

WILTSHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

Notes of the inaugural meeting held at 1400hrs on 14 January 2009

Venue : Wiltshire Wildlife Trust HQ, Devizes

Present :

Gary Mantle (GJM)– Chair	Simon Smith (SS)
Annie Child (ACd)	Matthew Pearson (MP)
Philippa Morgan (PM)	Alan Pardoe (AP)
Andy Conn (ACn)	Gary King (GK)
Dagmar Junghanns (DJ)	Carole Torrie (CT) – minutes

Apologies : Alistair Cunningham (ACm)

1. Welcome and Apologies

GJM opened the meeting by thanking those present for attending and the apologies of ACm were noted on this occasion, although he was represented by PM and MP. Given that this was the inaugural meeting of the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance, everyone briefly introduced themselves – summarised as follows :

GJM – Director of WWT; SS – Assistant Director of WWT and representing the Worldchangers Group; ACd – Wiltshire Accountable Bodies Group; MP – Wiltshire Authority (Biodiversity/Climate Change); PM –Wiltshire Authority (Economy/Climate Change); AP – Hills (Aggregates and Waste -commercial); ACn – Wiltshire Authority (Waste Services); GK – Wiltshire Authority (Environment); DJ- Natural England (Biodiversity); CT – Admin and Personnel Manager WWT (interim support)

2. Election of the Chair

Making no assumptions about chairing the Environmental Alliance, GJM asked for delegate's views on the Chairmanship of the group. It was agreed that GJM should take responsibility for the role for the first 6-12 months. This could then be reviewed when all the members of the group are in place. It could be that, in the future, the Chair rotates on a regular basis – say every 12 or 24 months. It will be GJM, as the Chair, who represents the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance on the Coordinating Group. ACd asked for it to be noted that, whilst she would attend the meetings of the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance in an advisory capacity, she would not be a voting member.

3. Constitutional Matters (EA1/09/1 and /2)

GJM presented the above referenced papers. EA1/09/1 entitled “Membership of the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance –Proposals for Discussion” was in two parts with an appendix entitled “Original Proposal Paper (December 2007)”. EA1/09/2 entitled “Thematic Delivery Partnership – Performance and Planning Information” was a document which had been completed and returned to ACd in November 2008. SS produced EA/1/09/1 based on the results of an online survey, effectively updating the original paper produced by GJM in December 2007. For the benefit of those present, GJM gave the background to the setting up of the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance (one of 8 Thematic Delivery partnerships across the County) and explained how it will link in to the Local Area Agreement and satisfying the National Indicators. The ensuing discussions focused on three constitutional issues – membership; role; and terms of reference.

- **Additional Members** : it was agreed that the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance should remain a small group with each of the environmental partnerships owning responsibility for national indicators in the LAA being represented. The Wiltshire Authority has three seats (ACm from the Wiltshire Renewable Energy Forum; GK from the Wiltshire Biodiversity Forum; and ACn from the Wiltshire Waste Partnership) and the Worldchangers Network has one seat (SS) currently and each of the partnerships was asked if it wished to nominate a second member to join –perhaps from outside of the Wiltshire Authority. MP did not think that there was anyone obvious from the energy side but ACn, given that his current role will change slightly under the new Authority, did suggest that someone from the Waste Collection side of the new Authority should perhaps be represented. He acknowledged that this would be another seat held by the Local Authority however and if the members of the group felt strongly enough about the second representative from the Waste Partnership should be external to Wiltshire authority, then another member of WWT would be his recommendation. SS proposed that the Worldchangers Steering group should be asked to identify their second member.

The group then addressed the list of **“key individuals”** and the areas of technical knowledge which should be represented. . GJM and AP fall in to this category currently, but there are other areas of expertise which need to be represented on the Alliance, and for which members need to be identified.

“Water” : It was agreed that a representative from Wessex Water should be invited to join the Alliance. **“Transport”** : ACd advised that there is already a Thematic Delivery Partnership for transport and so linkage is proposed; **“Food and Farming”** : GK asked if anyone had considered the relationship with the Countryside Landbased Issues Group, as their remit relates. As GK sits on both the Landbased Issues Group and the Environmental Alliance, he has identified an opportunity to make the connection. **“Education”** :for further deliberation; **“Health”** : it was agreed that a member from NHS Wiltshire (PCT) should be invited to join the Alliance to cover this area of experience and knowledge; **“Economics”** : ACd advised that there might be some linkage with the existing Wiltshire Strategic Economic Thematic Delivery Partnership. AP, however, felt that small businesses need to be represented and would therefore welcome someone from the Chamber of Commerce; **“Minerals”** : it was agreed that the group could rely on AP for this area of expertise; **“Access”** : Richard Broadhead was suggested as a nominee as the Rights of Way and Access Manager and then maybe someone else to represent highways. In acknowledging the list in the paper is by no means exhaustive, ACn proposed that the **“MOD”** should also be represented on the Alliance, and Mike Constable was suggested as someone with a strategic remit from Defence Estates. DJ asked the members present if they felt that **“historic/archaeological issues”** should be represented. It was agreed that this area could perhaps be covered by the Culture and Heritage Partnership or this group and that ACd should look in to this and report back at the next meeting. It was also generally felt that **“Natural Resources”** in the wider sense would need to be represented.

GJM concluded this item by asking everyone to put forward the names of either individuals or organisations to be represented to cover the sectors of expertise now agreed. It is not anticipated that any formal protocol for electing members on to the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance will be necessary. A recommendation by an existing member will suffice.

Action : ALL

Specific Action : ACd

- **Role** : ACd suggested that, in order for the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance to be sure of a place(s) on the Wiltshire Coordinating Board, one of it's roles should be upgraded to include responsibility for performance management and action in the achievement of the environmental National Indicators, particularly those adopted in the Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire (LAA) and Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW). ACd tabled two useful papers on the LAA and a flow diagram about how the Thematic Delivery Partnerships link in to the various other bodies. GJM undertook to tidy up the terms of reference to reflect the discussions. It was otherwise agreed that everyone was broadly happy with the role summarised below for ease of reference :
 - a) To help develop and promote a vision for a sustainable future for wildlife and people of Wiltshire;
 - b) Identify priorities for Wiltshire
 - c) Provide a forum for debate and ownership of the environmental input into the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA;
 - d) Monitor movement towards the vision
 - e) Monitor progress of the new NI's of environmental sustainability;
 - f) Enable accountability of the partnership to the wider Wiltshire environmental network;
 - g) Build partnerships;
 - h) Pool ideas and share issues
 - i) Provide leadership and focus
 - j) Promote Action

Action: ACd/GJM

4. Local Area Agreement and Family of Partnerships

- **Place/role within the LAA family of partnerships** : GJM asked the group to once again refer to the flow diagram tabled by ACd to illustrate how the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance as one of the Thematic Delivery Partnerships fits in to the LAA family.
- **LAA Performance Management and action plans**: the LAA for Wiltshire is a range of actions with indicators attached. This has been agreed with Central Government and the Wiltshire Coordinating Group will seek information on performance from each of the Thematic Delivery Partnerships. It is now incumbent upon the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance to decide how best to develop an action plan to meet the NI targets and to agree a performance monitoring strategy. When both have been formulated, these need to be presented to ACd. It was acknowledged that in some areas such as Biodiversity and Waste, work is already quite advanced but that Climate Change needs a lot more work to bring it up to the same standard. It was agreed that the existing objectives and targets need to be brought together in one document and linked to the terms of reference. GJM asked ACd to undertake this piece of work

Action : ACd
- **Representatives for the Wiltshire Co-ordinating Group** : GJM will act as the main representative.
- **LAW/LAA Refresh** : it is current practice to look annually at core targets. The reduction of per capita carbon dioxide emissions should be elevated from the LAW to the LAA. GJM was tasked to chase Alan Feist at WCC on progress on agreeing baseline data. The Waste NI's and targets are not being "refreshed". Once the revised LAA has been drafted, it will be submitted to Cabinet.
- **LAW/LAA Reward Scheme** : there is total of £3M available for the county as a reward grant if all the LAA targets are met. Given the number of LAA targets the reward grant for each area of activity will be modest.

- **Risk Management** : Jan Collins will be delighted to address the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance on this topic at a future date. However, ACd did advise that, in the interim, a risk register does need to be drawn up.
- **Equality/Diversity** : GJM proposed that this should be the focus of a future meeting.
- **Additional NI's : The Environmental Alliance would be responsible for National Indicators 186, 188 and 197.** ACd tabled a paper with a list of additional NI's which are not currently 'owned' by any of the Thematic Delivery Partnerships. She requested that the Alliance consider each in turn and to state whether the Alliance was prepared to accept responsibility for them. ACd would take these minutes as a formal notification and the results of the discussions are as follows :
 - a) Agreement was NOT forthcoming for NI's : 5, 6, 137, 167, 175, 176, 177 and 198
 - b) We have already agreed to 186, 188 and 197
 - c) Agreement to monitor 187 only, as this NI is led by Affordable housing
 - d) Agreement WAS forthcoming to adopt NI's 185 and 194

Action : ACd

5. The State of Wiltshire's Environment

Bill Jenman, the Head of Biodiversity Action (WWT) gave a presentation to the group on this topic. The presentation covered:

- Chalk Grassland: over half the remaining chalk grassland in the UK sits in Wiltshire
- Unimproved Neutral Meadows: Wiltshire has 10% of the national resource that has declined by 98% since the 1930's
- Limestone Grassland: 60% lost
- Ancient Woodlands: 55% lost
- Chalkstreams: raising temperatures in these waters as a result of climate change is having an impact on breeding salmonids.
- Standing Open Water: this is a success story and is expanding as a result of aggregates extraction
- Farmland (Birds and Rare Arable Plants): loss of the commonplace
- Rights of Way: lack of investment in Wiltshire has led to many public rights of way falling into disrepair/closure. This impacts on the costs of obesity, mental health and crime.

Bill concluded his presentation with the sobering message that we are the last generation to be able to take the necessary action on climate change. It is time to act and the benefits of early action far outweigh the economic costs of not acting.

6. Wiltshire Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (EA1/09/3 and /4)

GJM referred to the above document which had pre circulated to all attendees prior to this meeting, setting out the Terms of Reference for the Sustainability Working Group, which GJM has been asked to Chair. Asked if anyone around the table would like to join this working group, ACn said that he would certainly benefit from joining such a group as he would need to gain further experience of developing sustainability appraisals in his future area of responsibility under the new Wiltshire Authority. GK also asked that his requirements should be adequately represented. The next meeting is to be held on 21 Jan 09 at Kennet District Council offices and paper EA1/09/4 detailed the proposed agenda

7. Credit Crunch Initiative

The group collectively suggested items for a questionnaire which GJM has been asked to complete on the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance, detailing the impact the current economic situation is having on the county of Wiltshire both in the short and

medium terms. All Thematic Delivery partnerships have been asked to complete this questionnaire. This promoted a healthy discussion and some of the points captured ranged from increased unemployment; to reduced use of fossil fuel; to increased use of wood burning stoves and insulation; to a downturn in the recylclates market; to developers having to cut costs impacting on revenue gained under Section 106; to the development of larger conurbations with social implications such as increased crime rates; to unemployment in the area forcing people to travel greater distances in search of work; to the pressures for cheap food having a significant impact on conservation farming; to less disposable income or funding being readily available for the charity sector generally and thus affecting the work of WWT, WCC and Natural England specifically. DJ suggested that this situation be reviewed again in 6 months time. GJM undertook to capture everyone's thoughts and forward the completed questionnaire

Action : GJM

8. Date of Next Meeting

17 March 2009 @ 1400hrs

Venue : Elm Tree Court, Devizes

The meeting to be supported by CT once again, if the nominee from the Wiltshire Authority has not been identified.

9. AOB

GJM tabled an article from the Wiltshire Magazine entitled "your say, your board". It is about the setting up of local area boards and GJM asked the members of the Alliance to consider how these boards might link in to the family of partnerships. This topic will be taken at the next meeting in March.