

<h1>Meeting Notes</h1>		Meeting: Water Environment Governance Group	
Attendees: Richard Powell (Chair), Graham Dale, Mike Jeffries, Anna Gerring Mike Madine, Clare Deasy, Kim Wallis, Stephen Thompson, Isabella Askew		Date: 28/03/23	Location: MS Teams
Apologies: Melissa Lockwood		Distribution: Attendees and Apologies	
Note: A full set of documents is available in the Water Environment Governance Group SharePoint Site https://nwgcloud.sharepoint.com/sites/TD0273/dcs/			
No.	Agenda Item and Notes		
1	Introductions Isabella Askew introduced – New Technical Policy Advisor in Strategic Planning Team at Northumbrian Water		
2	Review of Actions Meet up in person and potential site visit – Discussed at end of meeting		
3	<p>Water Environment Team Update</p> <p><u>Year 3 delivery</u></p> <p>CD presented an update for Y3 (see slide pack):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68.1 km forecast against an internal target of 58km (includes 9.5 km carry over from Year 2) • 22 projects in delivery, due for completion this year • Sign off required for 16 projects in May for 42.8 km <p><u>Year 4 Plan</u></p> <p>CD presented an update for Y4 (see slide pack):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Projects in plan • 8 Projects previously approved, 5 Projects reviewed in this meeting <p><u>Year 5 Plan</u></p> <p>CD presented an update for Y4 (see slide pack):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Projects previously approved, 2 Projects reviewed in this meeting 		

Project Approvals

Seven projects were shared with WEGG for approval. Candidate project forms were shared in advance.

Project 1

Caring for Crimdon Dene

- Linked to SeaScapes programme
- NWG investing £350k
- 3.3km improved
- Improve biodiversity, addressing non-native species, creating seating areas, community engagement
- Match funding from Durham Heritage Coast and Seascapes

MJ – Likes idea, fills in gap. Rare bird species breeding site, therefore is it a good idea to increase public access? Do not want to drive birds away and needs to be done carefully.

AG – Neat project building on work already being done in the area

DECISION: WEGG agreed to approve the Caring for Crimdon Dene project

Project 2

Allen Banks Footpath & Environment Improvements

- Delivered by National Trust
- 2.3 km improved
- Match funding of £5,500
- Improving access, biodiversity enhancements, tree planting – regeneration of historic tree avenue, Himalayan Balsam control, general tree management

RP – Good that oral and visual project. Safety of project, i.e tree cutting etc. Is this a public access point? Yes. How big is Himalayan Balsam problem? Bottom end of river, and localised.

AG – Good project and familiar with the site. Work described is needed, therefore a good one to support. It is a well-used site.

MJ – Straight forward. Direct Access.

DECISION: WEGG agreed to approve the Allen Banks Footpath & Environment Improvements project

4

Project 3

Embleton Quarry Nature Reserve

- Internal and external project opportunities
- Linked to improvement of treatment works
- Reclaimed quarry
- 1.4km improved
- Bluespaces match funding of £3,300
- Improvements to nature trail, new waterside habitats – Sand Martins and invertebrates, species surveying, new waterside bat roost, events and education opportunities

RP – Likes Parish Council and new bat roosts, and existing ‘customers’ to see improvements.

MJ – Good group to support with Parish Council, and not isolated so improving the lack of access is very attractive. Making a big difference. Fits criteria well.

AG – Agrees with above, more work in water quality in Embleton over the next few years so beneficial to build relationship.

DECISION: WEGG agreed to approve the Embleton Quarry Nature Reserve project

Project 4

Angles Way River Improvements

- Delivery by Waveney Trust, with support of Anglian Water
- 2.2km of improvements
- Follow on from project supported last year
- Choked by vegetation, which needs to be controlled to allow for river flow which allows for access by canoes and paddleboards etc.
- Reconnect watercourse with surrounding floodplain, remove Himalayan Balsam, tree planting, improve access with local council
- Anglian Water tackling pennywort
- EA also support the project

RP – Big multi-partners project – are we going to get lost in the system? Good at communicating the funding streams and is still within ESW border.

AG – Have they completed all the year 2 work? Yes. Indicates that this project will get done.

MJ – Yes, happy that they are controlling vegetation in river.

DECISION: WEGG agreed to approve the Angles Way River Improvements project

Project 5

Dickleborough Moor

- Working with the Otter Trust, as well as EA and Historic England
- Match funding of £12,000
- Significant archaeological findings – Bronze Age Settlement, which means high level of media coverage
- Creating pools to provide habitats, owl cameras, expand turtle dove breeding area, plant hedging which will screen wading areas, black poplar donor site, increase biodiversity, educational purposes

RP – Brilliant site, and has the opportunity to be an amazing ecological and archaeological site. How remote is it from ESW and how do we manage that customers know that we've been involved? 5km from ESW supply and in catchment area, notice boards with logos etc., need to ensure that any releases include ESW/NWL logos.

MJ – Amazing site, and likes intuitive idea of using historical paths etc and high levels of biodiversity.

AG – Great opportunity.

DECISION: WEGG agreed to approve the Dickleborough Moor project

Project 6

Link Together Project

- Internal and external project
- Linked with improvements of Lumley Treatment works
- Opportunity to push for increase in bluespaces focus within partnership
- 13.6km improvements overall
- 6.8 improvements in year 5
- Increase biodiversity on Sunderland urban fringe, educational opportunities, encourage people to visit and care for local natural spaces, monitoring and reporting of NWL assets in the area
- Bluespaces match funding of £20,000 in year 5

RP – Large amount of funding? This is coming from Lottery Fund, which has already been identified. Support from Sunderland Council. Is 6.8km accessible to customers? Yes. Need all ducks in a row in case questioned by Ofwat in the future.

MJ – Scale is different to other projects. Over £1.9 mill is a significant amount of funding, does the £20,000 make a difference? £20,000 would link to bluespaces, as current literature only references improving greenspaces. MJ likes the area that the site sits in, good attraction to the area which sits in between Sunderland and Durham.

AG – Likes the idea of influencing the project to increase improvements of bluespaces.

CD – Strategic project that gives higher return compared to smaller projects which are more difficult to manage. Key move to build relationship with Sunderland Council in terms of Climate Change etc.

MM – Don't forget that all the rewards from this goes back to the environment.

DECISION: WEGG agreed to approve the Link Together project

Project 7

Martlesham Wilds

- Creation of 117 Ha nature reserve
- £24,000 match funding
- Former arable land (previously organically farmed)
- Protect and restore salt marsh, wetland, and ponds
- Linking up with First Bus to increase visitors, bike stands, way marker and viewing areas installed
- New warden to work with landowners – not included in project but necessary as large project

RP – Good project, and ability for ESW/NWL to get involved in large project. Need to ensure that signage and logos included on site.

MJ – Yes.

AG – Yes, connect with customers on a large site.

DECISION: WEGG agreed to approve the Martlesham Wilds project

Projects in development (ST) – added to agenda as time available

1. Stockton Beck Restoration and RiverLABS
 - 8 sites
 - Stockton Borough Council
 - No funding to support education – therefore Bluespaces could support this
 - Water quality improvements for WINEP – 2 STW
 - £30,000 of match funding over 2 years

	<p>2. South Burn Bluespaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality improvements for WINEP with Sacriston STW • Access, community engagement and biodiversity improvements • Smaller project driven by NWL <p>3. James Steel Nature Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New nature trail, new wetland scrape for amphibians and dragon flies, and guided walks and events • £3,000 funding <p>4. Ingleby Beck Bluespaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish passage enhancements, improving footbridge, way marking, education activities • 2km improvements • £6,000 funding • Water quality improvements • Part of bigger project <p>5. Whittle Dene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 Ha site, which joins NWT and WT sites • Biodiversity improvements, grassland restorations, car park improvements • £10,000 funding <p>RP – Likes the idea of all the projects. AG & MJ agreed.</p>
5	<p>Case Studies</p> <p>ST presented (See slide pack)</p> <p>ST to upload case studies to SharePoint and attendees to look through the case study packs on SharePoint.</p> <p>RP – Likes the design. Would be good to do it with all the projects.</p> <p>MJ – Good use of images.</p> <p>AG – Helpful for smaller organisations of what they could achieve. Would be useful to create one for smaller project and public facing impact report for end of Year 5, showing figures.</p> <p>ST showed Bluespaces projects videos on NWL social media – Links on slides.</p>

AOB

Field Visit

- ST to have a chat with Ross Smith to discuss options
- North (ST to review visit options) and South (Dickleborough visit – KW to contact) – People have options
- KW suggests that the South visit should take place before June as she is leaving the business to join the Essex Wildlife Trust
- June/July/September suggested for North visit
- CD to issue a Doodle poll for dates
- ST noted Geltsdale visit was a late offer, but other opportunities may arrive and he will share further Just an Hour activity as it arises

6 **ACTION: KW to organise a Dickleborough visit for WEGG members who may be interested/available**

ACTION: CD/ST to organise North East visit for WEGG members – CD to send out Doodle Poll for dates in the summer, ST to review visit options

Evidence Packs (CD)

- Question over how the group would like to review the project briefs for sign off
- Group suggests to receive a complete pack a week ahead of the meeting works well and would also be fine for the 16 projects proposed this year; WE Team will therefore issue these by 8th May ahead of the next meeting on 15th May