

Upper Foyle Catchment Stakeholder Group

Minutes

Wednesday 14 October 2009

Venue: The Grange, Omagh DC Offices, Mountjoy Road, Omagh

Present:

Peter Archdale (Chairman)
Joanne Livingstone (NIEA)
Stephen Annesley (NIEA)
Deirdre Spillane (NIEA)
Alvin Wilson (NIEA)
Brian Montague (NIEA)
Angela Halpenny (NIW)
Norman Henderson (NIEA)
Seamus Cullinan (LA)
Gareth Greer (RA)
Alan Morrow (DARD)
Jim Haughey (UAF)
Robert Scott (Abercorn Estates)
Margaret Gourley (NIEA)
John Kane (DCAL)

Apologies

Noel Melanaphy (FS)
John McCartney (LA)
Brian Johnston (Trout Farm)
Ian Irvine (FS)
Art Niven (LA)
Bob Davidson (NH)
Michael McAlary (NIW)
Lucinda Blakiston Houston
Robbie Marshall (UAF)

1. Welcome and Introduction

Peter Archdale (PA) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. PA explained that a shorter version of the minutes had been proposed and this was agreed by the meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

These were agreed to be an accurate account and are available on NIEA website.

3. Matters arising- Action points

AP 1: Alan Morrow (AM) to give an update at the next meeting on the new CMS with regard to water quality options and an update on the rational for variations in the closed period in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. (Carried over from previous meeting.)

Alan informed the group that there were approximately 950 applications for the new CMS with 150 interested in the water options, however some of these weren't successful as funding other applied to area of >1 ha. It was agreed to provide the update on the rational behind the variations at the next meeting as the farming community was not well represented.

AP 1: AM to provide update at the next meeting on the rational for variations in the closed period in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

AP 2: Joanne Livingstone (JL) to invite someone from IPPC and Waste and Contaminated land Unit to the next meeting to give a presentation on their role as industrial regulators.

It was agreed that this would be dropped from the agenda until a specific issue that needed addressed by IPPC arose.

AP 3: NIEA to provide answer on whether new hydro-schemes licensed will change the status of the water body to 'heavily modified'.

No rivers in Northern Ireland have been designated as heavily modified purely because of a hydro scheme. There was a discussion on heavily modified waterbodies and it was agreed that this issue should remain an agenda item until the final methodology and selection was available for discussion.

AP 2: JL to ensure that the final heavily modified waterbodies paper is circulated to the group and the issue is kept on the agenda.

AP 4: Mark Livingstone (ML) to collate list of existing landfill sites from Land Resource Management. List was provided.

AP 3: JL to circulate the list to the CSG to ask for additional local knowledge of landfill sites in the CSG area.

AP 5: JL to consider how a proposed project to promote fish spawning in the Creevan Burn by a local community group could get funding.

JL explained that she had spoken to the project manager and had discussed with DARD, NH, LA and RA how we could support the project. Loughs Agency provided the funding for the project and Seamus Cullinan provided an update on the works that had been carried out.

AP 4: SC agreed to provide a further update at the next meeting on how the project turned out.

AP 5: ML to discuss a joint management programme with John McCartney for the A5 WTC.

JL explained that an initial working group meeting (NIEA, DCAL and LA) had been held in Lisburn with Mouchel and the contractor carrying out the initial

ground work studies in the area. Unfortunately LA were unable to attend the meeting. There was a discussion on the concerns that the issues arising at the A4 would reoccur during this road construction. Pollution prevention should be as important as the H&S on site and that a section of the tender document should be written around pollution. Concern was expressed at the amount of culverting proposed for the A5 and how this was to be dealt with by the regulatory bodies. It was agreed that this should remain an agenda item for future meetings and that an integrated approach was imperative.

AP 5: JL to keep the A5 WTC as an agenda item.

4. Deidre Spillane (DS) – Regional update on pollution incidents and investigations in the Upper Foyle Catchment.

4.1 Deidre detailed the number, source and severity of pollution incidents since the last meeting and highlighted proactive surveys of poor quality streams. The presentation is available on the link below:

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic/catchment_stakeholder_groups.htm

4.2 There was a discussion on BOD measurement and whether or not BOD will be used in WFD classifications and monitoring.

AP 6: JL to confirm if BOD would be used in WFD classifications and monitoring.

4.3 There was a discussion on what gradient land had to be for slurry application not to be permitted. Alan Morrow (AM) explained the gradient was 20% but that spreading was still permitted unless they was a significant risk of water pollution.

4.4 There was a discussion on the recent flooding in Newtownstewart. Gareth Greer (GG) explained that this was caused by erosion due to heavy rain blocking a grate which caused the area to flood.

4.5 Concern was expressed at the recent clear felling by Forest Service may have exasperated the flooding issue. It was noted that some countries have moved away from clear felling because of the loss of ecology and run-off problems and also the nutrient flush associated with this. It was noted that erosion caused by clear felling has a detrimental impact on fish spawning grounds. It was suggested that stakeholders should be made aware of any plans to clear fell forestry. It would also be useful if FS could discuss the issue of the removal of brash from clear felling sites.

AP 7: JL to ask Forest Service to consider how to inform stakeholders of clear felling proposals and discuss the issue of brash removal from these sites at the next meeting.

5. Joanne Livingstone gave an update on the continued investigations into the ammonia problems in the Derg Catchment.

The presentation is available on the link below:

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/public_partic/catchment_stakeholder_groups.htm

6. Alvin Wilson gave a presentation on the way forward for the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans & the

development of Local Management Area (LMA) Plans within the River Basin Districts.

Alvin presented a paper on the criteria for selection of Local Management areas plans within each catchment Stakeholder group. The group agreed with the methodology but would like to see more detail.

Alvin explained that the local plans would be developed with the stakeholders and local input was very important. It was agreed that any comments would be send to Alvin directly.

AP 8: ALL – Any comments on the LMA selection paper to be e-mailed directly to Alvin as soon as possible.

7. Way forward for the Group.

JL explained that she would like to see a much more concerted approach in the meetings and especially in the implementation of the plans. She would like other attendees to have more opportunity to input their work and local knowledge in the development of the LMA plans and group actions. It was agreed the next meeting should focus on the LMA plan, with a round the table discussion with maps of the local management areas getting input from all stakeholders. This should allow the meeting to become more focussed on local issues which will allow more local stakeholder input. Some stakeholders had complained that the meetings were too high level and that they were not getting anything from them.

8. Close

PA thanked everyone for attending and for their input. The next meeting will be organised in the Spring 2010.

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