017/18 – HE funding is £370 million over 5 years with 3 years still to run

Catchment Partnerships - update

- Catchment Partnership approach emerged from Water Framework Directive response

- Defra has been keen to promote Catchment Partnerships but future direct funding (£15k in current year) is uncertain
- Hence CPs may well have to become financially self-sufficient
- New reporting measures being introduced with emphasis on new 'km of watercourse enhanced' – reporting on effort rather than specific outcome measures associated with WFD targets.

In discussion, importance of raising profile of Catchment Partnership approach was emphasised – in particular in Brexit debate and advocacy for catchment based approach to emerging land use policy

Partner Project Updates – key highlights of activity relevant to wider Partnership

Tyne Rivers Trust

- 21 projects in progress including: Wood for Water, Lintzford fish pass, Revitalising Redesdale HLF bid
- Ouseburn – contribution to project led by Groundwork and involving other core partners. Brunton Park flood alleviation project now complete (EA, NWG and Newcastle City Council). River restoration feasibility work done for area upstream of A1, seeking support from Highways England. Awaiting news on allocation of some Countryside Stewardship funding.
- Diffuse Metals project in South Tyne valley still requires substantial match funding to progress. Port of Tyne now facing problems disposing of very substantial amounts of contaminated sludge and dredging contractors offering some support. In discussion Northumbrian Water keen to explore joint project opportunities
- NWT highlighted importance of heavy metals to maintaining ecological value of calimarianian grassland SSSIs in South Tyne valley

ACTION – NWG and TRT to explore opportunities for joint project development re metal mine contamination

Northumbrian Water

- VC provided an overview and update on the Water Rangers project
- NWG are increasing the number of volunteer rangers and routes to be covered
- Potential to collect wider range of information including water quality and wildlife data

ACTION - Catchment Partners can use NWG Water Ranger hotline number to report concerns – 0191 375 3099 (NB number not for general circulation)

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

- Urban Streams work now largely completed
- Restoring Ratty project – reintroduction of Water Voles to upper North Tyne catchment has now commenced

South Tyneside Council

- River Don Partnership – detailed project brief should be issued soon

Gateshead Council

- Metro Green Area Action Plan – covering initial proposals for 800 houses near confluence of River Derwent with tidal Tyne currently being developed. Elements include flood risk, contamination and transport. Proposals may eventually involve up to 3000 homes.
- Land of Oak and Iron HLF project now in implementation stage. Involves wetland creation and fish passage – e.g. Lintzford weir
- Team Valley – proposals for similar partnership approach as being pursued in the Don catchment and involving flood alleviation and wetland creation. An internal team project planning day has been held with the EA and external focus day originally programmed for September will be rescheduled soon. NWG has commissioned consultants to look at issues associated with combined sewer outfalls in the upper catchment

Action – Graeme Hull to circulate EA ‘metro map’ of identified Water Framework Directive priority issues across Tyne catchment

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

An invitation had previously been circulated to all partners inviting proposals for a catchment wide partnership project to act as a focus for the Tyne Catchment Partnership. It had been emphasised that any new project would not seek to detract from existing projects being undertaken by partners within the catchment but rather was to be seen as a catalyst for new activity and as an opportunity to highlight the value of the TCP as a whole to a wider audience.

In the event, only one proposal for a new catchment wide project was forthcoming – from the Tyne Rivers Trust. This project thus formed the basis of discussion in the workshop

Proposed project – “ADOPT A STREAM” – presented by Douglas Philips, TRT

Key features of Adopt a Stream project:

- Key concept - individuals or organisations adopt a section of watercourse anywhere within the Tyne catchment and carry out some structured activity on that watercourse over a period of time – with some system to report and record on that activity and key outcomes / findings
- Opportunity to involve and link urban and rural parts of Tyne catchment
- Can involve wide range of stakeholders from farmers and landowners to riverside businesses, local interest groups, recreational users, local authorities and education sector
- Opportunities for environmental, social and economic aspects to be included
- Massive volunteering opportunities – monitoring, reporting, litter picking, tree planting etc
- Potential to do a lot of low cost activity
- Requires some seed corn money to establish interactive web platform to record what has been done where

- If successful, project could be a model with much wider application in the region and even nationally

Key points from discussion:

- Activity packs – sharing good ideas
- Water Rangers project provides many useful lessons
- Useful to learn from other projects elsewhere in UK and overseas
- Sensible to start with existing networks – existing volunteer groups, community groups, schools – initial focus on groups rather than individuals, more manageable?
- Very important to engage business sector early – e.g. Chamber of Commerce
- ‘Adoption’ might mean different things in different places – not a one size fits all model
- Potential to involve Skill Mill – history of successful training
- Initial stages will need clear direction – someone needs to coordinate and set up systems
- Support for having a ‘day of action’ to launch Adopt a Stream initiative and to garner support and publicity – AAS would provide excellent way to raise awareness of TCP and added value arising from partnership approach
- Opportunity to bring together different interests – e.g. Flood Action Groups and environmental groups
- Heritage / cultural interests – may open up different funding pots – HLF targeted funds etc
- Consideration needed at outset of health and safety, safeguarding etc
- Activity targeting schools must have very clear links to curriculum or schools will struggle to allocate resource / time to this
- Mechanism needed to identify and resolve any conflicting priorities on particular watercourses – coordination role / prioritisation
- Support for initial pilots to try out approach and iron out any difficulties
- Recognised that synergies with other projects – e.g. Living Waterways
- Badging of project will be important – need to agree final title for ‘Adopt a Stream’ at the outset

ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS FOR ADOPT A STREAM PROJECT

- **Partners agreed to proceed with Adopt a Stream as core delivery project for Tyne Catchment Partnership**
- **Graham Holyoak at Tyne Rivers Trust to undertake work to develop Adopt a Stream concept with target to launch project in Spring 2017**
- **All TCP partners to be asked to contribute to a SWOT analysis of Adopt a Stream Project – including key areas of concern, known community groups who might get involved etc**
- **All partners to identify potential funding sources and initial project sponsors - some seed corn money will be needed to get project moving. TRT have allocated some resource for initial work to develop concept.**