

## Bath & North East Somerset Council Strategic River Group

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

Drawing Room, Pump Rooms, Bath

### Minutes

**Chair:** Cllr Ben Stevens (B&NES)

**Present:** Louise Fradd (B&NES), Richard Rutter (CRT), David Crowson (EA), Geoff Dunford (TRRT), Cllr Dave Laming (B&NES/TRRT), John Wilkinson (B&NES), Kelvin Packer (B&NES), Tim Hewitt (B&NES), Simon Martin (B&NES), Cathryn Humphries (B&NES), Mark Minkley (B&NES), Lisa Bartlett (B&NES), Zoe Hancock (Wessex Water/B&NES), Aiden Johnson-Hugill (CRT)

**Guests:** Andrew Culley (B&NES), Nigel Smith (EA), Andy Wallis (Black & Veatch)

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Matthew Smith (B&NES), Alison Howell (Natural England), Dan Green (Wessex Water), Sarah Allen (Avon Fire & Rescue Service)	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes and outstanding actions from previous meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All SRG members to send suggested outcomes to ZH for consideration of River Strategy</li> <li>• Develop a mind map of all relevant strategies/plans and research a knowledge hub</li> <li>• Update Governance Structure</li> </ul>	ZH ZH ZH
<b>3.</b>	<b>Questions- Update Papers</b> River Safety Group Update Paper- provided by Cathryn Humphries (Chair of River Safety Group) RR- How are near misses/accidents along the river being reported? CH-The River Safety Group is keeping a data base of all reported accidental incidents. Now in contact with A&E to get more information/data about accidents related to the river. Also in contact with South West Ambulance Trust who sit on the River Safety Group, looking to improve data exchange. RR- Is there a noticeable trend in accidents, is the trend of river related accidents increasing? CH- The number of incidents being reported is increasing, however at this early stage this could be linked to an increased effort in reporting and capturing these incidents, will be able to understand the trends after a longer time period to review the trend.  No other questions were raised with relation to the other update papers that were circulated.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Options Appraisal Study- Nigel Smith (Environment Agency) and Andy Wallis (Black &amp; Veatch)</b> The Options Appraisal Study has been commissioned by the EA and B&NES to understand what the feasible options are for replacing the radial gate/sluice gates at	

<p>Twerton and Pulteney Weir. Both structures were put in place to protect Bath from flooding in the 1970's and they are coming to the end of their operational lifespan. <b>Please see attached presentation for more information about the options that are being reviewed.</b></p> <p><u>Questions and Answers:</u></p> <p>BS- Asked for clarification that all potential options being discussed will provide flood protection and not lead to any more flooding.</p> <p>AW- confirmed that all options being discussed will not lead to more flooding</p> <p>RR-How was the impacts of navigation being considered in the potential options?</p> <p>AW-Impacts of navigation have been considered, for example the options being discussed for Pulteney are not just considering flooding, the end result needs to factor in multiple issues around that site, and navigation is one of those issues. Need to consider potential outcomes of installing a new structure/system on the river corridor up and down stream, potentially need to mitigate potential impacts upstream?</p> <p>Also the study highlighted the need to make sure all options being proposed could be future proofed. For example, an option would not be favoured that stopped the potential development of lock gates in the future. However, at the moment due to cost/effectiveness/demand lock gates are not deemed to be a suitable measure at Pulteney Weir.</p> <p>DC- Asked if an interim measure could be put in place at Pulteney Weir. For example, drop beams, until we understand what developments are taking place with Bath Rugby and we have resolved navigational, boating and planning issues in the area, maybe we should wait and see what the most favourable structure will be?</p> <p>LF- suggested that the interim measure would probably be 'do minimum', this would carry on protecting houses from flooding and would not spend any more money on an interim measure with potentially a short life span.</p> <p>It was agreed that we need to consider the options being discussed at a more strategic scale and both gates should be factored in to other evidence base/strategies/plans that we already have.</p> <p>Various funding streams were discussed, again the focus was to align these funds to see what match funding could be generated from LEP sources, EU funding and EDF programmes.</p> <p>DL- Are we considering if water can be slowed down coming into Bath to help alleviate the volumes of water that the new structures will have to deal with?</p> <p>NS- Previous studies have clarified that potential flood storage schemes upstream will not stop flood events from occurring within Bath, due to the geology and nature of this catchment. Flooding occurs in Bath when the ground upstream is already saturated from previous heavy rainfall and the volumes of water being channelled down the River Avon are too great to be held upstream. However, this highlights that this appraisal study is not a stand-alone operational study, other key issues need to be factored into the outcomes of what will happen at each radial gate.</p> <p>RR- Need to be very careful how costs and information is communicated with regards to this work. CRT have learned from previous work at other areas that issues of flooding and boating can be very sensitive and figures can be easily miss-quoted/ not used in right context, must have a joined up and clear communications plan for this work.</p>	
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	<p>Summary:</p> <p><i>Up to the end of phase 1a the focus of the project was on the options for maintenance or replacement of the 2 radial gates at Twerton and Pulteney. However, work to date suggests a separate approach to the subsequent phases (1b and 2) may not be the most appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>To date the team has separated the issues in Bath into two specific questions: the first being the maintenance of the radial gates (phases 1a, 1b) and the second the consideration of flood defences through the City (phase 2). The study so far shows that modifications of either structure has the potential to change the flood risk and the extent and level of wall raising, and in particular there may be substantial benefits in a more fundamental change to the Twerton Sluices.</i></p> <p><i>It is possible now to look at a more comprehensive scheme to reduce flood risk in Bath that includes work at both gates and also various sites in between and upstream of Pulteney. By considering a more comprehensive approach it is possible to highlight the potential wider benefits of the whole scheme allowing stakeholders and funders to influence and invest in the scheme as a whole.</i></p> <p><i>This revised approach to the study has been programmed and represents the same effort as the previously split project. However, the benefits from a stakeholder workshop can only best be realised by retiming it for mid-May rather than February as originally anticipated. It is hoped that a final report will be ready in July 2015.</i></p>	
5	<p><b>River Task Group Meeting-update</b></p> <p>ZH provided a brief update on the recently formed River Task Group that met on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015. The Task Group formed to address and identify the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat Dwellers/River Travellers needs and requirements</li> <li>• Navigational Issues- especially around Pulteney Weir</li> <li>• MoU between CRT and B&amp;NES</li> <li>• Provision of appropriate moorings in the planning system</li> </ul> <p>Both Canal &amp; Rivers Trust and B&amp;NES staff attended the meeting.</p> <p><b>River Travellers/Boat Dwellers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed CRT's Local Mooring Plan</li> <li>• Current issue- increasing number of boat dwellers not cruising- leading to congestion, need to be managed in appropriate way</li> <li>• Current lack of understanding- (demographic of these boaters/requirements)- need to improved evidence base on boat dwellers/river travellers</li> </ul> <p><b>Action-</b> River Task Group to draft a Project brief for outline for the boat dwellers/river travellers report</p> <p><b>Navigational Authority Issues- Pulteney stretch of River Avon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section of river not currently part of Navigational Authority- leading to various issues with management of the river along this stretch</li> <li>• CRT and B&amp;NES will work together to look for short term/longer term solutions along this stretch</li> <li>• Potential interim solution required. Eg: Public Space Protection Order (used in other areas of UK)</li> </ul> <p><b>Action-</b> CRT work with B&amp;NES to determine an interim and longer term solution in this reach of the river</p>	<p>ZH</p> <p>River Task Group</p>

	<p><b>Memorandum of Understanding- B&amp;NES and CRT</b></p> <p>It was agreed , in general an MoU (not legally binding) often helps to support partnership working, useful to have a set of principles clearly outlining the roles of each organisation around a specific area/matter- also helps with continuity of projects when staff leave/change roles</p> <p>Potential for Task Group to help realise the economic, social and environmental potential of stretches of the river corridor- future development and management- support for a Water Space Study/Plan in the B&amp;NES area.</p> <p>ZH- presented a few slides introducing the concept of a Water Space Study that was conducted in Bedford in 2011. Link to Bedford Study below: <a href="http://www.bedford.gov.uk/business/strategies_plans_and_research/bedford_waterspace_study_2011.aspx">http://www.bedford.gov.uk/business/strategies_plans_and_research/bedford_waterspace_study_2011.aspx</a></p> <p>It was agreed by the Group that the concept of a Water Space Study should be taken forward and the River Avon corridor would benefit from having a strategic and informed Plan (as part of a Water Space Study) that would aid coordination and delivery of projects along the river corridor. It was also suggested that the evidence base/information required to inform the Study should be linked to the existing evidence base that already exist (e.g. Enterprise Area Masterplan, Flood Risk Studies, Appraisal Studies, Green Infrastructure Plans, etc). Where there is a gap in evidence all new research/studies should be built in to support the work of a wider Water Space Study. Until a Water Space Study can be commissioned and finished, we will also need to consider interim solutions for areas like Pulteney reach of the river. The interim solution needs to be delivered in a joint approach with partners.</p> <p><b>Action-</b> ZH to develop a draft brief for Water Space Study for River Avon Corridor, including canal network</p> <p><b>Action-</b> Partners (EA, CRT, Wessex Water plus others) are invited to consider their potential involvement/contribution to this work and communicate with B&amp;NES/ZH</p>	<p><b>ZH</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p>
6	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>TH- Provided an overview of the River Corridor Fund update that was circulated before the meeting. TH also confirmed that £150 k has been approved for the 2015/16 River Corridor Fund, potential projects have been highlighted. Need to work out how to prioritise the fund. ZH asked the Group for comments on the following Criteria that is being proposed to help guide how the River Corridor Fund is allocated:</p> <p><b><u>What projects can be funded?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the key aims of the River Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Safe, Active &amp; Healthy Community use of the River Corridor</li> <li>o Environmental River Improvements</li> <li>o Sustainable Economic Growth and Development</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Confirm that work can be completed by March 2016</li> <li>- Demonstrate that the project can provide match funding (in kind contributions also supported)</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clearly identify benefits that will be delivered via the project to the river corridor</li> <li>- If feasible, work in partnership to deliver outcomes of the project</li> <li>- Demonstrate that capital funding invested during 2015/16 has been invested in a long term project that has a viable business plan for the on-going maintenance/work to maintain the project delivery</li> </ul> <p><b><u>How will the fund be allocated?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The River Corridor Fund will be used to support projects that deliver direct benefits in relation to the 3 key aims of the River Strategy.</li> <li>- The fund will support a diversity of projects that deliver a wide range of benefits.</li> <li>- Also, where feasible, the fund should be allocated to projects across the whole of the river corridor.</li> </ul> <p>Two potential options to provide funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revenue funding</li> <li>- Capital funding</li> </ul> <p>The 2015/16 River Corridor Fund has been assigned from the capital pot of funding; the requirements for capital funding projects must support projects that are provide direct delivery benefits and can be completed before the end of March 2016.</p> <p>General comments from the Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to capture invested costs- convert criteria into a spreadsheet</li> <li>- Can the River Corridor Fund be used to support the work of the Water Space Study?</li> <li>- Crucial that we improve evidence base where we currently have a gap in our knowledge/understanding, e.g. Boat dwellers report</li> <li>- Keen to feed in potential projects being scoped by TRRT into the Water Space Study, however future site allocations need to be informed by the Study/Evidence Base</li> <li>- Also need to consider how Section 106/CIL funding could support project work being scoped and delivered via the River Corridor Fund.</li> <li>- Need to work with LEP/LNPs to draw down funds to support this work- will help to generate income</li> <li>- Can riverside developments provide a contribution?</li> <li>- Can Local Sustainable Transport Fund (£3.8 million) be joined up with this work?</li> </ul> <p><b>Action-</b> Convert funding criteria into a spreadsheet and circulate for comments from the group</p> <p><b>Action-</b> Develop a summary table of previous river related funding- clarify what has been spent and where?</p> <p><b>Action-</b> Need to seek confirmation from Finance- what projects are suitable from Capital funding</p> <p><b>Action-</b> Research what funding can be provided from B&amp;NES to support the Water Space Study</p>	<p>ZH</p> <p>ZH</p> <p>TH/ MM</p> <p>JW/ ZH</p>
7	<p><b>River Avon- Social Use</b></p> <p>DL provided a brief update and raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>University Boat Race</b></li> </ul> <p>DL has been contacted by local university representatives who are keen organise/be</p>	

	<p>involved with a race along the main stretch of the river (potentially between Sainsbury's and Churchill Bridge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Bath Boating Festival</b></li> </ul> <p>DL has also been contacted about re-starting the boat festival, there is potential to work in partnership with Bristol Natural History Consortium to deliver a Boating Festival.</p> <p>The Group thought both ideas sound promising and positive for increasing recreational access of the river. However, with current plans to scope a Water Space Study, it would be advisable to wait until this wider piece of work has been completed. The Water Space Study will then aim to inform/consult with river users where the most ideal places will be to host these events along the river, and also ensure that they are compliant with safety/access issues and organised in a coordinated approach.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>A.O.B</b></p> <p>No items raised</p> <p><b>Date of next meeting:</b></p> <p>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2-4pm, Guildhall, Bath</p>	

#### Summary Table of Actions:

Agenda Item	Lead	Action Detail	Date for completion
5	ZH	River Task Group to draft a Project brief for outline for the boat dwellers/river travellers report	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2015
5	River Task Group/ZH	CRT work with B&NES to determine an interim and longer term solution in this reach of the river	Interim solutions identified by May 2015
5	ZH	Develop a draft brief for Water Space Study for River Avon Corridor	May 2015
5	DC, RR, ZH	All relevant partners (e.g. EA, CRT, Wessex Water) are invited to consider their potential involvement/contribution to the Water Space Study work and communicate with B&NES/ZH	June 2015
6	ZH	Convert funding criteria into a spreadsheet and circulate for comments from the group	April 2015
6	ZH	Develop a summary table of previous river related funding- clarify what has been spent and where	June 2015
6	TH/MM	Seek confirmation from Finance- what projects are suitable from Capital funding	April 2015
6	JW	Research what funding can be provided from B&NES to support the Water Space Study	April 2015