

Arun Valley Vision Steering Group - Meeting Notes

Wednesday 31st May 2017 – 14.00 to 16.30

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

Attendees

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

Apologies

Elaine Webster – Natural England
Martin Brightwell – Horsham District Council
Mark McLaughlin – Horsham District Council
Tony Whitbread – Sussex Wildlife Trust
Matthew Woodcock – Forestry Services

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.

Presentation - Andy Townsend Flood, Risk Advisor, Environment Agency (see attached document)

Key Points:

3. Environment Agency has 3 main role:
 - We are an environmental regulator - we target our efforts on the highest risks and the poorest performers to maintain and improve environmental standards. We also seek to minimise unnecessary burdens on business.
 - We are an environmental operator - we work with people and communities across England to protect and improve the environment in an integrated way. We provide a vital incident response capability.
 - We are an environmental adviser on behalf of people and the natural environment - we compile and assess the best available evidence. We provide technical information and advice to national and local government to support policy and decision making.
4. Within England we're responsible for:
 - regulating major industry and waste
 - treatment of contaminated land

- water quality and resources
 - fisheries
 - conservation and ecology
5. The Environment Agency are also responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea.
 6. The Environment Agency has permissive powers to undertake necessary works in main river watercourses and coastal defences. This means that we may choose to intervene in the public interest, where we believe works would be beneficial and / or economically viable, but we have no legal duty to do so. This recognises that we have finite resources and must prioritise how we use them.
 7. The Environment Agency is responsible for commenting on planning proposals where the site is within the estimated flood zone from the sea or Main Rivers. We provide advice on flooding issues and guidance to members of the public, developers, consultants or Local Planning Authorities. We aim to educate the widest possible audience about the consequences of flooding and ensure that proposals are sustainable in terms of flooding.
 8. It is about working with others to deliver the National FCERM Strategy for England. To deliver the Strategic Overview in England, we will need to:
 - a. Understand the risks from all sources of flooding and coastal erosion
 - b. Provide leadership and guidance on managing those risks
 - c. Work with others to ensure cooperation in flood risk management
 9. Funding for flood risk projects (capital grant in aid (GIA)) is provided from Defra through an annual bidding process.
 10. The Environment Agency reports to the European Union on the outputs of flood risk.
 11. The Environment Agency is a Category 1 responder where we provide both a strategic and operation response.

Presentation – Matt Jackson, West Sussex County Council (See position statement and presentation)

Key Points

12. West Sussex County Council as a Lead Local Flood Authorities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 are required to:
 - a. Prepare and maintain a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas, coordinating views and activity with other local bodies and communities through public consultation and scrutiny, and delivery planning.
 - b. Maintain a register of assets – these are physical features that have a significant effect on flooding in their area
 - c. Investigate significant local flooding incidents and publish the results of such investigations
 - d. Establish approval bodies for design, building and operation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
 - e. Issue consents for altering, removing or replacing certain structures or features on ordinary watercourses
 - f. Play a lead role in emergency planning and recovery after a flood event.
13. WSCC LLFF has prepared and continues to maintain, under the FWMA and Flood Risk Regulations, a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PRFA), Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and a local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS)

14. WSCC LLFA maintains a digital record including mapping of over 200 potential Flood Risk Assets that are the responsibility of various districts/boroughs. The Council holds a huge data catalogue and mapping is freely available.
15. The LLFA are required to investigate and produce a report on significant flood events (June 2012 flood event).
16. Establish approval bodies for design, building and operation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
17. Issue consents for altering, removing or replacing certain structures or features on ordinary watercourses
18. Category 1 responder and are more involved in the recovery phase of a significant flood event.
19. Operation Watershed funding:
 - a. Created 2013 Active Communities Fund
 - b. Support & Community, local solutions for local issues- examples include Littlehampton Flood Action Group and Earnley & Birdham Flood Action Group
 - c. £3m investment over last 4 years in Flood Resilience
 - d. 146 Community Groups
 - e. 356 Projects
 - f. Award Winning – ADEPT Award
20. The aim is to facilitate the sharing of information through local community groups. Making information publicly available to allow people to help themselves.
21. Aim is to make information more widely available to wider communities through resources such as Huddle and Sharepoint. In addition, mapping services such as Parish online which is a professional mapping system for local councils.

Presentation – Kate Rice, Catchment Strategy Manager, Southern Water (see attached presentation)

Key Points

22. Southern Water are responsible for a lot of infrastructure throughout the catchment.
23. Funding come from customer bills so they have to ensure the service they are providing is good value for money. The money you pay through your water bill goes towards our £3 billion programme of service and environmental improvements, equivalent to spending almost £1,500 for every property in our region
24. Engage with in a number of ways:
 - a. Customer Advisory Panel
 - b. Strategic Environment Panel
 - c. County Stakeholder Panels
25. With regards to flooding Water Companies are responsible for:
 - a. Public surface water sewers
 - b. Public foul sewers
26. Southern Water are currently working on their Strategic Statement which sets out long term strategy for waste water and water for next 25 years.
27. Currently developing Southern Water Business Plan 2020 -2025 alongside Water Resources Management Plan and Drought Plan. A timeline is included in the presentation (see presentation)
28. Very interested in exploring opportunities for a circular economy (using wastes as a valuable resource) such as nutrients from sludges and recycling water.

Q&A's

29. Derek Waller asked Andy Townsend to talk through the Environment Agency responsibilities with regards to asset inspections and the flow of information to local communities.

Andy Townsend said that the Environment Agency undertake visual inspections not structural inspections. If a defect below a required standard is identified then the landowner is informed.

It was suggested that the information is not being adequately shared with the community and that structures should be put into an acceptable condition before they are handed over to the landowners.

30. Claire Kerr asked Andy Townsend if the Arun Vision Steering Group will have the ability to change LTRAS and if so, can the Environment Agency provide a statement that clarifies this?

Andy Townsend responded by saying that LTRAS is strategic framework document which could be influenced by the work being undertaken through the Arun Vision Group. The Environment Agency will provide a position statement to the group clarifying their position with regards LTRAS.

31. Adrian Waller asked that Environment Agency data be made more accessible particularly with regards to flood modelling and the river bed survey findings.

The Environment Agency suggested that they could undertake presentations at future meeting giving further details on the riverbed survey and flood modelling for the Arun.

32. John Godfrey asked what the criteria is for the Environment Agency to fund works.

Andy Townsend responded by saying that the work has to be cost beneficial and has to have a wider public benefit (protect properties).

33. Julianne Evans asked what the Environment Agency responsibilities are in relation to the protected site.

Andy Townsend responded by saying the Environment Agency have a legal obligation with regards protected sites. Initial visual inspections are undertaken and additional work is undertaken if it is required.

34. Tom Ormesher asked if there is the opportunity to do things in a different way with regards information flow and work requirements.

Andy Townsend responded by saying there are definitely opportunities to do things in a different way. In order to do this we need to get smarter and look at other delivery mechanisms.

35. Dr John Godfrey asked what the budget was for the LLFA for delivering with the agenda outlined in the presentation.

Matt Jackson responded by saying that detailed information of the capital and revenue projects was available on the website. In addition, £500k was available through the Operation Watershed project for local communities to bid for funding. Other smaller pots of funding are available within the WSCC for active communities. It is important to identify what funding sources are available and develop a wish list of opportunities.

36. Steve Gilbert asked how the Environment Agency and LLFA work together.

Environment Agency Partnership and Strategic Overview teams work closely with the WSCC. Meetings are held to discuss inputting into the Environment Agency Medium term Plan for funding project and additional working groups develop new initiatives. The organisations have a

Memorandum of understanding and a Duty to Co-operate with regards sharing of data and information.

WSSC delegate day to day consenting responsibilities to technical engineers in the District Council. WSSC have a strategic overview of consenting and also take the lead with regards major consenting.

37. How is the Reservoirs Act enforced in the Arun?

Matt Jackson responded by saying the Neil Parish reported back from the select committee in support of reducing the threshold to raised reservoirs with a capacity of 10,000 cubic metres or more. For example this would mean that the number of reservoirs in Crawley would raise from 4 to 11. However, if the Government proposes a reduction to the threshold, it must set out a full evidence base to justify how this decision balances safety, economic and water management issues.

38. Dr John Godfrey commented that nothing about water quality had been mentioned in the Southern water presentation and enquired if this was an issue for them?

Kate Rice said that water quality was a big consideration for them particularly in Drinking Water Protected Areas with nitrates, pesticides (e.g. Metaldyhyde) etc. To combat this Southern Water are investing in their works and developing catchment management initiatives.

Julianne Evans stated that water quality should be something the vision considers as water quality is very important in the Arun Valley. This is illustrated by the fact that the embankments at Pulborough regularly overtop having a potential impact on the protected site.

Kate Rice said there were a number of projects Southern Water are currently developing/working on in partnership to improve water quality. Examples of these include supporting the development of a cluster farm partnership in the Rother Valley. This will complement the Arun to Adur cluster farm partnership that is already established.

Dr John Godfrey said that we hope to have a discussion with Defra on agricultural policy post Brexit at our meeting later in the year.

Actions and Decisions	Deadline
Andy Townsend to explore how information following asset inspections is currently shared and report back to steering group.	Next Meeting
Environment Agency to produce a position statement to include a statement on LTRAS.	Next Meeting
Sara Denton to arrange for presentations to be undertaken on flood modelling in the Arun Valley and the findings of the river bed survey.	Next Meeting

Presentation from Ian Moodie, ADA (See presentation)

Key Points:

39. ADA are a membership organisation whose members include Environment Agency, Local Authorities (LLFA and District).
40. IDB's cover a 10th of England's land volume and carefully manage water levels in areas of 'Special Drainage Need'
41. Pevensey Levels and North Kent Marsh are two areas where new IDB's have been formed.
42. Some Boards across the country have amalgamated into consortiums where they share resources.
43. IDB's were established to carefully manage water levels in areas of special drainage need.

44. The role of an IDB:

- a. Land drainage
- b. Flood risk management
- c. Irrigation
- d. Environmental benefit

45. IDBs :

- a. Represent the communities they serve through elected and appointed Board membership.
- b. Raise funds locally for water level management.
 - i. IDB Special Levy
 - ii. Agricultural Drainage Rates
- c. Seek to balance the priorities and views of all stakeholders within their Districts.

46. The structure of IDB's relies on where the funding comes from and is made up of representatives from Local Authorities, communities, NGO's etc.

47. There is lots of information available on the ADA website - www.ada.org.uk

Q&A's

48. Tom Ormesher asked if IDB's get involved with the RFCC and do they bid for FD GIA funding?

Ian Moodie responded by saying that the IDB's have no formal role with the RFCC and there are no appointees on RFCC's from IDB's. However, Anglian RFCC hold meeting with the IDB to discuss where the precept will be spent over the next 5 years. In addition, the RFCC do talk to the IDB about demaining sections of main river.

With regards to FD GIA funding - IDB's can and do bid for this funding. Sometimes to cover 100% of project costs and sometimes as little as 10% with the remainder being made up of partnership funding.

49. Roger Spencer asked how do you set up a new IDB?

Ian Moodie responded by saying that the establishment of new IDB's in other areas had support from Local Authorities and landowners. It is easy to transition to a new IDB where there is already a defined area and payments system established.

Lots of information available on the ADA website - <http://www.ada.org.uk/key-topics/governance-and-accountability-for-idbs/>

Dates of future meetings 2017

12 July 2017

6th September 2017

25th October 2017

6th December 2017