



## Summary of West Cumbria Catchment Partnership Meeting

19<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### Attendees:

15 people attended the meeting:

Angela Wakefield – Cumbria County Council  
Caitlin Pearson – West Cumbria Rivers Trust  
Clair Payne – West Cumbria Rivers Trust  
Dave Bechelli – Copeland Borough Council  
Ingrid Morris – Copeland Borough Council  
John Gorst – United Utilities  
Matthew Brown – National Highways  
Natalie Bibby – Environment Agency

Neil Ash – Environment Agency  
Nick Hall – Lake District National Park Authority  
Robert Frewen – CLA  
Sandy Brown – Mitchell's Land Agency  
Sion Platts-Kilburn – United Utilities  
Steven Hebblethwaite – Woodland Trust  
Vikki Salas - West Cumbria Rivers Trust

### Introduction

Vikki Salas welcomed everyone and outlined the purpose of the meeting as being to provide project updates and look at the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain as mechanisms to target and fund future delivery.

*See attached slides for details. The main points and any discussions are summarised below.*

### Project updates

#### United Utilities- Wastewater catchment management – Sion Platts-Kilburn

Sion explained that he is the Catchment Manager for the wastewater side of the business and John Gorst is the Catchment Manager for clean water, with other colleagues covering infrastructure.

The Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) is United Utilities' strategy for wastewater. This provides a high-level view of the most appropriate solutions for individual catchments, given their characteristics. A stakeholder meeting for the Derwent and Waver/Wampool DWMP will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> November to look at the next steps.

The Water Industry Natural Environment Programme (WINEP) draws down into specific site-level opportunities. The WINEP is currently being developed for Asset Management Plan period 8 (2025-2030). There is a deadline of November 2022 for proposing solutions for the WINEP. These will include both conventional and nature-based solutions.

The WINEP shows the priority focus for each wastewater treatment works site, including ammonia, phosphorus, chemicals and storm spills. These are based on the Cumbria Habitat Investigations that were undertaken in AMP 7. United Utilities are looking for feedback on these. This information is available on the United Utilities collaboration portal: <https://collab-uu.co.uk/> under 'Join the Discussion'.

Most priorities in the Derwent are phosphorus and in the Ellen are storm spills. Solutions are very variable and are still being developed. Potential solutions include on-site treatment, asset upgrades or catchment solutions (mostly for phosphorus).

**Action: Due to short timescales, Catchment Partnership hosts to feed into WINEP with Catchment Partnership priorities.**

The Derwent Integrated Catchment model is in development. Continuous water quality sampling is being undertaken at multiple points around the catchment to better understand water quality and the impacts of United Utilities' assets. In the Derwent catchment, the sampling is upstream of Bassenthwaite, on Stonethwaite Beck and on Newlands Beck. In the Waver/Wampool catchment, sampling is on Wiza Beck, Gill Beck and Chalk Beck. This data will help to prioritise and identify solutions.

**Action: Sion to ask colleagues if raw data can be shared with partners.**

Infrastructure removal projects are in development at Chapelhouse Reservoir and Overwater, Ennerdale Water and Crummock Water. United Utilities recently held public drop-in sessions to showcase and receive feedback on the plans for re-naturalising these areas. Further engagement events are planned for February 2023, ahead of the planning permission process. The work at Crummock Water is expected to be completed in 2025/26.

Ennerdale is slightly further behind in the process. Because the Ehen is a more sensitive area, due to the freshwater pearl mussel population, the works at Crummock Water will go ahead first so that any lessons learnt from this can be applied at Ennerdale. Overwater and Chapelhouse projects are progressing on a similar timeline to Crummock Water.

Flood modelling undertaken by Atkins/United Utilities shows significant reductions in downstream flood peak by removing Crummock Weir. The Environment Agency are involved in these projects and are also modelling the impacts of changes to the hydrology, particularly with respect to the receding limb of flood peaks passing through Cockermouth and synchronisation with the River Derwent flood peak. The primary driver for these projects is the habitat regulations associated with the SSSI and SAC habitats but any re-naturalisation cannot increase flood risk and opportunities to decrease downstream flood risk will be realised where this does not conflict with the habitat improvement driver.

The Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience project is also looking at options to increase water storage on the floodplains around Crummock Water, and West Cumbria Rivers Trust have funding to look at options for river restoration of the Cocker downstream of Scale Hill bridge. These projects need to be coordinated to ensure a joined up approach within the catchment.

**Action: Vikki to set-up a Cocker catchment meeting to ensure all these projects are coordinated.**

**Action: Updates from United Utilities infrastructure removals team and CiFR project team at February Catchment Partnership meeting.**

## **West Cumbria Rivers Trust project updates – Vikki Salas, WCRT**

**See attached presentation slides**

Vikki outlined the work that West Cumbria Rivers Trust have delivered this summer, including river restoration projects, invasive species control, fish surveys, habitat creation projects and natural flood management.

Funding has been secured for continued delivery, farmer engagement, INNS control and feasibility studies in the Cocker catchment, from the Farming in Protected Landscapes fund. There is money available for small-scale delivery in the Waver/Wampool catchment through the Water Environment Improvement Fund but this area is still a priority for development of a larger project.

Garfield Weston have offered some funding for a project in the Marron catchment but the amount awarded was insufficient to recruit a Project Officer so the funding may have to be diverted into another area where

match funding is available. The Marron continues to be a priority for the Catchment Partnership due to the multiple drivers of SAC habitat, high phosphorus levels, poor fish numbers and flood risk.

The Resilient Glenderamackin Investment Readiness project is continuing to be developed and the project team are starting to have conversations with potential buyers, with the aim of securing £8 million over the 5-year project period. JBA and the Environment Agency are helping to model the impact of the proposed project on flood risk in Keswick. Neil Ash highlighted the need to consider the timing and synchronisation of the Glenderamackin and St. John's Beck flood peaks.

Information on the range of funding sources available and what each could be used for was requested. There are online funding platforms such as the Grants Online searchable database that list all grant opportunities. <https://www.grantsonline.org.uk/members-area/user-guide>. However, these are paid for at £150 per year.

**Action: Caitlin to collate list of funding sources available to the Catchment Partnership.**

### **Riverlands – Becky Powell, National Trust**

Becky was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. The National Trust have delivered a number of projects this year through the Riverlands programme. Many of the projects are on open access land and worth a visit:

- Armboth fell peat restoration and access improvements
- Stonethwaite floodplain restoration
- Dunthwaite – large scale pond creation, ditch blocking and wetland restoration.
- Hartsop Beck – in the Eden catchment but a good example of river restoration within a farmed landscape, setting back flood embankments to allow more natural lateral movement of the river.

### **Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Angela Wakefield, Cumbria County Council**

**See attached slides.**

The Environment and Sustainability team within Cumbria County Council has only existed for a year. With the local government reorganisation in April 2023, the team is likely to be split into two. It is hoped that cumbria-wide projects, like the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, will remain at this scale but one authority will become the accountable body.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy aims to create a co-ordinated and collaborative approach to nature recovery. Currently a draft strategy has been produced, following the pilot project in 2021. The strategy has not been formally launched, and will need to go to public consultation, but the draft strategy and maps are available online. The written strategy (<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/planning-environment/lhrs/default.asp>) sets out the outcomes and measures that need to be achieved for nature recovery. This document is close to being a final draft but needs some work on its presentation. The mapping tries to show the spatial priorities for restoration of 18 priority habitats but currently has multiple layers and is complicated to interpret:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/37f4d1624e384a058957ed71dd1c48f7>

The LNRS team are awaiting further guidance from DEFRA on funding, regulations and next steps but are continuing to progress with work to improve the maps and prepare for wider stakeholder engagement.

Angela asked the group how they would like to be involved and how they might use the strategy. It was difficult to answer this without further guidance from DEFRA on whether the Local Nature Recovery will be linked to funding or used to target Environmental Land Management payments. It was felt that opportunity maps are often unreliable and delivery is primarily constrained by what landowners are willing to do.

The Environment Agency are currently creating strategies for individual catchments, looking at how multiple benefits can be delivered through the FCRM programme and how multiple sources of funding can be combined

to facilitate delivery. The Kent is the first catchment that this is being done for but this approach will be expanded across the county. Linking these catchment strategies to the LNRS to coordinate delivery will be essential.

**Action: Angela to speak to Chris Evans, Environment Agency.**

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy could be a good way to increase the accessibility of data, as records from the Biological Records Centre are expensive. Using the LNRS as an initial screening tool to see if something is likely to be suitable in a given location would be useful. It would also be helpful for the maps to include protected sites, condition and reasons for failure.

The maps currently do not represent rivers and floodplains. Information on river condition and restorability should be inputted into the mapping layers and the Catchment Partners are well placed to do this.

**Action: Angela to liaise with Catchment Partnership to improve mapping.**

## **Biodiversity Net Gain – Nick Hall, Lake District National Park Authority**

*See attached slides.*

**WCCP hosted a webinar in August 2022 on Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality and notes were circulated. These provide further background information about these two new requirements.**

Biodiversity Net Gain 'off-setting' should be done as close to the development site as possible, ideally within the site. It has to be 'additional'; it can't be used for something that would be happening anyway. BNG cannot fund improvements to protected sites if it is improving a feature of interest. This may reduce how it can be used within large areas of the National Park and SAC rivers.

Nick's role is to get the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) ready for BNG coming in next year. There are currently delays from DEFRA in the guidance about how certain elements will work, which is affecting this preparatory work. There needs to be some projects ready for developers to select from by Autumn 2023 so that developments can continue to go ahead. DEFRA are also currently consulting on the BNG metric. There will be a new version of the metric and the UK Habitat Classification early next year.

The Lake District National Park Authority could act as a broker or ask developers to find BNG units themselves. Baseline surveys are required with a management plan and an assessment of how many units implementing this plan would provide. Ideally, we would see holistic management plans agreed before a developer approaches. These could be put on the market so a developer can see if the units on offer match what they need. Currently units are priced at about £20k each. There are a very limited number of ecologists who are able to do baseline condition assessments and unit calculations. There is also a funding gap here, landowners may have to fund these surveys themselves but this may discourage people from offering BNG units. This gap could be covered by private finance but it cannot be funded from Government sources.

Biodiversity Net Gain will use Section 106 agreements or Conservation Covenants to get 30-year agreements between the developer and landowner. Long term monitoring will be a key part of these agreements. Under a Section 106 agreement, the Planning Authority would monitor the site. Under a Conservation Covenant the Wildlife Trust could be contracted to monitor.

Environment Bank are currently contacting farmers but they are not interested in sites smaller than 10 Ha. The LDNPA could potentially be a broker for smaller sites. Nick is currently trying to set up 2 x 20 Ha habitat banks in Cumbria.

Currently a landowner is not allowed to 'stack' income for multiple benefits from the same piece of land. For example, planting a woodland and selling BNG, nutrient neutrality and carbon units. However, 'bundling' different features within one site is allowed e.g. creating a woodland, hedgerow and wetland and selling these to different income streams.

LDNPA are currently employing a team to help implement nutrient neutrality. Nutrient Neutrality requires very long agreements (120 years) and feedback from landowners is that this is too long to commit to as it is essentially a permanent land use change.

The Countryside and Land Association recently released a podcast on nutrient neutrality [Nutrient Neutrality: What is the impact on development? • CLA](#)

Eden District Council have a nutrient budget calculator online, which shows how much mitigation is needed for a given development. There are no standard measures for mitigation actions; site-specific assessments are required. There is a lack of expertise available to do this and, as for BNG, there is a funding gap for these assessments to be carried out.

Air pollution is also increasingly important for planning applications near protected sites. Simple Calculation of Atmospheric Impact Limits (SCAIL) is a set of online screening tools that assess the impacts of agricultural developments on SSSIs and SACs in terms of acidity, nitrogen and Sulphur deposition and may be relevant for farmers looking to undertake any development.

## Project Reporting

When the Catchment Partnership reported directly to the Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership, a list of projects was collated every quarter showing new projects and project progress. This project spreadsheet still exists but has not been kept up to date since 2020.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15SKBeMte6kpiH\\_v5XimW8QM3NWQfmT-wNlndMFsl4Qk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15SKBeMte6kpiH_v5XimW8QM3NWQfmT-wNlndMFsl4Qk/edit?usp=sharing)

Understanding project opportunities and who is working where allows us to identify potential collaboration and match funding, to avoid duplication and competition and match opportunities with funding sources. It is therefore key to the objectives of the Catchment Partnership. However, populating the spreadsheet requires resource from partners and often requires multiple people within an organisation to update on all relevant projects.

Partners were asked a series of questions to gauge support for continuing to use the spreadsheet and how it could be improved. Results are displayed on the attached slides (Catchment Hosts didn't vote).

It is clear that partners are not making use of the project spreadsheet. This may reflect a high turnover in Catchment Partnership members within the last two years. Everyone present wanted to keep using the spreadsheet. The majority felt that the online system remained the best way of updating it but some felt a one-to-one catch up would be better. Some organisations already have lists of project opportunities and progress that could be shared with the Catchment Partnership hosts. It was felt that once every six months was an appropriate frequency for updating the spreadsheet.

**Action: Partners to update the spreadsheet by the end of November. If anyone would rather do this in a meeting or would like to send through existing project lists to be added to the Partnership list, email Caitlin.**

Everyone present thought it would be useful to receive a summary of the project pipeline. The majority of organisations would like Catchment Partnership hosts to feed projects into funding streams on their behalf. When the project spreadsheet is up-to-date, Catchment Hosts will refer to it when funding opportunities arise but will check with project leads before putting any projects forward for funding.

The Environment Agency are developing the North-West Opportunities Toolkit, which will rationalise their capital delivery programme and identify where there is overlap in where people are working. Jacobs are currently developing this. This needs to compliment, rather than duplicate, the Catchment Partnership project spreadsheet. The North-West Opportunities toolkit will be discussed in more detail at future meetings, as it develops.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be in February 2023. A number of topics were identified throughout the course of this meeting. Voting on other topics showed that partners would like to cover: project updates, LNRS, funding opportunities and partnership communications campaigns. Specific suggestions included a planning department view of BNG and nutrient neutrality and a communications campaign specifically for Cockermouth.