



8 September 2020 9.30am – 12:30pm

Online Teams meeting

Present: Ceri Gibson(Chair), Rob Carr (EA), Clare Ross(GMBC), Clare Rawcliffe (STC), Abi Mansley (NNPA), Sarah Tooze(NPAONB), Jimmy Young (GMBC), Clare Deasy(NWG), Rachael Jackson (STC), Natalie Rutter(NCC), Darren Varley(NCC), Dorothy Fairburn(CLA), Peter Shield(GMBC), Michele Mc Callam (Gwk), Thomas Brown (NCC), Becky Hetherington (NT), Tony Baines (NWG), Dave Cooke (CA), Mark Dinning (DWT), Liz Walters(TRT)

1 + 2. Finish joining attendees and Welcome Ceri Gibson

3. Activity Log update Liz Walters

The Log was sent round and Liz thanked those who responded for their comments. Ideally all projects within the Tyne Catchment should be included even if not technically a partnership project. This is so that best practice can be shared and opportunities for adding value or match funding projects are not missed.

RC Other catchments have a visual representation of this information as a story map. This still has a spreadsheet behind it but might be easier or more appealing to update.

DC The Coal Authority uses GIS to store information.

ACTIONS: If any partner has views on a more convenient or appealing way to update this information please share this.

EAW to contact individual partners to update Activity Log.

4. RBMP update Ceri Gibson

Ceri received five responses which have been incorporated into the TCP response. There has been some delay and EA have extended the deadline. Suzanne Bennett (SB) organised a meeting last week to give partners an opportunity to engage with the consultation. This activity was not well attended but there were useful comments received. Ceri will now finish going through Suzanne's notes from that event and she, Rob Carr and Suzanne will co-ordinate the final response.

Ceri asked how many partners have submitted a response from their organisation, roughly 4 indicated that their organisations had submitted a response.

Rob Carr commented that EA had received more responses than for any other consultation. Covid has encouraged people to see environmental issues as important, and it is important that the government knows this is a high priority for people. The consultation results are likely to be available in one year's time.

ACTION Partners last chance to comment on C & C consultation deadline is 23rd September.

5. Water Environment improvement feasibility update Clare Deasy

The South Tyne Vision document is not yet completed and NWG will be recruiting to fill the South Tyne project post. There is restructuring taking place in NWG but the South Tyne post is not affected. The catchment-style water directorate team is restructuring and two 'leads' and two 'advisor' posts will be created resulting in a whole new team.

The 2020-25 Business Plan will have NWG thinking more broadly and new performance indicators allowing them to work with partners on improvement projects. This is the result of work that took place in 2017 at the 'Thinking Ahead' workshops. This work has been brought together with customer's expectations to create a new performance commitment to work in a new way.

Clare is carrying out a feasibility study until March and her post will be backfilled. There is a new post based in Essex and Suffolk (Kim Wallis) who will also carry out work up in the north-east. There will be a new co-ordinator role here and therefore lots more people to develop the ambitious ODI during the next 6 to 9 months.

Innovation Festival 2020 will be a virtual event. Clare encouraged partners to join the NWG sprint 'Cool Cool Water' which consists of three sessions on three days to create a shared vision for investment.

New mapping project consultant is STANTEC who will create a GIS project which maps opportunities for projects within the north east. The map will be a series of layers run on ARC GIS online and focus on future project not those already completed. Project requires partners to get involved in a trial.

Discussion followed about how the NWG GIS project fits with the TCP Activity Log story map. They use the same technology but one is current and past projects and the other is future opportunities. Partners were keen to keep the information in one place if possible.

DF Asks what the definition of accessible water was for the Water Environment Improvement fund.

CD Water which can be accessed legally for example over open access land, ROW, accessible beaches and wetlands. Any improvements qualify along accessible sections of river for example fish passes, wildlife garden, bat boxes or a café. But wildlife gardens and cafés would count as only improving the area they are along, whereas fish passes and water quality improvements would count as improving a stretch of the river. The key is the projects must improve the water environment for visitors. This will go above and beyond the regulatory drivers for NWG.

CD Matthew Powell has been appointed as the Whittle Dene catchment advisor to continue the engagement with farmers on pesticides.

Branch Out has been expanded to include priority habitat creation and tackle invasive species but must fund delivery.

ACTION CD to advise MM and EAW how to link with the NWG/STANTEC mapping project.

6. EA WEIF funding update Rob Carr

The process and funding has been delayed this year. EA are in the process of finalising this year's projects with partners. Next year the scope of fundable projects is changing very slightly because the DEFRA 25 year environment plan reflects Brexit and the resulting loosening of criteria. A full EU exit removes the restriction to WFD focussed projects and opens up funding for protected habitats and species.

The MTP Programme is a big list of projects waiting for an allocation of funding. If they don't get funded they remain on the list for subsequent years. The DEFRA 25 year plan includes priority habitats and species as well as wider benefits eg community engagement.

If any partners have any project ideas for MTP then contact Rob.

DC What scale of funding is available?

RC There are two pots one for capital and the other for revenue. The money available changes each year but very approximately for the NE region it is: Capital £500,000 Revenue £200,000. The Tyne normally receives a good allocation and once work has started in a catchment then EA is keen to keep funding that area. Match funding of at least 20%.

DC This one of the few sources of revenue funding available.

RC Revenue is new and the amount varies. EA like to use revenue for long term projects where there is a great need but not enough information for delivery. The money cannot be used to investigate (this is a statutory role of EA) but can be used for a feasibility or scoping project. This then provides information about an appropriate intervention and a good report can be produced to bid for capital in the future.

In the past WEIF project business cases were created each year but multi-year business cases are now being created. This reduces paperwork and the time and resources required to apply. Multi-year business cases can be 2,3 or 5 year. The paperwork required is more complicated if the project costs go above £100,000 per business case as more information is required. The money is not guaranteed annually even with an agreed multi-year business case.

Sometimes there is funding available at short notice, so 'shovel-ready' projects already in a multi-year business case could be funded more quickly. Other funding opportunities will be available in the future eg. Green Recovery, Green Bonds, Carbon Credits. If there is a strong list of projects to invest in, they are more likely to be funded.

CG There is an upcoming window of opportunity for Green Recovery fund. How well will this dovetail with WEIF?

RC This will dovetail with this year and next year's WEIF funding.

BC The Green Recovery Challenge fund is DEFRA money brought forward for early spending. £40 million is available and the application opens up in one week. There is a 3 week application window for grants between £50,000 and £3 million. Larger grants require an 'expression of interest' to be written within 8 weeks.

Projects for the Green Recovery Challenge fund are to be shovel ready and must be delivered over 18 months. The fund is administered by NLHF who have postponed their application process until next year. Green Recovery is about sustainable jobs, supporting the economy whilst helping the environment. Successful projects will be fully funded but it might help if there is match. There is a quick turnaround. Guidance will be out on 14th September.

CR Local authorities can apply but a substantial amount of the money must go to a charity to deliver the project. The main aim is to sustain charitable jobs and boost the charitable sector.

DC The Coal Authority is offering to work with partners to enhance active projects. There is 'metal programme' delivery taking place anyway and there are opportunities to widen these projects and delivering 'softer edges' that the Coal Authority wouldn't think of or have the ability to do. There are also ongoing coal schemes, that are often overlooked, that would have the potential to become a partnership project.

ST The AONB has worked with the CA at Allen Valleys to plan trees as part of a mine remediation scheme. The CA made the project 100% funded as the majority of the money came from a woodland grant which funds 80%.

RC This links back to the Activity Plan to ensure all partners know about projects taking place in the catchment and opportunities are not lost for match funding.

Discussions took place around the NWG South Tyne PR19 monies which have been delayed due to staff changes etc. New Tyne/Tees post which will deliver this work has been filled by Clare Ross, currently at Gateshead MBC. She starts on 21st September.

ACTIONS **TB to ask for a detailed South Tyne update including timescales and send to CG.**

Partners to look at possibility of applying for project funding.

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/green-recovery-challenge-fund>

Jack Bloomer (TRT) to discuss CA active projects with the potential to be enhanced.

7. Virtual meetings ALL

Today's virtual meeting has gone well and everyone was happy with using Teams. All agreed to stick to virtual meetings for now and to the date for the next meeting in February.

ACTIONS

EAW to consult those who did not make September meeting.

ALL to save the 2nd February for the next meeting.

8. Any Other Business

a. Hadrians's Wall Loughs AB

AB Sam Almond has left and no information has been received about his replacement.

CG There is a need for a specific meeting to discuss the loughs. There was agreement for the Loughs to keep their own sub-catchment partnership for now rather than be subsumed into the South Tyne one.

AM Greenlee Countryside Stewardship has been sorted out, but all partners need to discuss the wider catchment as not all problems relate to the immediate land management, some relate to wider land management upstream and downstream of the loughs.

CG TRT to commit to organising a small working group of partners to look at this issue.

BH Agreed that it was important to get partners together now and scale-up the management improvements. There have been several personnel changes within relevant organisations.

AM Would Silas (?) from NE cover that area?

CG Happy to take a co-ordination role to address the immediate issues at Greenlee farm.

b. TCP Site Visits

DC Could some smaller site visits be organised between partners?

ACTIONS

EAW to investigate potential for smaller site visits.

CG to co-ordinate next steps for the Hadrian's Wall Loughs.