

## River Team Catchment Partnership Meeting Minutes (01/10/2018)

### In attendance:

Neil Wilkinson (NW) – Planning (Gateshead)  
Lucy Mo (LM) – EA Planning Technical Specialist  
Zoe Lewin (ZL) – Planning (Durham)  
Peter Shield (PS) – Ecologist (Gateshead)  
Gayle Wilson (GW) – Planning (Gateshead)  
Jimmy Young (JY) – LLFA (Gateshead)  
Lucy Gibson (RG) – WSP Geotechnical  
Peter Henson (PH) – Highways England  
Lesley Silvera (LS) - Groundwork  
Rob Carr (RC) – EA Tyne Catchment Coordinator  
Rachel Bastow (RB) – Student GIS Officer (Gateshead)  
Matthew Forde (MF) – Student Planning Officer (Gateshead)  
Clare Deasy (CD) – Catchment Strategy Link NWL

### Apologies:

Elizabeth Waters – Tyne Rivers Trust  
Sally Gallagher – Environment Agency  
Peter Thorn – Coal Authority  
Carl Hodgson – LLFA  
Stuart Priestley – Durham County Council

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

**NW** welcomed stakeholders to the third meeting of the Team Catchment partnership.

#### 2. Opportunity/Constraints Mapping

**GW** constraints and opportunities were being mapped by Rachel Bastow to inform the visioning work. The draft map constraints were displayed thematically into three categories: flooding, natural environment and built environment. The intention was to collate data on an interactive map available on a webview for members of the partnership, but this would not be available to the public. A key conceptual map would be created for the public to accompany the vision. **GW** asked partners to identify any additional data for the mapping exercise.

**PS** highlighted potential time / capacity issues with supplying council ownership shapefiles, also acknowledged that provision may incur a charge. **RC** suggested that green infrastructure plans / land could be a suitable as a proxy.

**NW** would discuss with Corporate Asset Management Team about Council owned sites data, and to determine freehold and leasehold. Gateshead Council had limited land ownership in rural parts of Gateshead.

**PS** reasoned that current spatial knowledge of protected / invasive species (otter, GCN, badger, mink, giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam) could be misleading, therefore these constraints had not been mapped. Protected / invasive species may not be identified as there had not been surveyed. ERIC had the most comprehensive dataset but even their records would be incomplete.

**JY** suggested that adopted highways should also be included as a constraint.

**Action** – Rob Carr to send non-open source EA data to Gayle Wilson / Rachel Bastow.

**Action** – Durham County Council to send over corresponding constraint/opportunities shapefiles.

**Action** – GW/RB to turn data table into a data register: source of data; version; access restrictions.

**Action** – All to consider draft maps/table of data and identify any additional constraints/opportunities to be mapped.

### 3. Vision

**NW** expressed the desire to set a broad set of parameters for the vision, beyond the core objectives of flood management, water quality and biodiversity/environmental improvements, to cover socio-economic issues.

**RC** noted that the Durham Wildlife Trust and North East Local Nature Partnership had written the vision statement for the River Don Catchment Partnership: the format could be used as an initial template. Members of the partnership should determine the vision and objectives. The parameters would need to be wide. This would line up with the Government's 25 year environment plan which had drastically broadened factors considered e.g. health and wellbeing, access to nature on doorsteps, iconic landscapes and engagement with communities.

**NW** noted four main themes that the Council would want to see in the vision:

- economic growth to sustain the Team Valley Trading Estate and protect it from the threat of future climate change;
- housing growth, existing properties are sustained and future hinderances to development are mitigated;
- 'THRIVE' agenda of targeting vulnerable communities and residents in Gateshead – addressing key issues such as mental and physical health, wellbeing of residents, providing access to the countryside e.g. mapping childhood obesity; and
- duty to protect the natural environment.

**CD** noted that Northumbrian Water's (NW) position had changed over the past two years which was reflected in the new 2020 business plan. Based upon feedback from customers, NWL's ambitions included environmental improvements such as improving the quality of rivers for public access, to support health and wellbeing and for amenity/recreational use. NWL also shared ambitions for partnership working through a catchment based approach and the integrated drainage partnership.

**RC** confirmed that the EA's 'noble causes' put forward to the business team for Government's spending review would fit into NWL's business plan and vision for the partnership.

**PS** suggested that the Team catchment vision would need to take a different approach to the Don vision given its more rural nature, significant landscape character, ancient woodland/woodland etc. Durham Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust had assets in the Team catchment therefore it was important for these stakeholders were involved in the partnership.

**ZT** Durham County Council shared aspirations to address health and wellbeing through access to the countryside. DCC sought support to build on the success of the Wear Catchment Partnership.

**All agreed** to use the River Don plan as a starting point, but it would be amended as necessary.

**Action** – GW to produce initial vision statement / objectives and circulate to wider group for input and comments.

**Action** – To agree and sign off on vision and objectives for the partnership at next meeting (February 2019).

**Action** –RC to share River Don sharing agreement as a basis for terms of reference/ MOU. Data sharing agreements to be arranged with external partners.

### 4. A1 Realignment

**RC** requested an update on the scheme itself.

**PH** draft scheme to be submitted in January 2019 with full submission in for Spring 2019. 3-year completion time with start to take place in late 2020. Four lanes wide in each direction from Coal House to Birtley. There would be a diversion of the culvert at Allerdene Lane. Old bridge structure would be demolished, and an attenuation pond would be located in its place. The scheme was currently going through environmental assessments and scoping of EIA.

**NW** enquired about the future land management of the old road alignment.

**PH** to check plans of existing embankment.

**RC** following an EA and Council meeting with Ali Hussain from WSP in March 18, RC enquired about any progress with the design details of the detention ponds to maximise multifunctional benefits, and the integration of swales /baffles as part of daylighting of the culvert, to reduce flood risk and achieve betterment of water quality.

**PH** stated that the land take for the scheme would be limited and no alterations would take place to the Coal House roundabout. There was currently little public objection given that very few people would be affected. There was potential links with the Team Valley flood alleviation scheme. The plans for alterations to the watercourse (due to bridge foundations/ additional piers at Coal House) and drainage (culvert) had been submitted for consideration to the Development Management case officer, Andrew Softley.

**JY** pointed out that the plan to alter ordinary watercourses would need consent from the Local Lead Flood Authority which was a legal requirement.

**CD** asked whether Highways England had any long term plans south of this proposal.

**PH** There were no further plans south of this scheme.

**PH /RC** match funding from Highways England was available for environmental schemes. A workshop would be held on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

**Action** – Consult Andrew Softley for details of A1 scheme.

## 5. Team Valley Trading Estate Flood Alleviation Scheme

Ross Whitelaw, the EA's project manager leading the FAS, was unfortunately not present. **RC** mentioned that there had been some changes to scheme, the EA was currently under pressure to determine the protection of residential properties. The business case sign off had been delayed. Additional modelling work would not be available in time for the scheme.

**NW** there was potential to include the LEP and assert political pressure should the project delivery stagnate, given the threat from climate change to the region's largest trading estate, which had potential to affect economic growth.

**GW** The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Team Valley Surface Water Management Plan had been updated. These documents would be published at end of October as part of Local Plan Making Spaces for Growing Places consultation.

## 6. Rowlatch Burn

**LS** Following the Rowlatch Burn feasibility study, Groundwork was gearing up to deliver three projects. The water quality was very poor and Water Framework Directive funding (Water Environment Improvement Fund) had been secured for project delivery.

1. Ibstock Bricks at Birtley was currently progressing. Project involved channel restoration, bank stabilisation, rock weirs creating cascades and pools, and channel re-profiling. Groundwork was awaiting ecological work from E3 (GCN). The project was expected to start very soon.

2. St. Bede's landfill site channel restoration. This would require a section of the river to be de-channelised with concrete embankments on both sides. The restoration was constrained due to railway and landfills (both current and historic). Network Rail needed to be engaged. Timescales for delivery were October 2018 – March 2019. Engagement with teams within both Durham County Council and Gateshead Council was underway. Three styles on footpaths would be replaced. There was a plan for a volunteering / educational project involving up to eight schools, working with the EA's Community Engagement Officer Taryn Al Mashgari. There had also been engagement with Komatsu. Station Lane Associates had an issue with the use of pathways by trail bikes. James Kirkland was dealing with complaints about Westline Industrial Estate: there were legal and illegal waste sites in this area.

**JY** ordinary watercourse consent would be required from LLFA if the concrete channel was removed.

3. Realignment of tributary west of Shee Recycling plant. Network Rail project for realignment of ECML with freight loop around Drum industrial estate had been withdrawn. Ouston Villa Farm contains a high level of ammonia contamination. There were opportunities to improve water quality.

**Action – RC** to request update on waste issues in this area from EA colleagues.

**Action – CD** to find Network Rail contact.

## 7. Groundwater / Minewater Issues

**GW** A report had been circulated to the partnership regarding groundwater and minewater issues in Gateshead, which the Coal Authority and Environment Agency had fed into. It referenced rising groundwater levels; and a minewater flooding incident in 2016 at former JJ Stanley scrapyards, Swalwell which occurred after heavy rainfall and the failure of one of the minewater pumps at Kibblesworth. The Coal Authority and the Environment Agency had prepared a SuDS constraint map to trigger hydrogeological assessments to inform drainage schemes for new development. The wider environmental issues of changing the pumping regime at Kibblesworth had far reaching implications and required a strategic catchment management approach.

Acknowledgement by **NW** that the council lacked both capacity and expertise to cope with the potential repercussions. The Coal Authority would perform a risk assessment about changes to the current pumping regime over the next two-year period.

**NW** raised the point that the CA had previously stated that the EA regulates whether the CA could change the minewater pumping regime and discharge into watercourses.

**RC / LM** The EA's scrutiny of the CA related to contamination and the requirements for water treatment to maintain/improve water quality under WDF regulations. The EA did not have a remit to control the volumes of minewater being pumped.

**NW** highlighted that there were much wider implications for rising groundwater levels: e.g. LLFA lacked resources to help landowners deal with increased groundwater flooding incidents, additional costs for developers, increased pressure on Howdon Sewage Treatment Works and local sewer network for NWL.

**Action –** To discuss with the CA their forward plan concerning the management of mine water and incorporate into partnership vision and objectives. CA need to represent themselves at partnership.

**Action** – Commission a pilot study to gain greater understanding of the groundwater/minewater issues and then apply them at a greater scale.

## 8. **Communication**

**RC** Communication was vital for the partnership.

**Action** – **RC** to develop comms and engagement plan for River Don which could be used as a template and incorporate into vision and objectives. **RC** to update at next meeting.

## 9. **Other Business**

**CD** – NWL had now published their business plan 2020-2025. It had larger ambitions in comparison to previous plans in terms of improvements to the environment. There were 6 main themes: customer experience; reliable and resilient; innovation; improving environment; building local economies. Post 2020 plans had a wider focus on improvements to the 'water environment', including the River Team. Water companies were now obligated to plan long term for wastewater management. There was also a new water environment scheme fund of £500,000 which could provide match funding for partners to deliver public access to the water environment, linked with health and wellbeing.

**RC** EA had narrowed down the area where TBT contaminant was entering River Team. Concentrations were currently on an upward trend.

**RC** also noted that the current Team catchment boundary was the 'natural boundary' based on the topography of the area. The boundary did not account for tidal influence and 'non-natural' drainage.

It was agreed that the catchment boundary should overlap with the Team Tyne confluence, and consideration should be given to drainage areas outside of the catchment boundary that drain into the catchment.

## 10. **Next meeting**

Next meeting scheduled for February 2019.