

# M I N U T E S

## PICKERING PROGRAMME BOARD

Monday 13 July 2009 – 1030hrs – Forestry Commission, Pickering

### Attendees

Jeremy Walker	- Chairman of the Pickering Programme Board
Peter Welsh	- Area Manager North, Natural England
Andy Wilson	- Chief Executive, North York Moors National Park Authority
Prof Stuart Lane	- Executive Director, Durham University
Paul Murby	- Flood Management Programme, Defra
Cllr Peter Sowray	- North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Brian Baker	- Town Mayor of Pickering
Crispin Thorn	- Regional Director, Forestry Commission
Vince Carter	- Regional Development Manager, Forestry Commission
Tom Nisbet	- Head of Water, Soil and Heritage Research Group, Forest Research
Alan Eves	- Forest Management Director, Forestry Commission
Simon Marrington	- Pickering Programme Manager, Forestry Commission
Craig McGarvey	- Yorkshire Area Manager, Environment Agency
Jeff Pacey	- Ouse Catchment Project Manager, Environment Agency
Beth Medley	- Ouse Catchment Project Support Officer, Environment Agency

### Apologies

Janet Waggott - Chief Executive, Ryedale District Council

### 1 **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Jeremy welcomed all partners of the Pickering Programme Board to the meeting and introductions were made around the table. The project was of much more than local importance, with the potential to inform National Policy and practice.

### 2 **Defra Bid and Contract (Report 09/01)**

Report 09/01 provided the group with an outline of the “Slowing the Flow at Pickering” project, how and why the project had been funded, who the principle partners were, the aims and objectives of the project and a timeline against the key outputs.

The group congratulated Simon Marrington on becoming the Programme Manager and Jeremy gave thanks to all of the partners involved who had made significant match funding commitments or “in-kind” contributions to the project to date.

### 3 **Delivery Timetable and Key Milestones (Report 09/02)**

Report 09/02 provided the group with the Work Programme and Tom gave a presentation on the range of best land management practice measures that the project hoped to implement in order to help reduce flood risk and provide wider multiple benefits for the local community. He also described the key tasks and milestones to achieve a successful project.

Board Members considered what challenges there would be in delivering the whole project and after some discussion, agreed that there were 5 major challenges:

- Quantifying the success criteria of the project in terms of the local community, e.g. being able to answer the question “what difference will the project make to people’s experience and perception of flooding?”, and evaluating all of the benefits, e.g. the Environment Agency’s work in the Ripon Multi-Objective Project in quantifying the number of landowners taking action.
- Managing the public and, up to a point, Government expectation that the project will solve the flooding problem and the measures taken would be finished and fully operational within 2 years, when in reality the full benefits will be seen over a much longer period of time, e.g. tree planting benefits.
- Proving that the project has achieved a significant reduction in flood risk so that the measures can be rolled out with confidence to other locations.
- Securing match funding and co-operation from landowners, not least for new woodland planting on farmland within the Pickering Beck and River Seven catchments.
- Accessing Environmental Stewardship resources because of staff capacity constraints in Natural England.

It was agreed that all of the partners were fully committed to the project and would offer as much support as they could. The Programme Delivery Group were asked to identify and agree a list of criteria that could be used to evaluate the success of the project and provide an assessment of the main risks.

Craig said it was important not to lose sight of other relevant flood risk reduction activity going on in the two catchments. This needs to be addressed by the project’s communications strategy and appropriate links established with the groups involved. Stuart drew attention to the risk of the measures implemented at Pickering inadvertently increasing flood risk further downstream, for example by synchronising peak flows.

#### **Action**

- **The Programme Delivery Group to give some thought to success criteria and risks and make a report on these to the Board’s next meeting.**
- **The Programme Delivery Group to establish links with those involved in undertaking other flood interventions in the catchments and integrate these within the planned measures.**

#### **4 Proposed Governance Arrangements (Report 09/03)**

Report 09/03 asked the group for their views on a proposed framework for decision making and partnership working. In particular, agreement was sought for the roles of the Programme Manager and the “line to take” when communicating the purpose, aims and expected outcomes of the project. Within the Report, a Project Governance Structure was circulated, which raised queries about the weighting given to different strands. Vince assured the group that each “Strand” was of equal importance but that “Strand 1” was highlighted as being central to delivery of the contract with Defra.

As for the central purpose of the project, it was clear that the implemented measures would not stop **all** flooding in Pickering, but they should bring about a significant reduction in the frequency of future flooding, subject to the impact of climate change. However, the group agreed that it was important to establish, where possible, the level of protection that the measures could provide.

It was noted that the Pickering Flood Group felt excluded from the project and thought that they could offer valuable knowledge and experience, as well as their strong links with Ryedale District Council. Following discussion it was agreed that:

- It would be helpful for the Board to be more aware of other initiatives that were ongoing in the area, e.g. Pickering Town Flood Plan, a copy of which was circulated at the meeting, in order to have the “full story” and engage those already active in trying to reducing flooding in Pickering.
- Community representatives would be invited to present their thoughts on the planned measures to the Board.
- The Governance Structure set out in the paper was broadly correct, but the Board should consider ways of engaging community groups in the work of the Programme Delivery Group (next agenda item).
- The proposed timing of the Board’s meetings might need to be adjusted, depending on project needs.

#### **Action**

- **Vince to explore dates for the next meeting of the Pickering Programme Board, perhaps in less than 6 months time.**

## **5 Engaging the Local Community (Report 09/04)**

Report 09/04 provided the group with proposals for engagement with the local community. Jeff suggested that the following initiatives should take place:

- Simon would be trained in the “Working with others principles and approach”.
- A public meeting would be held in early September 2009 in order to inform people of the project and ask how they wanted to be involved. This would provide an opportunity to capture the community’s experience of either being flooded or witnessing a flood. Membership of the Community Advisory Group would be discussed and agreed, as would representation on the Programme Delivery Group and contacts with the Programme Board.
- Engage with FWAG and others to assist in asking landowners for their co-operation in the project.

Andy asked the group to be mindful of any planning permission that may be required and to allow for this within the project timescale.

Given the previous media reports on the proposed membership of the Board and Delivery Group, Jeremy suggested that a clear account of the Board’s conclusions should be made available quickly and a Press Release drawn up reporting the first meeting of the Board and the appointment of Simon. Tom agreed to take the lead in drafting a press release.

The Board agreed that the project should be managed in an inclusive way and every effort should be made to engage constructively with the local community, adopting an “engage, deliberate, decide” approach. Membership of the Programme Delivery Group should be extended to include representation from the Community Advisory Group.

**Action**

- **Jeff and Simon to arrange a well trialed public meeting on the lines discussed.**
- **Tom to take the lead in drafting a Press Release and co-ordinating the response to any media interest.**

**6 Any other Business**

There was nothing to report under this Item.

**7 Date of Next Meeting**

**Action**

- **Vince to arrange the next meeting.**