



**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017, 10.30-12.30, Humberhead Peatlands, Natural England, Unit 1a, Green Tree Warehousing, Tudworth Road, Hatfield, DN7 6HD**

**Attendees:** Helen Kirk (HK), Tim Kohler (TK), Melissa Masserella (MM) David Hinchliffe (DNH), Matt Cox (MC), Paul Duncan (PD) and Paul Schofield (PS)

**Apologies:** Caroline Steel (CS), Tim Allen (TA), James Freeborough (JF), Roger Mitchell (RM)

**Absent:** Cllr Sue Wilkinson (SW)

**Support staff:** David Hargreaves (DPH), Amanda Lane (AJL), Richard Smith (RS)

Discussions/Key Points	For Action By
<p><b>1. Welcome and Introductions - PD</b></p> <p>PD welcomed Paul Schofield (PS), Landscape Project Manager for the Isle of Axholme and Hatfield Chase Landscape Partnership Project to the meeting. PS thanked the group for his invitation to the meeting and provided members with an overview of his background. Steering group members followed by introducing themselves and the organisation they represented. PD noted apologies.</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising – HK</b></p> <p>PD invited HK to take members through the minutes from the last meeting as she had chaired the meeting. HK asked if members had any specific points that they would like to raise, if not she would like to take members through the action points that had emerged from the last meeting, assuming that members had read through the minutes. HK took members through the actions and the following was noted:</p> <p><u>Action 1 – Volunteer base to support the Project’s AfterLIFE monitoring works</u> – TK advised that discussions were still on-going and he had no further information to add at this time but would update members as and when progress had been made.</p> <p><u>Action 3 – Confirmation on associated beneficiary contracts/invoices for LIFE+ project can be viewed by Steering Group</u> – PD informed the group that invoices received from DE IDB, relating to the LIFE+ project were available in the office. He followed up by stating that DPH checks these invoices and asked who from the Steering Group would want to go through these, and what would be the purpose. HK said that she would want to check these to support transparency of information. PD reiterated that these invoices, received to date, were available in the HHP office and it was fine for individuals from the steering group to</p>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> TK to update members when progress made towards developing a volunteer base to support the Project’s AfterLIFE monitoring works.</p>



view these invoices. DNH sought clarity on how the invoices were audited as he was confused about whether the discussion was related to invoices received for the LIFE+ Project or the Water Level Management Plan. DPH clarified that the project was focused on the invoices that related specifically to the LIFE+ Project.

DPH went onto explain the audit process for the project, explaining that Natural England (NE) and DE IDB will carry out their own internal audit but that the project will be audited by the EU, through Ernest and Young. DPH informed members that KPMG had carried out an audit of at the Mid Term report stage of the project. The outcome from the audit has been received by NE and DPH will inform members of the steering group of the audit results when these are received, hopefully at the next steering group meeting.

PD reminded members that the EU Monitor, Lynne Barratt, had met with the DE IDB in late 2015 to discuss invoices and their eligibility.

Action 4 – Roger Meade report – TK said this action is ongoing. He has reviewed the report and is looking at re-introducing the monitoring elements but needs to determine how it will be done.

Action 5 – Obtain VAT exemption letter from DE IDB to forward to the EU – DPH informed members that the letter from HMRC would be required as evidence to accompany the next report to the EU to cover the DE IDB element. DPH has had discussions with Craig Benson at the IDB and there was some confusion on the VAT status. DPH clarified that VAT cannot be claimed as part of match funding if it is reclaimable by the beneficiary. DPH said he understood the urgency of obtaining the letter in good time for the next report to the EU (September 2017).

Action 6 - Management Plan - TK informed members that the management plan is still ongoing and that little progress had been made since the last steering group meeting. He said that he was reluctant to give a revised date for completion but would report on progress at the next meeting.

Action 7 - Radio tracking nightjars – TK reported that he has had various discussions with Kathryn Arnold at the University of York about what information can be released to partners without infringing IPR. He will explore this further with the University of York and report back to the steering group.

Action 8 – Availability of invertebrate assemblage baseline sampling raw data – TK said that he would follow this up and forward the raw data to the steering group members.

**Action 2:** DPH to share the results of the project’s mid-term audit, carried out by KPMG, when he receives the report.

**Action 3:** TK to update members on progress.

**Action 4:** DPH to obtain VAT exemption letter from IDB, as a matter of urgency.

**Action 5:** TK to report progress made towards completion of the Management Plan.

**Action 6:** TK to explore further with the University of York what information can be released to partners without infringing IPR.

**Action 7:** TK to provide the raw data to steering



<p><u>Action 9 – Circulation of socio-economic impact report</u> – DPH apologised for not circulating the socio-economic report to members. DPH said that he would send out the report and asked members if they would be mindful that the report contains confidential information, such as salary details, and that he would welcome this not being widely distributed but refer people to the report’s summary and headlines which focus on the amount of expenditure being spent at a local level.</p> <p><u>Action 10 – End of Project Conference planning meeting</u> – AL confirmed that the meeting had taken place on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016. This action is complete.</p> <p><u>Action 11 – Provide ideas/suggestions on community engagement activities</u> – HK said that she had suggested wildlife training workshops to support the sustainability of the monitoring element of the project post the LIFE+ Project. This action is complete.</p>	<p>group members.</p> <p><b>Action 8:</b> DPH to circulate the socio-economic impact report to Steering Group members. Members to note confidential information in the report and requested not to circulate the full report but to focus on the headlines.</p>
<p><b>2. Isle of Axholme and Hatfield Chase Landscape Partnership Project – PS</b></p> <p>PD thanked PS for attending the meeting, in his role as Landscape Project Manager, and agreeing to provide a verbal presentation on the project to the steering group members.</p> <p>PS started his presentation by reminding members of the key elements of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project has been around for 2-3 years.</li> <li>• It is a 5 year project which officially started on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016.</li> <li>• £1.84 million from Heritage Lottery Fund.</li> <li>• The project covers three key themes:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Peatland/Wetland Restoration – match funding provided by the LIFE+ Project.</li> <li>○ Time and Place</li> <li>○ Community Connections</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The key themes will be delivered through 15 projects, with one overarching project that pulls all the projects together through a series of events and training workshops.</li> </ul> <p>PS provided a list of the 15 projects, under each themes, as follows:</p>	



<p><u>Peatlands and Wetlands Restoration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peatland Restoration on Thorne and Hatfield Moors</li> <li>• Keadby Warping Drain</li> <li>• Reconstructing the Wildscape</li> </ul> <p><u>Time and Place</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From Flaxen Locks to Retting Pits</li> <li>• Castles and Manors – Kinaird and Owston Castle</li> <li>• Neolithic Age Trackway</li> <li>• Industrial Archaeology of the Moors</li> <li>• Presenting the Past Package (farmsteads, field walks, living history, stripfields, heritage skills incl. ploughing)</li> <li>• Landscapes of Heroes</li> </ul> <p><u>Community Connections</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorne Waterfront - Canal Community Connections</li> <li>• Thorne to Crowle Moors Access Bridge</li> <li>• Hatfield Moors Viewing Platform and Access</li> <li>• Isle of Axholme Greenway</li> <li>• Third Party Small Grants Scheme – up to £2,000 for community groups in the area.</li> <li>• Education Transport support</li> </ul> <p>HK asked for clarification on the group involved in the historic landscape project as there seemed to be some confusion on whether they were still involved as they had not received any recent communications. PS said he would discuss with HK at the end of the meeting.</p> <p>DNH and HK asked about the access bridge from Thorne to Crowle Moors and whether the Bailey Bridge would go. TK responded by suggesting that the fate of the Bailey Bridge is in question. DNH asked whether the new access bridge could be engineered to ensure that access restricted quad bikes, etc.</p> <p>PD again thanked PS for his presentation and asked that the group be kept up to date on project progress.</p>	
<p><b>3.Key Milestones/Operational Activities – DPH</b></p> <p><b>Project Performance Report - DPH</b></p> <p>PD invited DPH to take members through the LIFE+ Project Performance Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 by providing an update on progress. He stated that he would primarily focus on progress that was on red.</p> <p><u>Action A2</u> – Management Plan. TK had commented on this earlier in the meeting under ‘minutes of the last meeting and matters arising’. DPH went on to say that as long as the completion of the Management</p>	



Plan does not impact 'works' on the ground and was completed by the next report to the EU which would be September 2017 then it was not an issue.

Action C1 and C2 – Scrub control. DPH informed members that there were issues with the current contractor and due to these issues the outputs from their original work plan/contract had been reduced. He went to say that a re-tender for the remaining works was currently in progress and he hoped that a new contractor would be able to start at early February.

DPH went on to explain how the procurement framework used to obtain the current contractors worked. PD explained that Defra procurement now understood that the framework was 'not fit for purpose' in terms of the requirements of this project which meant that the re-tender could be done outside of the framework. DPH explained that securing an extension to the project should allow completion of the remaining scrub areas envisaged in the grant agreement.

PD also explained that a series of part payments had been agreed with the current contractor in line with their revised work plan.

DNH asked how much scrub the estate worker team had cleared. DPH said that he would obtain the figure and inform steering group members.

Action C4 – Plastic piling and steel dams on Hatfield Moors. DPH explained that Defra has a framework in place for this type of work and the contract had been awarded to Mott MacDonald. He explained that he was awaiting an inception meeting with the contractor but progress in setting up the meeting was slow. HK asked if there were any penalties in place should this impact on the delivery schedule for the works. DPH explained that these were built into the framework/contract. He went on to explain that the completion date for these works would be August 2017 rather than the end of March 2017. He suggested that any impact on birds would be minimal as the weirs were at point locations rather than over larger linear areas which would happen with bunding works.

Action D1 – Radio tracking nightjars. DPH informed members that he had received the 2016 tracking report and that he would send a copy to the steering group members. However, DPH stressed that the report should not be disseminated further, due to IPR.

**Action 9:** DPH to obtain the amount of scrub that the estate workers have cleared and inform steering group members.

**Action 10:** DPH to send members a copy of the tracking report 2016. Steering Group members to note the request not to disseminate further due to IPR.



Action D3 – Supply and installation of water-level data loggers. DPH reported that the installation of the boreholes will start next week. He went on to explain that these additional boreholes need to be in place before the pumping station is in operation as the EU want to have at least one year's data to evidence that the new pumping station is doing its job. DNH asked what happens if the data suggests that the pumping station is not doing its job. TK explained that data from the existing boreholes had influenced the construction of the pumping station and the new pumping station will be more flexible allowing alterations to be made, if necessary. DNH asked whether there was an agreement in place on what could be pumped from the pumping station. TK confirmed that an agreement was in place with the Swinefleet IDB which allowed water to be pumped from the site and that monitoring of the data from the boreholes will allow alterations to be made, as and when needed. DNH suggested that he may need a discussion reference water being pumped out of the site as it was currently brown. He went on to ask if the pumping station was on track to be completed, as scheduled. TK confirmed that it was currently on track.

Action E1 – Engaging with the local community. DPH reported that he had increased the number of projected outputs on some of the community activities, particularly in relation to a possible extension. He said that he would focus, with AL on training events for the local community. EB and MO would be focused on providing events for local schools.

Action F3 – Audit. DPH covered the audit of the project's mid-point sample earlier in the meeting. He reiterated that he would share the audit report with members once he had received it.

**Proposed extension update - DPH**

DPH informed members that he had submitted the extension letter and documentation to the EU, as requested. He confirmed that it was currently with the EU Monitor, Lynne Barratt, who was considering the extension. It would then be forwarded to the EU Desk Officer, Lazlo Becsy for consideration. DPH said that he is confident that the EU will grant the extension, particularly as the EU Desk Officer is keen to see three years of nightjar monitoring data and an extension would allow this to happen. He also reported that the EU Desk Officer had requested to visit the project in May 2017, to tie into a conference he is attending in Cambridge. DNH asked what the likely turnaround time was on confirmation of an extension. DPH suggested between 2-3 weeks, and went onto explain that the requested extension would see staff working either to the 31<sup>st</sup> March or 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018, dependent on their role in the project. DNH asked whether all the scrub clearance



would need to be done in this timeframe and DPH confirmed that it should. DNH also went onto ask about the plans for regeneration spraying once the project had finished. TK said that this would be part of the AfterLIFE and some works would be undertaken as part of the Isle of Axholme and Hatfield Chase Landscape Partnership Project. He also explained that the WLMP will help to reduce the regeneration as water was key to helping to manage any regrowth.

HK asked that as part of the final write up for the project that the questions is asked why it was only given a duration of three years to run.

**Science sub group – Terms of Reference (draft) – RS**

RS asked members if they would consider the ToRs tabled with the steering group papers. In addition, he referred members to the comments made by HK to the ToRs, copies of which were circulated at the meeting. PD asked before considering the comments made by HK whether they had remarks that they would like to raise. MM said that HK had made comments that needed discussion.

RS continued by stating that the ToR had been brought back to the Steering Group as this is the forum in which they had originally been raised. He referred members back to the extract from the steering group meeting held in June 2015. He also commented that only one meeting had been held and HK suggested that is why the ToRs were being discussed now. RS continued by taking the members through the ToRs, and then asked HK to go through her comments. HK said that her comments had been made to help with the continuity of planning monitoring once the project had concluded.

PD asked for clarification on the publicity point made in H6 and its link to H4 which HK had made in her tabled comments. HK suggested that the form of words may need addressing. MC sought clarity on the science group, for example, that it is not about delivery but offering practical advice to the monitoring officer. RS agreed that as only one meeting had been held the group had not yet got off the ground and potentially it was not serving what the sub group wanted from it. RS stressed that its focus should be on what partners who work on the Peatlands want.

RS explained about the membership attending the sub group meeting that afternoon, including MC, MM, HK, RS, DPH, TK and Louise Hill (LH). HK said that the membership of the sub group had not been discussed at the steering group. RS said that this could be covered in the afternoon. MM suggested that the ToRs are agreed in the afternoon meeting where further clarity could be sought before they are

**Action 11:** Science sub group to consider ToRs and RS to report back to the next steering group meeting.



brought back to a future steering group meeting. In addition, the membership could also be discussed.

HK also suggested that the language used in the ToRs could be tidied up, for example, 'intended' changed to 'hoped'. MM and TK suggested that the role of the science sub group needed to be linked to the management Plan, particularly if monitoring objectives were required post project.

**End of project conference update – AL**

AL started by summarising the outputs from the end of project conference meeting that members had attended in November 2016. She explained that the conference would be over two days, with a one day community event/conference yet to be discussed. Day One of the conference would also include a networking event and dinner, with guest speaker. The conference would cater for 100-140 delegates.

AL informed members since the meeting in November 2016 two venues had been visited – Yorkshire Wildlife Park and Earl of Doncaster Hotel, with a visit planned to view the conference facilities at Mount Pleasant Hotel. HK who attended the visit to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park gave her feedback on the venue. AL followed this up by tabling a Venue Evaluation Matrix providing comparisons between the two venues visited. In addition, AL tabled the budget for the end of conference, providing members with this in both sterling and euros.

Members discussed the pros and cons of hosting the conference at a venue with or without accommodation, and whether the budget could be used to cover delegate's accommodation costs. In addition, members provided suggestions on other venues that could be considered and visited. MM suggested that maybe there was a compromise by using a conference venue without accommodation and hosting the Day One networking event and dinner at a hotel.

AL tabled a draft end of conference programme as a starter for members to amend and redraft. AL and DPH asked if members could offer ideas on guest/keynote speakers. HK suggested that members could use their contacts and that Roger Mitchell might be able to get a contact for David Attenborough.

AL advised members that the next steps would be to agree on a date, conference format, venue and promotion. DPH said that the date would be dependent on confirmation on an extension to the project from the EU but would advise hosting the conference in May 2018 as the weather would be better and the majority of the outcomes from the project would be complete. PD suggested that AL and DPH source and visits other venues, reporting back to the steering group with

**Action 12:** AL and DPH to source and visit other venues and obtain quotations.

**Action 13:** Steering Group members to read through the draft conference programme and make suggestions to be





<p>quotations so that the steering group can make a final decision. He also asked if members could look through the draft conference programme and make suggestions to be discussed at the next meeting.</p>	<p>discussed at the next steering group meeting.</p>
<p><b>4. Any Other Business – PD</b></p> <p>PD asked members if they had any other business to raise before they moved onto discuss the Hen Harriers item, and members said they did not.</p> <p><b>Hen Harriers</b></p> <p>DPH provided members with context to this item by explaining that the contractors had been set on to clear scrub on Packards Heath, Hatfield Moor and work had been halted as Hen harriers had been sighted and they were mindful of disturbance to a Schedule 1 bird. He went onto explain that he had been notified of one bird roosting but two males had now been seen. He went onto say that once this information had been received advice had been obtained from the Natural England (NE) expert on whether scrub clearance in this area could continue. The advice was that work could continue. DPH went onto say that an email from HK directing him to a report from the Scottish National Heritage (SNH) contradicted the advice from Natural England but on reading the report further, the report contradicted its own advice.</p> <p>MC suggested that NE should follow the example set by the RSPB in the Humber who are continuing a programme of reed cutting works despite roosting Hen Harrier. HK suggested that it would be nice to know if the same birds on Hatfield Moors are those seen on Thorne Moors. In addition, she advised that the birds were potentially returning to the roosting site from 14:30 onwards. MM asked what advice had been received from the NE Hen Harrier expert and DPH suggested that from their perspective it was not an issue. MM asked that as there was conflicting information what advice NE were going to follow. DNH suggested getting the best advice and following that. HK suggested that scrub works take place between 07:50-14:30 and not change due to pressure.</p> <p>HK asked that whatever position NE were going to take that a precise form of words are prepared that can be quoted and published, possibly on the LIFE+ Project website. PD said that he and DPH would produce a form of words. DNH reiterated that whatever position NE take they should stick to it.</p> <p>HK raised the issue of the new flailing that had taken place on the Deer Riding and asked whether it would be undergoing a second run as it was deadly. TK said that if it was a health and safety risk it would be</p>	<p><b>Action 14:</b> PD and DPH to agree a precise form of words to support the decision made by Natural England.</p> <p><b>Action 15:</b> TK to address whether the Deer Riding</p>



<p>addressed, and he would look into this.</p>	<p>flailing poses a H&amp;S risk and to address accordingly.</p>
<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>PD suggested that members may wish to meet in a month's time in light of the need to agree the details of the end of project conference so that a venue could be chosen and the programme agreed. Members present at the meeting agreed.</p> <p>The next meeting will take place at the Humberhead Peatlands office on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 from 10:30 – 12:30.</p> <p>The meeting finished at 12:45</p>	