

Yorkshire Derwent Partnership

Minutes of Board meeting – 11th July 2016, Environment Agency Office, Clifton Moor, York

Attendees:

Jeremy Walker, Chair – Independent member	(JW)
Prof. Ian Cowx – East Yorkshire Rivers Trust	(IC)
Sir William Worsley – Independent member	(WW)
Alan Menzies - East Riding of Yorkshire Council	(AM)
Mark Scott – Environment Agency	(MS)
Crispin Thorn – Forestry Commission	(CT)
David Shaw – Natural England	(DS)
Terry Smithson – Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	(TS)
Prof. Colin Mellors – Regional Flood and Coastal Committee	(CM)
James Copeland – NFU (Substitute)	(JC)
Granville Davies – YWS (Substitute)	(GD)
Mark Young – NYCC (Substitute)	(MY)
David Renwick – North York Moors National Park Authority	(DR)
Duncan Fyfe – EA Catchment Co-ordinator	(DF)
Karen Saunders – Partnership Facilitation Officer/Secretariat	(KS)

Apologies:

George Winn-Darley – CLA	(GWD)
Adam Bedford – NFU	(AB)
Nevil Muncaster – YWS	(NM)
Richard Shaw – York North and East Yorkshire LEP	(RS)
Richard Flinton – NYCC	(RF)
Phil Long – Ryedale District Council	(PL)
Andy Wilson – North York Moors National Park Authority	(AW)

Summary of Actions:

No.	Action	Who?
1	DG to develop a suite of draft long-term measures and, if needed, interim measures, for consideration by the Board at the next meeting	Del. Group
2	Board members to send nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair to JW, IC or KS	All
3	Board members to send specific comments on the ToR to KS by Friday 29 th July	All
4	JW to quantify the immediate funding requirements and share this with the Board to secure commitment and explore potential funding with member organisations, including YWS.	JW/All
5	Officer role to work with the Board and Delivery Groups to pursue bids with LEP and RFCC.	KS/ Officer
6	KS to canvass Board members for availability for meetings over next 12 months.	KS/All
7	Board members to submit any suggestions for future items to JW/IC or to KS.	All
8	KS to set programme of meetings for the Delivery Group.	KS
9	DG to identify items for the Board to discuss at future meetings.	Del. Group
10	DS and MS to discuss Defra family representation for future Board meetings.	DS/MS

1. Welcome by Catchment Host

JW opened the meeting by thanking the Environment Agency for hosting the inaugural Board meeting and providing a buffet lunch. He then handed over to Professor Ian Cowx, as Chair of the East Yorkshire Rivers Trust and co-host of the Yorkshire Derwent Partnership.

IC welcomed everyone to the meeting. East Yorkshire Rivers Trust (EYRT) and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) are co-hosts for the Catchment Partnership and EYRT have received 'hosting' funding from Defra to support the development of the Partnership. Defra launched the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) in 2013 and EYRT have been the lead host for the Derwent since then. Along with YWT, they have been trying to build the Partnership, but have only had access to small amounts of money. Most recently, this money has been used for supporting the hosting role and, since November 2015, to pay for a Partnership Facilitation Officer. Work to date has focussed on delivering projects to help meet Water Framework objectives, which was the original driver for CaBA, rather than the bigger picture.

IC noted that although some progress has been made to deliver projects 'on the ground', there is still lots more to do and the idea is to bring all the key players together to move the catchment based approach forward. The hope is that this Partnership will achieve more effective joined up working among partners and EYRT is keen to support that. IC thanked JW for progressing the recruitment of the Board and added that he is now keen to see the Partnership make gains across the catchment.

2. Welcome and Introductions

JW also welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the apologies. His hope is that through the Partnership and collaborative working, the group will be able to combine the delivery of water quality and other WFD objectives with work on water level management to facilitate the management of flood risk and resilience to drought. By working together, in a joined up way, the Partnership will be able to manage multiple objectives and secure significant financial resources to allow much more activity to take place on the ground. Each Board member was then invited to introduce themselves.

JW thanked everyone for the explanations of their different roles and interest(s) in being part of the Partnership. He reflected on some of the common themes around delivering multiple benefits through effective collaborative working and the links between the environment, flood risk and the economy. There appeared to be enough common ground to achieve genuine integration of different priorities. He noted that although the Slowing the Flow project had primarily been about working with natural processes to reduce flood risk, there had been spin offs in terms of environmental improvements, community engagement and economic benefit. He was keen to see if that approach can be scaled up to a much bigger set of risks on a whole catchment basis with much more explicit linking of environmental, water quality and economic benefits with water level management measures.

3. Partnership – Background and Objectives

JW introduced the paper, noting that one bit of context had changed – it was unclear what the implications of the European Referendum vote to leave the EU would be for WFD.

However, it was agreed that the Partnership should assume that the Government would retain it, as it had been transposed into UK legislation and is the 'right thing to do' in terms of improving and protecting the natural environment.

The main focus of discussion was on section 4.2 (Objectives), which build on the work of the Interim Steering Group (ISG) and set out what the Partnership is trying to achieve. JW explained that, for the Partnership to be effective, it was essential that Board members were willing to sign up to a single set of objectives. The Partnership should be able to make progress on all of them, but not necessarily in every individual project. It was also important to recognise that there would be inevitably be tensions between them.

RF (apologies sent) had suggested before the meeting that it might be helpful to have an over-arching objective, such as improving water level management, in order to help resolve conflicts should they arise. GWD (apologies sent) had also queried the objective on access and registered his concern if the Partnership was seeking to create new access rights, particularly in relation to navigation. JW and KS clarified that this objective was essentially about re-connecting the general public with the river and that the objective was more about improving existing access rather than creating new access rights. The Board agreed.

MY reminded the Board that the objectives had been developed via a series of three workshops, involving many organisations. This had been an effective process, but it was also right for the objectives to be subject to scrutiny by the Board. DR supported this and noted that one of the key things from the consultation workshops was a shared desire for the Partnership to deliver 'win/wins.' To have one over-arching objective on water level management would result in the Partnership being seen as a flood partnership, and such partnerships already exist. The Board supported this and it was agreed that an over-arching objective was not needed – it would be better to deal with any conflicts as they arose. Moreover, there would be different views on which objective should be the primary one. There was some concern that the wording of the objective "to introduce or sustain catchment sensitive land use" seemed to suggest there was little evidence of this at the moment and could be perceived as being a new imposition on farmers and land managers.

CM reminded the group that although Partnerships are positive, they are time-consuming and the Board needed to be clear that by working together, they were able to deliver things collectively that they couldn't achieve on their own – i.e. there was an over-arching objective in relation to additionality. The Board would also need to accept that they would not be able to please everyone with every action, but to be clear about any no-go areas and accept them, focussing discussions on the areas of common ground rather than spending significant amounts of time discussing the 'no-go' areas. Partnerships would require trust and accept that it was a long term partnership that we are building (>10 years).

There was a general view that the objectives were about right, but would need measures to be developed in order to monitor progress against delivering them. It was noted that the paper referred to 6 objectives, whereas the governance paper referred to 8 goals. KS explained that the goals were generated by the workshops in 2015 and were all captured within the six objectives, but it was agreed that there should be a single set to avoid confusion. It was accepted that individual partners would be pursuing their own objectives, but in articulating what each member did/did not want, the Board could then focus on the

convergent areas. Some successes would give the Partnership some confidence that it could deliver across multiple interests.

JC noted that given the objectives and the calibre of the organisations involved, there was a huge opportunity, but also a challenge. Some organisations have a regulatory role, or steer legislation or could provide financial support, which could lead to a lot of external expectation. When ‘telling the story’ for the Derwent, the Board needs to make sure it’s captured and ‘truthed’ by all the bodies involved in the Partnership. MS asked what it was that the ISG had felt they were missing and would want from the Board. MY said that there was a lot of energy within the ISG and they were keen to get on with delivery, but wanted the senior endorsement/buy-in from their respective organisations. The ISG was prepared and keen to drive things forward, but if needed, would want input from the Board to help resolve any potential conflicts that might arise. DR also noted that it was important that the Partnership was able to tell a simple story about what we were trying to achieve – what difference will the Partnership have made in 10, 20, 30 years?

JW summarised the discussion. There was consensus that the objectives were in the right territory and that the Partnership was about ensuring so far as possible that “win/wins” were delivered so as to get the additionality being sought. The overall view was that we didn’t need to have an overarching objective and to have one, could potentially put some people off, by appearing to have a ‘pecking order’ of interests. All the objectives are important, but the Board should recognise that in pursuing any one objective partners, individually and collectively needed to think about achieving multiple benefits at the same time. The comments made in relation to access should be noted and clarified in relevant, future communications. As for the objective in relation to catchment sensitive land use, this was acknowledging that land management played an important role in catchment and that it was about helping people to work sustainably within the catchment, by supporting approaches to land management which could help achieve progress against one or more of the Partnership’s other objectives.

The next step was for the Board to produce a plan to address the different objectives, including lending support to other organisations already working on projects within the catchment. DR welcomed the input of landowners to the Partnership and noted that one of the Partnership’s challenges would be to ensure that projects makes sense to landowners and land managers ‘on the ground’ so that they can see how different initiatives might help them.

The paper also raised the issue of setting measures to monitor progress against the objectives. MY suggested that this might be an action for the Delivery Group and the Board agreed.

Action: DG to develop a suite of draft long-term measures and, if needed, interim measures, for consideration by the Board, at their next meeting.

IC noted that one of the requirements of the CaBA grant in 16/17 is to produce a catchment action plan. This will need to pull all the information together in one place and will be able to link to funding bids.

4. Governance Arrangements

JW introduced the paper and recommended that the discussion was not to address the fine detail of the drafting of the Terms of Reference, but to consider the main issues raised in the paper.

Accountability – it was agreed that, at this stage, it was not necessary to nominate a single organisation to hold money on behalf of the Partnership. In reality, it was important to choose the best fit for different funding sources, such as EYRT/YWT for CaBA funding, but it was agreed that if significant central government funding was secured, funders may look for this to be held by a larger statutory organisation. AM queried which aspect of accountability the paper was trying to address – finance, credibility or reputation. JW confirmed that in this case, it related to financial accountability. Since the Partnership is an unincorporated body, it has no formal powers but does have the ability to influence stakeholders and funding bodies and to help steer the deployment of resources. DR noted that the Delivery Group and others are keen to escalate the scale of delivery on the ground and hoped that where necessary, the Board would be able to ‘unblock’ issues – the test will be to see if the Partnership is ready and able to seize some big funding opportunities. WW commented that the informality of the Partnership is also one of its strengths and that the level of seniority of members of the Board is important as they have the stature to make decisions. CM recommended that the level of formality in terms of governance should be as light touch as possible.

Individual vs organisational membership – it was agreed that the Partnership needed senior level representation and that although occasional substitutes may need to attend, this should be the exception rather than the norm. Sustaining senior level participation at Board meetings was crucial, but it was agreed that if substitutes were needed, good practice would be for the Board member to have a meeting with the substitute before and after the Partnership Board meeting. CM added that there needs to be value for people sitting around the table, but the Partnership needs people who understand the domain and have the status to influence the agenda in their organisation. Knowledge and influence is what matters.

JW summarised the discussion: There should be a strong presumption that board members attend all meetings, but this doesn’t debar substitutes from attending. Meetings need to be sufficiently frequent to encourage continuity, and the Board was content to hold meetings quarterly.

Size of Board – The Board agreed with the proposal to proceed with the current size of the Board, but to keep it under review.

Partnership Name – The Board endorsed the proposal to change the name of the Partnership to Yorkshire Derwent Partnership. KS added that the Delivery Group also supported the name change.

Election of Chair/Vice-Chair – JW said that he had agreed to act as convenor for the first meeting, but made no assumption going forward. The proposal is to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair at the next meeting. The Board supported this recommendation.

Action: Board members to send nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair to JW, IC or KS

Big issues – A couple of Board members noted that the ToR referred to the potential for the Chair, in consultation with others to make urgent decisions outside of a normal meeting and

queried what those occasions might be. This was mainly intended to deal with the situation of funding bids needing to be submitted quickly and it was agreed that Board members could not make pronouncements/decisions on behalf of other organisations.

Action: Board members to send specific comments on the ToR to KS by Friday 29th July

5. Funding/Resourcing the Partnership

DR introduced the funding paper. The scale of funding needed was linked to the ambition and scale of the Partnership and a key challenge is always securing financial funding. He noted that delivering success takes time and cited the example of the Humberhead Levels Partnership, which is now securing multi-million pound funding, but started more than 10 years ago.

The immediate challenge is to secure some short-term money to help sustain/develop the Partnership and in particular, to fund an Officer role. A bid has been submitted to the LEP for pump-priming money to help with this, but there has been no formal response to the application yet and the Partnership needs to think about what other sources of funding might be available and, in the longer term, what the potential mix of different funding options might look like.

MY said that NYCC are very keen to see continuity and momentum in developing the Partnership and is prepared to contribute financially to support this in the short term in the expectation that others would do the same over the medium term. This would help strengthen other potential bids as an example of match-funding. The funding would be managed by NYCC's Environment Team. IC also confirmed that EYRT would be willing to contribute some of the CaBA hosting money, but they would be constrained in terms of how much money is available for any Officer role. MY reiterated that an Officer role was essential, without which the Partnership would struggle to sustain itself. DF gave an update on the CaBA funding for 16/17 for which EYRT will submit an application. He confirmed that it is to develop Partnership working and is not specifically for delivering projects on the ground, but only 70% of CaBA funding can be used for contracting external support (c£10.5k). It was agreed that there is a need for someone to facilitate the group/provide the secretariat role.

CM added that the biggest budgets supporting delivery of measures on the ground will be some of other organisations' budgets. The Partnership needs to consider this too – some of the Partnership's work will be about influencing expenditure of existing budgets of individual partners and other stakeholders. It was also important to build on momentum of Slowing the Flow and to remember that when asking for money, it is very persuasive if you can show that others have put in contributions especially from private sector.

JC noted that the Derwent Partnership is one of 11 Catchment Partnerships within its region. The NFU are able to support the catchment partnership due to the multiple factors captured within the catchment and benefits to our membership. If partners are to contribute financially to the partnership, it would need to be made very clear what the partner would be getting for the funding and why this Partnership merits the funding. AM noted that it was unclear exactly how much money was needed for one year, as there were different references. It was agreed that an outline budget for Officer support and other activities should be developed. This could then be shared with Board members with a view to members confirming whether they would be able to offer financial and/or in-kind support to the ongoing co-ordination and management of the Partnership. CT suggested that there were two different elements to the funding requirements -

one securing the partnership, which is the immediate priority and one about delivery on the ground.

DR explained that the LEP submission was for around £115,000 consisting of a mixture of revenue money for staff costs and some money to run up to three pilot projects. CM said that although he was not representing the LEP, it seemed that the bid was in line with LEP thinking going forward, but the Partnership would clearly need to develop a business plan.

DS explained that funding for Natural England was very tight. A result of this was that they had moved to a focus area delivery, one of which is the Derwent. He would therefore have some control in targeting expenditure in the area and over staff/officer input and therefore NE might be able to provide some officer input to keep the Partnership going. DS is leaving NE in September, so he would need to pick this up with his successor.

GD said that Yorkshire Water recognised the potential benefits of the Partnership's work and would therefore consider how best they might be able to help support it.

Action: JW to quantify the immediate funding requirements and share this with the Board to secure commitment and explore potential funding with member organisations, including YWS.

Action: Officer role to work with the Board and Delivery Groups to pursue bids with LEP and RFCC.

6. Other business

Frequency of meetings – JW recommended that the Board should agree dates for the next 3-4 meetings, meeting on a quarterly basis.

Action: KS to canvass Board members for availability for meetings over next 12 months.

Programme of Board Business – it was agreed, that the Board should develop a programme of work and business for discussion at future meetings. Items identified for the next meeting were:

- Election of the Chair/Vice-Chair
- Discussion on communications and publicity

Action: Board members to submit any suggestions for future items to JW/IC or to KS.

Interim Steering Group – it was agreed that this group should be renamed the Delivery Group going forward and should set a similar programme of meetings and identify items for Board.

Action: KS to set programme of meetings for the Delivery Group.

Action: DG to identify items for the Board to discuss at future meetings.

Successor for David Shaw – DS reminded the Board that he would be leaving Natural England in September. NE would need to review membership going forward, but it might be worth considering if the NE role could cover the EA as well or vice versa.

Action: DS and MS to discuss Defra family representation for future Board meetings.

JW thanked everyone for their time and contributions and closed the meeting.

Karen Saunders – 18th July 2016