

<h1>Meeting Notes</h1>		Meeting: Water Environment Governance Group	
Attendees: Richard Powell (Chair), David Alborough, Barry Bendall, Graham Dale, Clare Deasy, Laura Kennedy, Natalie LeBrun, Melissa Lockwood, Mike Madine, Kim Wallis		Date: 14/10/20	Location: MS Teams
Apologies: Jude Huffee		Distribution: Attendees and Apologies	
Note: A full set of documents is available in the Water Environment Governance Group Teams Site.			
No.	Agenda Item and Notes		
1	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Following group introductions, RP gave brief introduction to the meeting. Aim is for collective discussion and use of expertise to shape how the project moves forward.</p>		
2	<p>NWG’s water environment approach and the PC and ODI</p> <p>CD delivered a presentation that outlined the background to the development of the Water Environment ODI.</p> <p>The ODI has been shaped by customer views that highlighted the importance of wider environmental issues (e.g. access, litter), in addition to working with stakeholders to identify a shared vision and opportunities to work together strategically for maximum benefit.</p> <p>It is also hoped that by going above and beyond, the scheme could be used to highlight good work already being undertaken to improve the water environment that is not necessarily as visible to customers.</p> <p>CD shared a document published by Ofwat as part of the Draft Determination which highlighted the importance of the WEGG in signing off projects before an improvement length can be counted. This document also illustrated the PC levels (10km per annum) and the penalty and reward rates. NWG’s commitment to invest 50% of any reward after costs was restated.</p>		

	<p>It was noted that the Ofwat document divided the eligibility criteria into four categories (splitting access and facilities & recreation). It was queried whether this should be clarified with Ofwat as to whether this division was intentional – however it may offer greater opportunities as four categories.</p> <p>Ofwat also require a report by an appropriately qualified third party as part of the assurance for the scheme. It is proposed to issue this report via the WEGG and the Water Forums annual report.</p>
3	<p>Progress so far and plans for the feasibility project</p> <p>CD outlined the progression of the scheme from the Innovation Festival 2018 to its present stage, with work to date including stakeholder engagement, development of the mapping portal, creation of internal steering group, development of principles for improvements and candidate project template, customer research, governance and the communications plan.</p> <p>The feasibility project is intended to run from 1st September 2020 to 31st March 2021.</p> <p>The Water Environment Improvement team were also introduced alongside the tasks being undertaken.</p> <p>The budget for the project was queried. MM advised that a decision had been taken to assess each opportunity and seek funding on a case by case basis rather than set a specific budget for the overall scheme. Further detail behind this thinking can be shared with the WEGG.</p>
4	<p>Case studies for discussion</p> <p>KW presented two case studies using the proposed project template – Kielder Water & Forest Park and Carlton Marshes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested that evidence of benefits for Kielder could include changes in visitor numbers, bird and bat surveys to measure improvement • For Carlton Marshes, it was queried whether there was any link with the Suffolk Waders Strategy, and also whether there was opportunity to work with farmers. <p>CD presented a further two case studies – Killingworth & Longbenton and Durham City Riverbanks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was support for linking work on Durham City Riverbanks with storm overflow work – it was suggested that the storm overflow data could be shared to record change.

	<p>Details shared included the nature of improvements, funding sources, associated kilometres of improvements that could be claimed as part of the work and evidence of benefit. WEGG input was requested to develop areas of the project template, such as the Evidence of Benefits section. Discussion around the approaches taken in the case studies was also welcomed.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Principles for water environment improvements</p> <p>CD presented a slide showing principles requiring discussion.</p> <p>General discussion points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to ensure project benefits aren't double counted through different schemes. • It is important to use the scheme to be a leader in the community. • Projects must be above and beyond – not projects that would have progressed anyway. • It would be good to list secondary benefits (e.g. carbon, flood risk, cost benefit ratios) and also to use projects to showcase nature-based solutions by comparing with cost of traditional approaches. Need to clarify how flood risk reduction would be measured. • It would be useful to have an overall progress scorecard for WEGG to monitor and sign off. <p>Questions for further thought / discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can schemes from the WINEP be included for this scheme also if additional improvements are undertaken? • Should ensuring works on projects have all necessary permits form part of the WEGG overview? • Would the report required by Ofwat be written by the WEGG or an external resource? • Where WEGG members have interests in schemes proposed, how are these flagged to the group? Need to ensure transparency. • Is 50km of improvements stretching? There is a need to balance this with the cost of further improvements to the customer, although 50% of reward will be reinvested in environment schemes. NWG to provide financial modelling to show cost to customer. • Is there a possible link with NWG carbon offsetting activities? • Would there be support for using Just an Hour activities as legitimate improvements as part of this scheme? • How can the scheme contribute to the evolution of WINEP? • How do we ensure the scheme strengthens local partnerships rather than splintering them? NWG very keen to enhance partnerships and support existing strategic visions. Fund is not competitive so hope that this will assist in bringing partners together rather than apart. • If a suggested project is not selected for the scheme, where is it passed to? • How should investment be split across NW / ESW regions? <p>The group agreed that it would be useful to consider the impact of the scale of potential reward on customer bills.</p>

	<p>ACTION: CD to bring bill information to the next meeting.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Project approvals and reporting process</p> <p>It was proposed that the Water Environment team would gather potential projects, which are worked into opportunities before being taken to WEGG for approval. Projects would then be captured on the log and mapped on the portal.</p> <p>RP suggested the project at Kielder progress due to timescales, with other projects being brought to WEGG. The group would also like to see proposed projects that might not have been selected to progress further so alignment can be viewed. RP suggested that Kielder and Carlton be progressed so as to create working examples that can be used for other projects, presenting proposals for the proportion of a total project that can be claimed as ODI improvements (e.g. total amount vs. relative proportion), justified by ‘claimability’, potentially presented in a matrix.</p> <p>It is important to understand how kilometre improvements are agreed and important for the WEGG to challenge this.</p> <p>Points for further consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be considered acceptable evidence for sign off by the WEGG? • Would the WEGG create a sign off document that an external partner signs as proof? • Would site visits be undertaken? • Some projects will need studies to demonstrate improvement rather than simply measuring length. • Examples of WINEP sign off documents and governance could be shared with WEGG for information. <p>The group discussed the use of a progress scorecard to capture projects considered, in development, approved, delivered etc. There was also a desire to see the long list of projects.</p> <p>ACTION: Water Environment Team to finalise the template and circulate this for comment.</p> <p>ACTION: Water Environment Team to bring case studies for review to the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Water Environment Team to create a template score card for the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Water Environment Team to share the long list of projects with the group once available in a useful format.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Terms of Reference, link with the Water Forum and group membership</p>

	<p>RP asked the group whether they were happy with the ToR. One typo was identified but the document was otherwise accepted. It was suggested that maps of catchment and operational areas would be good to include. (These can also be included in the Candidate Projects Template).</p> <p>With regard to group membership, it was suggested that this could be explored as the project moves forward. The NFU were suggested as a potential member. The balance across NW and ESW was also a point to consider. The group were invited to submit any further suggestions.</p> <p>It was agreed to hold two further WEGG meetings this year in November and December to get the process developed.</p> <p>ACTION: CD to finalise TOR</p> <p>ACTION: Any proposals to invite other individuals as members to WEGG to be sent to RP</p> <p>ACTION: LK to liaise with members over dates for next meetings and get these in diaries</p>
8	<p>Other opportunities / issues</p> <p>BB asked about engagement with the Catchment Partnerships and support for the Catchment Based Approach. CD commented that this was an integral part of the approach and that the approach had been co-created with partnerships through workshop sessions, and partners particularly in the North East kept regularly updated. Engagement would increase in relation to ODI opportunities once the full team was in place from 19th October.</p> <p>Discussion regarding customer research to influence projects – a project is booked in between Oct and Dec. Proposal to be circulated to WEGG for feedback ahead of November meeting.</p> <p>Opportunity to extend access around reservoirs – an area to consider.</p> <p>ACTION: Water Environment Team to demonstrate engagement with the Catchment Based Approach and work with Catchment Partnerships to members</p> <p>ACTION: CD to circulate customer research proposal to WEGG members once available</p>
9	<p>AOB</p> <p>CD updated the group regarding the use of MS Teams and Share Point for the group. A Teams site has been established which will work similarly to SharePoint. All have been invited and should have received notification.</p> <p>ACTION: All to check they can access MS Teams Site</p>

Make our meeting effective



Post-Meeting Note:

Richard Powell and Clare Deasy met immediately following the meeting to discuss and establish next steps for taking the approach forward.

These points were agreed and where appropriate will be added to a ***Decisions Log*** to be reviewed at each meeting:

1. The terms of reference are accepted.
2. The principles are accepted, no issues were raised at the meeting.
3. Regarding the regional split, where we presented options, as Chair, Richard's preference is that we use the 2/3, 1/3 price control split for NW and ESW, which he thinks is logical and understandable for customers. We did not yet agree whether this is on number of projects, km improved or NWG investment.

The scope of projects may be quite different for NW and ESW, with more ability to connect to people in the North with bigger cities, and greater opportunity for landscape scale projects with broader biodiversity benefit in the south

4. Kielder and Carlton Marshes are approved in principle as multi-year projects with Year 1 delivery.

We should work these up into full candidate projects for approval at the next meeting, but we can progress our funding cases and delivery on the understanding they will be approved.

We'll need to justify carefully the km we claim for Carlton Marshes.

We should use these as the two test projects (one a company site and NW driven, one an external partnership project to which we are a contributor)

5. The template is close but we should add:

- A map of location and details on area
- Info on above and beyond vs. baseline/business as usual/regulatory obligations
- A matrix of 'clamability'
- Areas of secondary benefit (inc. carbon, visitor numbers, flood benefit, site income)
- Links to other strategies and initiatives
- Monitoring of benefits, linking to evidence for improvements.

We need to show that monitoring is in place for a project we include, and use our leadership to ensure that environmental benefits are measured.

Make our meeting effective



6. Assurance of km length improved – we need to think more about how we justify this, how this relates to investment and support, and whether we need an economist’s viewpoint for some of our projects.
7. Annual reporting should be from NWG to the WEGG for sign off and from the WEGG to the Water Forum, via the Environment Sub Group, but Richard will discuss this with the Chair. Our team will write the report, present this to the WEGG for sign off, and possibly report to the WF in person if appropriate. The report will then be included in the Water Forum reporting to Ofwat.

Next meetings should be late November and late December.

Richard has confirmed he is happy – and keen – to chair the group through to the end of March.

List of items to bring to next meeting:

- Customer research proposal
- Embracing the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) and working with partnerships
- Overall progress scorecard (inc. numbers of projects considered/in prep/approved/delivered)
- Impact on customer bills
- Long list of projects
- Project sign off
- Process for reporting