

<h1>Meeting Notes</h1>		Meeting: Water Environment Governance Group	
Attendees: Richard Powell (Chair), Barry Bendall, Graham Dale, Melissa Lockwood, Mike Jeffries, Mike Madine, David Alborough, Clare Deasy, Stephen Thompson, Kim Wallis		Date: 28/07/21	Location: MS Teams
Apologies: Laura Kennedy		Distribution: Attendees and Apologies	
<b>Note: A full set of documents is available in the Water Environment Governance Group Teams Site</b>			
No.	Agenda Item and Notes		
1	<b>Introductions</b> RP welcomed all to the meeting and introduced MJ to the other WEGG members.		
2	<b>Review of Actions</b> All actions on the Action Log have been completed.		
3	<b>NWG's Water Environment Improvements Strategy</b> CD presented a summary of the agreed strategy for this new ODI. There are 3 key aspects to the strategy: investment in external projects developed with partners, opportunistic internal projects on which water environment improvements can be built or which are already considered to be eligible, and delivering water environment improvements for communities as part of capital project legacy. Water Environment Improvements of around 48 km are targeted in year 2. In Years 3-5, £175 will be invested annually in projects to be delivered in partnership across the three strands. Total anticipated investment in the Water Environment Scheme is around £1m over 5 years, to achieve 250 km water environment improved. The final strategy was well received by the group and considered a great outcome from the feasibility project.		

**Year 2 Project Approvals**

6 projects were brought to the WEGG for approval at this meeting.

Marden Quarry

ST presented the form for this project, which is linked to a capital project as legacy, and would be delivered in partnership with North Tyneside Council.

The group were supportive of the proposal and happy for it to progress to the next stage.

**DECISION: The Marden Quarry project was approved by the WEGG.**

Carrs Nature Reserve

ST presented the form for this project. This is a Branch Out project awarded funding in August, which is being delivered in Year 2. This is considered an 'opportunistic internal project' which is eligible for the ODI and which the company would like to present as a Water Environment Improvements project. This is funded from Branch Out core funds and is above and beyond for NWG.

There was a discussion around Branch Out and the link between schemes. Following this, the group are happy to support Branch Out projects which are already funded through the core scheme as voluntary and above and beyond business activities, and which are eligible for the water environment improvements ODI.

The group were supportive of the proposal, particularly in relation to the localness of the scheme, and the accessibility benefits, and happy for it to progress to the next stage.

**DECISION: The Carrs Nature Reserve project was approved by the WEGG.**

Greening the Marina

ST presented the form for this project. This is another Branch Out project awarded funding in August, which is being delivered in Year 2. This is considered an 'opportunistic internal project' which is eligible for the ODI and which the company would like to present as a Water Environment Improvements project. This is also funded from Branch Out core funds and is above and beyond for NWG.

MJ had a query on the monitoring and maintenance of the floating island and noted that others elsewhere have not been managed in a way which promotes biodiversity and makes them attractive to water environment users. ST reassured the WEGG that this project includes a maintenance contract with Biomatrix and South Tyneside Council will be responsible for ensuring longer term benefits.

The group were supportive of the proposal and happy for it to progress to the next stage.

**DECISION: The Greening the Marina project was approved by the WEGG.**

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Derwent Reservoir

ST presented the form for this project. This is a joint Leisure Team and Conservation Team project, another ‘opportunistic internal project’ which is delivering wide above and beyond improvements and is eligible for the ODI, and which the company would like to present as a Water Environment Improvements project.

The group were supportive of the proposal and happy for it to progress to the next stage.

**DECISION: The Derwent Reservoir project was approved by the WEGG.**

Hanningfield Fishing Lodge

KW presented the form for this project. This is a joint Leisure Team and Conservation Team project, another ‘opportunistic internal project’ which is delivering wide above and beyond improvements and is eligible for the ODI, and which the company would like to present as a Water Environment Improvements project.

GD commented that this was a fantastic project and enquired whether this also included access improvements to the woodland area. This project is the first of two for Hanningfield and KW is currently developing a bigger project for Year 3 looking at footpath expansions and access improvements to open up and connect access to other areas of the reservoir including the woodland.

The group were supportive of the proposal and happy for it to progress to the next stage.

**DECISION: The Hanningfield Fishing Lodge project was approved by the WEGG.**

Mardyke Valley

KW presented the form for this project, which will be delivered in partnership with the Land Trust and the Land of the Fanns Landscape Partnership. This is returned to the WEGG for approval after it was not approved in May 2021 and a review was requested. The length of water environment improved to be claimed has been reduced and the company is confident the improvements planned are above and beyond its statutory responsibilities as the site owner.

The group were supportive of the revised proposal and happy for it to progress to the next stage.

**DECISION: The Mardyke Valley project was approved by the WEGG.**

RP requested that the Water Environment (WE) Team review the language used in the Candidate Forms to ensure it is clear which aspects of projects are above and beyond, and whether funding is allocated, confirmed, or required from water environment improvement sources.

The WE Team use a different front sheet for internal approvals which makes this clear and sets out what funding is required and from where for the internal reviewers. The WE Team propose to add this information to the WEGG form for clarity.

**ACTION: Water Environment Team to revise the front sheet on the WEGG candidate forms to provide clarity on above and beyond and funding position.**

These 6 approved projects bring the total number of approved projects for Year 2 to 12. One of the projects is now considered to be undeliverable, due to partner funding constraints. The forecast km water environment improved following this meeting from the 11 other projects is 30.5 km as shown in the updated scorecard below.

RP commented that these project approvals now ensure that the scheme is well set up to deliver further improvements and plan for year 3, 4 and 5.

Water Environment Improvements - Year 2 27th July 2021		No. Candidate Projects Developed	Candidate Projects		Undeliverable Projects	Deliverable Projects	Projects Delivered	Projects Signed Off by WEGG
			Approved by WESG (Internal)	Approved by WEGG (External)				
Number of Projects	NW	7	7	7	1	6	0	0
	ESW	5	5	5	0	5	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Water Environment Improved (Km)	NW	22.6	22.6	22.6	7	15.6	0	0
	ESW	14.9	14.9	14.9	0	14.9	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**AOB**

SWaN Conference and Essex site visits

NWG is organising a Science, Water and Nature conference in Essex on 6-7<sup>th</sup> October which may be of interest to the WEGG. KW will circulate some info to WEGG members. CD and ST will be attending and taking the opportunity to visit a couple of Essex sites. CD asked if WEGG members attending the conference or based locally would be interested in joining the site visits. RP suggested that this could be combined with a WEGG meeting. The WE Team will discuss this and keep members updated.

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**ACTION: KW to circulate info on the SWaN conference to WEGG members and Water Environment Team to invite WEGG members to linked field visits.**

Multi-year projects

CD asked for a short discussion on multi-year projects, particularly those relating to capital project legacy for WINEP. Where water quality improvements are used as the baseline and above and beyond access and biodiversity improvements are built on to these, it would not be practical for partnership planning and delivery or funding to claim all these only in the final delivery year (usually year 5). ML suggested that it would be appropriate to claim WEI projects earlier, assuming WINEP baseline improvements will be delivered, but these should be reviewed on a case-by case basis.

## ***Make our meeting effective***



GD suggested that should these projects then have an issue with WINEP delivery, reward gained would be clawed back, as the project would not have been delivered in full. CD agreed to speak to Jim Strange about how this should be managed within the ODI (though it is not expected to be needed).

**ACTION: CD to discuss reward returns relating to undelivered early sign-offs for multi-year projects with JS.**

### Email approvals

ST asked if approvals for Year 2 projects required for autumn starts could be obtained by email using the process developed in May. These projects need to go through internal approvals first but are expected to require approval in September. RP confirmed that this approach should be used.

### Next Meeting

The next meeting is planned for 29<sup>th</sup> September but is not appropriate for all WEGG members. RP suggested we look at a meeting close to the SWaN conference and if not CD will ask LK to send out a Doodle poll for availability for the next meeting. The group plan to meet quarterly going forwards.