

East Suffolk Catchment Partnership Meeting – September 2019, Bramford Church Hall

Meeting aims: discover interests from all partners in proposed projects and develop a project plan to take forward.

Documents: Project Proposal form summarising project ideas from partners (4 projects in total)

Jane Herbert welcomed all partners to the meeting and outlined the aims of the meeting. There was broad agreement that any project taken forward will help build a resilient catchment. The need for a 'river' focus was discussed, which does not have to be the sole focus of projects in this partnership, however water outcomes are key.

Project 1: Habitat creation (tree planting)

These types of project are excellent for carbon storage, public engagement and the reduction of wind erosion on farmland. When done on riverbanks this can be achieved without using more land. A target for Suffolk could be a 10% increase in tree cover.

National woodland creation targets were discussed (20% of land cover; current state is 11%), within which Suffolk county has the lowest tree cover in the UK. Within woodland management circles there is a focus on the wayfaring tree to replace ash, which works well in a farming catchment like ours. Black poplar is also a target species, however as an aphid host this is not suitable for farmland.

Agroforestry was discussed in terms of how food can fit within woodland creations such as this. Nutteries and orchards can play a role, and have a social aspect. Heritage trees have a cultural aspect and they also provide habitats, and a nectar source for pollinators. At present these are not in stewardship, so we need other funders.

In terms of funding such work, it could be one big bid, broken up into smaller pot of money which multiple partners use to deliver their piece. Local Authority engagement would be useful.

Farmers on the Sandlings want shelter belts, which can be native trees, and can ideally be moved into fields.

Input from partners:

EA is already undertaking riparian tree planting on rivers, via funding SWT to work on River Gipping.

FWAG is looking at soil as a focus for its work but would like to explore nutteries and orchards

ESRT are planning to talk to the Woodland Trust to explore tree planting projects

Gen Broad from Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (and Suffolk Traditional Orchards Group) was flagged up as someone to advise and potentially have funding.

Green Light Trust were also flagged up as potential partners in a woodland project.

Project 4: Riverine tree planting (Deben)

This project was discussed as a natural progression from project 1, however it would focus the tree planting along the River Deben, using trees from Woodland Trust, SWT's landowner contacts and EA technical expertise. The EA can bid for £10k per catchment and is already doing so for this work. There is no other financial incentive for this work.

Input from partners:

EA and FWAG are keen to move this kind of work into ELMS and EA have submitted bids. The aim is to find out what needs to be on offer before we see uptake from farmers. Naomi has found willing amongst farmers on the Gipping already, but this requires funded staff time to engage landowners.

Project 2 – River restoration (Deben)

This project looks to improve flows and allow natural water storage within the catchment through wetland areas along banks, back-channels, the introduction of meanders, removal of invasives and modification of barriers. This would build on the work we have already done on the Deben and provide some continuity of outcomes.

Input from partners:

Will Robinson from Essex & Suffolk Water attended an Innovate East conference where water quantity was discussed as a focus for ELMS which has not yet been addressed. Water Resources East (WRE) have £25k which

could be used for an East Suffolk project, and which may fit this project idea. If projects can be rationalised, split apart and delivered by partners, this would be a better prospect for Defra to fund.

Project 3 – Improvements to the Mill River at Bucklesham

This project looks at the Mill River in East Ipswich that flows through Brightwell into the Deben near Hemley. It was designated as poor quality in 2017 and also designated a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone due to agriculture (see data [here](#)). Working with landowners on nitrate application and reducing run-off, and engaging local schools and public with other sources of pollution will help clean it up. This could be a showcase for what can be done to other rivers.

Input from partners:

Paul Bradford from Sustainable Water Solutions shared his knowledge on the area, which also has lorry diesel run-off from the A12, and a culvert under Brightwell which would be suitable for a fish passage. The project could include changes to channel morphology and assessing water quality. Most landowners here are already engaged and involved in Felixstowe Hydrocycle and could be interested in putting meanders back in. The Wild Trout Trust have produced a paper which is relevant here; this is the only official trout river in the catchment.

Naomi Boyle from EA shared information on issues at Copdock where they have tried to tackle morphological issues. Treatment ponds are a possible solution. Working on a specific catchment like this is easier to see clear results, which could be replicated elsewhere.

Anna Beames from FWAG raised the issue of stakeholders and the polluter pays principle. Anglian Water extract here. There is a live landfill site as Foxhall nearby. There is a big housing development at Bucklesham planned. If we can map the private companies in the locality there is a potential source of private funding for the project.

General discussion

It was considered that the Bucklesham Mill River project would need to fit into a bigger project that works on bigger themes, such as Natural Flood Management, or building more resilient catchments. NFM would be more relevant to the Alde/Ore. All of the 4 project ideas overlap and they could be pulled together into one bigger project with multiple elements.

In choosing an element for initial focus and deliver we need to look at the areas with most opportunities, where engaged landowners can be worked with.

We need to be clear on our outcomes, which aside from biodiversity improvements, cleaner water, and WFD delivery, could include 'public money for public goods'. We need to consider the wider value. Sustainability of water and carbon mitigation are key, but all partners have their own outcomes to deliver within the partnership.

We would need a subgroup of 3-4 partners to develop a more concrete project plan.

Conclusions and next steps

Project 3 (Mill River) and Project 2 (Deben) were progressed most, with tree planting as an element to both.

First steps need to be identifying funders, and besides public money we need to look to private finance and do a mapping exercise of potential funders. An EA list of regulated industries could be helpful here.

Once this is completed we can develop a proposition to approach some big funders with. Companies mentioned include Nichols, Colemans, Stokes, Greene King, British Sugar, Anglia Water, IBIS hotels. CKI has bought many of these local companies, including ESW, and has a big charitable foundation (Li Ka-Shing Foundation).

Actions:

All to submit ideas for companies in the catchment to contribute to a review by ESRT of private funding for projects.

Jane Herbert to report back on meeting with Edwin from Woodland Trust re: Projects 1 and 4.

Will Robinson to bring directors of ESW together with view to making proposal to CKI's charitable foundation. Will also to keep the group updated on his proposals to bring Innovate East funding to East Suffolk (could be 3-4 weeks).

ESRT will work on project development with a smaller working group once we know the outcomes from Will.