

# Arun Valley Vision Steering Group - Meeting Notes

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017 – 14.00 to 16.30

White Swan, 16 Chichester Road, Arundel, BN18 0AD

## **Attendees**

Dr John Godfrey (Chair)  
Gill Farquharson (Chair)  
Sara Denton (AVVG Project Officer) – Environment Agency  
Dave Robinson – Environment Agency  
John Archer – Arun and Rother Rivers Trust  
Mat Jackson - WSCC  
Adrian Waller – Amberley Landowners  
Claire Kerr – RSPB  
Steve Gilbert – RSPB  
Fran Southgate – SWT  
Henri Brocklebank - SWT  
Peter Knight – Duke of Norfolk Estate  
Derek Waller – Arundel Town Council  
Jeremy Burgess – South Downs National Park  
Kate Rice – Southern Water  
Robin Edwards – CLA  
Roger Spencer – Arun District Council  
Andy Townsend – Environment Agency  
John Spence – Arun and Rother Rivers Trust  
Tom Ormesher - NFU

## **Apologies**

Martin Brightwell – Horsham District Council  
Mark Maclaughlin – Horsham District Council  
Matthew Woodcock – Forestry Services  
Louise Bardsley – Natural England

## **Welcome and Introduction to the Meeting**

1. Introduction and welcome to all members of the steering group (See attendee list above).
2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting were agreed by members of the steering group.

## **LTRAS Update from Dave Robinson, Environment Agency**

3. Dave Robinson informed the group that the Environment Agency is still happy to be involved in the AVVG but will not be able to provide further admin support to the group in 2019.
4. LTRAS was signed off in 2014 and it was agreed that implementation would be put on hold from January 2017 while the Arun Vision project was undertaken. The Environment Agency will review the recommendation made by the Arun Vision Group (report and scenarios) but it is the intention of the Environment Agency to start implementation of LTRAS and issue notice to cease maintenance in March 2019. This means that maintenance by the Environment Agency will cease in SU4 in 2021.

5. Henri Brocklebank asked what the impact of LTRAS implementation will be on the protected sites.

Dave Robinson responded by saying that the Environment Agency are currently undertaking an investigation to identify the best option for the future for SU3. Emily Bye is now managing this work and will report back to the group in due course. Andy Townsend will provide further information later in the meeting.

6. Peter Knight raised his concerns regarding Network Rail and their lack of support regarding the embankment their asset sits on.

Dave Robinson said it was difficult to justify spending EA money on this with no direct protection to property.

7. John Godfrey asked what contact the Norfolk Estate had with Network Rail on this issue.

Peter Knight responded by saying that were only interested in t Network Rail being reactive when there was an issue as opposed to being proactive. Derek Waller added that Nick Herbert MP has agreed to write to the Managing Director of Network Rail outlining the concerns of the Norfolk Estate.

8. John Godfrey asked Dave Robinson if he would put the Environment Agency position regarding the implementation of LTRAS in writing.

Dave Robinson Agreed.

9. Peter Knight raised his concerns regarding whether or not assets will be handed over in good condition when maintenance ceases.

Dave Robinson responded by saying that the maintenance protocol states the need to avoid excessive expenditure and that assets should be handed over in fair condition.

10. Jeremy Burgess asked if the Environment Agency would be prepared to review their position based on the final output of the AVVG.

Dave Robinson responded by saying it all depends on the final output and recommendations.

11. Derek Waller stated that he felt that things haven't moved forward in 2 years.

Dave Robison disagreed and said he felt that things had moved forward.

12. Peter Knight said irrespective of what the Arun Vision Group come up with, the Environment Agency will always be governed by Treasury rules.

13. Gill Farquharson asked whether the assets will be handed back in good or fair condition.

Dave Robinson responded by saying we always try to hand the assets back in fair condition, although he knows this is a point Peter knight would disagree. The Environment Agency have been able to fund maintenance costs of assets for longer than anticipated, Moving forward a new approach will be required with regards undertaking maintenance funding in a different way. For example the offer of funding from the Norfolk Estate could form part of a partnership agreement.

14. Peter Knight raised the point that SU5 is intrinsically to SU4.

Derek Waller added that if the recommendations for SU4 have an adverse effect downstream for Arundel then there is currently nothing in place to counteract these implications. £1.6m is required for Arundel.

Dave Robinson responded by saying that the Environment Agency will be implementing whatever option is agreed.

15. Gill Farquharson asked for clarification on the future plans for maintenance.

Dave Robinson responded by saying notice would be served in March 2019 and the maintenance protocol would be implemented. Maintenance would continue for a period of 2 years and would cease in March 2021.

16. Steve Gilbert said that the group needs to explore alternative option for funding maintenance.

17. Tom Ormesher suggested that there is currently an information gap in understanding the current asset condition and the consequence of them failing. Could the Environment Agency provide this detail in a simple way such as a set of slides?

18. Peter Knight said the condition of the embankments is of concern and Adrian Waller asked if the Environment Agency class embankments as an asset.

Dave Robinson responded by saying the Environment Agency had found money to continue to maintain the embankments.

Derek Waller said that all assets need to be handed over in fair condition.

Dave Robinson responded by saying that the Environment Agency are still bound by Treasury rules and we cannot guarantee to put everything into fair condition. There is very little funding available for the Arun Valley. With the funding we've had we have been able to justify small repairs but are unable to justify large costs.

19. Henri Brocklebank said that Network Rail should be part of the AVVG and participate in this discussion.

Peter Knight said that whilst Network Rail do not have permissive rights he is always happy for them to come onto the Norfolk Estate.

20. Dave Robinson said that there needs to be a 2 year end point (March 2021) when the EA stops maintaining assets in SU4. There may be scope for some further support but there needs to be an alternative sustainable way of funding on-going maintenance.

#### **Update on River Road – Dave Robinson**

21. Dave Robinson informed the group that the decision regarding finances for the wall collapse on River Road, Arundel was currently being discussed by Minsiters.

John Godfrey said that locally there was some hope that a way forward could be found.

Derek Waller added that Michael Gove had suggested that short term subscription might be the solution. The residents have had a quote of £500k to fix the problem. The residents can cover £300k and the £200k shortfall is currently being debated. Nick Herbert recently had a very positive meeting with Michael Gove to discuss the issue.

#### **SU3 Investigation Update - Andy Townsend**

22. Andy Townsend updated the group that John Gower had moved on from managing the SU3 investigation to a new role in NCPMS. Emily Bye is now project managing the SU3 investigation and Phase 1 of the project is now coming to an end. The intention is to share the information collated for Phase 1 with the group within the next few months. Phase 2 of the project which involved developing options for the protected sites will involve working closely with Natural England and other partners. Phase 3 will involve implementing the preferred options but it is anticipated that this will be some way ahead.

23. Kate Rice asked if WS Atkins will be available to inform Phase 2 of the SU3 investigation.

Andy Townsend responded by saying there was no additional money available for Phase 2 of the investigation but WS Atkins are available for support with the Phase 1 output for a year. We are currently planning for Phase 2 but conversations with Natural England remain difficult and protracted. We are currently talking to them about participating in the project board for the SU3 investigation as they are key to this process.

Claire Kerr suggested that this should be a recommendation in the final Arun Vision document.

24. Tom Ormesher suggested that this is an extremely important subject and should be discussed in further detail at a future meeting.

#### **Arun Vision Scenario Development - Sara Denton**

See Scenarios session output

#### **Dates of future meetings 2018:**

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2pm to 4.30pm

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2pm to 4.30pm