

MINUTES

Slowing the Flow at Pickering Project

Programme Board Meeting

FC North York Moors Office, Outgang Road, Pickering. YO18 7EL

2nd September 2010

1:30pm - 3:30pm

Attendees

Jeremy Walker	- Chairman of the Slowing the Flow Programme Board
Tom Nisbet	- Head of Changing Physical Environment Programme, Centre for Climate Change, Forest Research
Vince Carter	- Regional Development Manager, Forestry Commission
Cllr Brian Baker	- Town Mayor of Pickering
Simon Marrington	- Slowing the Flow Programme Manager, Forest Research
Peter Welsh	- Area Manager Natural England
Andy Wilson	- Chief Executive, North York Moors National Park Authority
Cllr Peter Sowray	- North Yorkshire County Council
Paul Cresswell	- Corporate Director Ryedale District Council
Craig McGarvey	- Area Manager Environment Agency
Lucy Huckson	- Asset System Management Technical Specialist, Environment Agency
Mark Young	- Flood Management Officer, North Yorkshire County Council
Liz Newbronner	- Chair Sinnington Parish Council

Apologies

Crispin Thorn	- Regional Director, Forestry Commission
Alan Eves	- Forest Management Director, Forestry Commission
Jeff Pacey	- River Basin Programme Manager, Environment Agency
Paul Murby	- Flood Management Programme, DEFRA

1. Introductions

JW welcomed all partners to the third meeting of the Slowing the Flow at Pickering Programme Board. Minutes to the previous meeting were agreed as being an accurate record and existing action points were dealt with as outlined below:

Action 1 - PDG to circulate draft success criteria for comment by end of January. ✓ (completed as requested)

Action 2 - JP to develop a clear note to explain the issues around creation of the bunded storage option on the River Seven. ✓ (Q+A document prepared and circulated to project group)

Action 3 - JP to develop briefing note to explain the issues around dredging of rivers and flood risk management. ✓ (circulated to Board members)

Action 4 - JP to contact NYCC Highways Dept to discuss Ropery Bridge. ✓

Action 5 - NO to complete modelling of CRIMS including those in Cropton forest and report findings by end of January. ✓ (modelling completed and results provided to TN prior to final report completion in April 2010)

Action 6 - JP to keep the Chair informed on the modelling work around the bunded storage option, including any need to seek a quick decision on options or support for funding. ✓

Action 7 - SM/TN to develop the STF website and keep a log of all media coverage achieved by the project. ✓ (website online end of February, media log in place)

Action 8 - JP/TN to develop ideas on how the flood risk benefit of separate measures might be illustrated, and how this could be incorporated into the development of success criteria for the project. ✓ (discussed by PDG during development of project success criteria)

Action 9 - TN to consider how to capture information about the multiple benefits of the proposed land management measures and incorporate these within the success criteria. ✓ (discussed by PDG during development of project success criteria)

Action 10 - JP to explore options for contributing to the national Defra/EA conference in June and to liaise with TN to take this forward. ✓ (TN presented combined STF paper at FCRM10 in June)

Action 11 - JP to bring proposals to the next meeting about incorporating flood resilience work into the project. ✓ (incorporated in project success criteria and proposed RDC capital grant scheme.)

2. TN presented an overview of Progress against Delivery Timetable and Key Tasks / Milestones (Paper 10/01). Highlighted progress by focusing on the '7 demonstration measures' proposed in the Defra bid.

Key discussion points:

CM - praised the amount of work which has been done, but pointed out the bunds timetable is now out of sync with the original project timeline i.e. March 2011.

TN - agreed but pointed out there is some flexibility in the wording of the success criteria agreed with Defra, so whilst completion is desirable if it is not possible it may not be critical as long as we can demonstrate that firm plans are in place i.e. 'design is agreed, funding secured and timeline established for the construction of low-level bund(s) and associated works within the Pickering Beck catchment'.

AW - drew attention to the fact that more than one form of consent may be required and therefore some works may still not be possible due to difficulty gaining approval i.e. commoners agreements.

JW - The project looks likely to achieve the stated aims but it may well have taken slightly longer to get there. It is important that we report and disseminate this sort of issue as part of our shared learning experience. Two years is not a long time, elements may take around nine months longer to deliver.

3. LH presented a report on the Bunded Storage strand of the project (Paper 10/02). A summary of the current bunded storage proposal is also provided on the website.

Key discussion points:

PS - declared an interest in the issue over joint determining authorities for the bund construction as Chair of the NYCC Planning Committee. The NYCC believes dual planning determination is regrettable but a legal requirement.

AW - highlighted a recent example of case law and pointed out the legal problems which may be encountered through trying to short-cut the system.

Action 1 - JW agreed to write to both planning authorities to advocate a rapid, joined up approach in order to avoid unnecessary delays during the process.

JW also agreed to act as senior project representative to prompt/facilitate/co-ordinate and ensure the planning application is proceeding as quickly as possible.

VC - requested a statement to clarify the position for members of the Board.

LH - pointed out that everything to do with the planning process from here on, including the Environment Agency formal opinion screening letter would be a public document.

PC - indicated a capital grant scheme from RDC to help at-risk properties with resilience measures may be launched in January 2011, subject to Council approval.

The Board welcomed and endorsed the decision taken by Ryedale District Council to support and part-fund the chosen Bunded Storage option. The Board also acknowledged the RFDC's funding contribution.

4. SM presented a Land Management Update (Paper 10/03) and drew attention to two recent significant additions to the website - the final hydrological modelling report from Durham University and an update on LWD dam construction.

Key discussion points:

BB - asked what the lifespan of the LWD dams would be.

TN - replied that LWD dams can persist for many years, with the capture of new material from the natural addition of woody debris to streams balanced by losses during larger flood events. Dam failures can occur but much of the released material is often retained by downstream dams.

MY - pointed out the increased potential of LWD dams in conjunction with or within close proximity to existing trees and (presumably) new planting schemes.

TN - acknowledged the role of riparian and stream-edge trees and said that such features are exploited when new dams are being constructed.

Unfortunately there is currently no way of encouraging LWD dam construction via EWGS in order to combine the effect of the two measures on new riparian planting sites.

JW - asked whether the LWD dams present Natural England with any dilemmas?

PW - replied that whilst there may be individual site sensitivity the LWD dams represent a natural solution and that far from being problematic this is desirable on an appropriate scale.

AW - pointed out that the public bodies concerned need to see the bigger picture and make the regulations work for the project rather than against it.
LN - requested that the project partnerships approach to and experiences of regulation need to form part of the final report.

Action 2 - VC to clarify for JW the potential to modify existing or develop new grant schemes that allow compensation or incentives to reach tenants to encourage buy-in to planned measures, following discussion with SM/PW/AW/Peter Barfoot.

The Board endorsed the Programme Delivery Groups actions to date.

5. SM/LH summarised the Working With Others approach to Community Engagement (adopted for the STF project at the first Board meeting) and requested the Boards approval and support for a second public event to be held in October (Paper 10/04).

Key discussion points:

LH - stated that one reason for the timing of the event is to consult with the community over the planning application for the bunds.

LN - requested that consideration also be given to updating the community at Sinnington in January.

LH - stated that the intention was also to use the event to raise awareness of and promote resilience measures (for residents who are not protected bby the bunds) with the support of the National Flood Forum.

BB - Offered the support of PTC and agreed to liase with SM/LH on this issue.

SM - suggested the format of the event would be similar to that used in September 2009.

JW/AW - agreed there is a need for the existing (Environment Agency) project timeline chart to be adapted and expanded beyond the end of March 2011.

Action 3 - SM/LH to discuss and develop an extended project timeline based on existing commitments and partner resources for circulation to the project group before the event in October.

The Board approved the proposal to hold a second community event during October, date tbc.

6. AOB

(none)

7. Confirm Dates/Locations for Future Meetings

JW - suggested that given the rate of progress an earlier Board meeting than originally scheduled would be appropriate. SM to confirm date and location w/c 13th December based on best availability.