

Latchmore Brook Restoration EIA



Purpose Stakeholder Meeting – Friends of Latchmore
Project number 5964.01

Date Wednesday 26th February 2014

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Name	Organisation / Email	Att.	Dist.
Jane Smith	Forestry Commission	•	•
Mike Seddon	Forestry Commission		•
Marianne Bergin	Forestry Commission	•	•
John Shepherd	Friends of Latchmore	•	•
Fiona McDonald	Friends of Latchmore	•	•
Ailsa Farrand	Friends of Latchmore	•	•
Philip Smith	LUC		•
Sarah Young	LUC	•	•
Ben Miller	LUC	•	•
Eric Heath	LUC	•	•
Helen Kent	LUC		•
Claire Pitcher	Cascade		•
Omar Sholi	Cascade	•	•

Summary of Meeting

Action

The meeting began with all attendees introducing themselves.

Sarah Young (SY), along with contributions from Eric Heath (EH) and Omar Sholi (OS), gave a presentation to the attendees. The presentation outlined the background to the proposed Latchmore Brook restoration scheme EIA, who LUC and Cascade are and how the EIA process and associated consultation would be undertaken.

Throughout the presentation and afterwards, a range of questions and discussions took place which are summarised below.

EIA Process

Friends of Latchmore (FoL) asked the difference between IEEM and IEMA, as the IEEM guidelines seem more appropriate to the EIA. EH stated that IEEM are ecology focused, whereas IEMA is an environmental/planning professional body which covers the full range of topics covered in an EIA. The ecology chapters of the EIA will be undertaken in accordance with the IEEM guidelines. SY highlighted that different guidelines exist for different EIA topics such as the GLVIA3 guidelines for LVIA.

FoL asked, and SY confirmed that the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) will consult on and confirm the scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) via the Scoping Report/Scoping Opinion stage.

FoL asked whether there was a difference between an official EIA or voluntary EIA. SY

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confirmed that there was no difference and that the process will be exactly the same.

FoL asked how ecology information (e.g. presence, abundance) will be presented. EH outlined the surveys (e.g. Extended Phase 1 habitat survey) that will be undertaken and the methods that will be used. SY stated that all approaches would be outlined in the Scoping Report and that the ES would set out any limitations to the methods.

FoL asked if any monitoring would take place after completion of the works. SY explained that as part of the EIA, mitigation will help identify any necessary monitoring measures.

Surveys/Data

FoL queried how fish will be surveyed. EH stated that electro-fishing will be undertaken, and fresh research with new data will be collected.

FoL stated that it is difficult to establish the baseline due to the changing conditions of the environment, and asked how the surveys undertaken, particularly for ecology and hydrology, will reflect this correctly and accurately.

OS confirmed that hydrology surveys would use existing gauges (if available), spot flow measurements and other hydrological datasets (e.g. precipitation records) to reflect conditions throughout the year, as well as between years, and throughout the catchment, and use JBA's work for example – low and high flows. OS also mentioned that longer term data from neighbouring catchments of a similar character would be analysed.

FoL highlighted their concerns with JBA's high flows, stating that they were not realistic and that it would be good to check JBA's data and cross check it against known conditions.

Jane Smith (JS) outlined that JBA's work will be made available to LUC and Cascade and that OS can use the data as necessary. OS indicated that an independent review of the JBA return flows (e.g. 1 in 20 year flow) would be made as part of the assessment and that the information would not just be used blindly.

FoL confirmed that they hold photos and data that may be of use to OS and would be happy to provide it. OS stated that any dated and spatially referenced photographs and other evidence etc. would be helpful. FoL stated that they may be able to provide volunteers to assist with the data collection. SY made it clear that any survey work has to be undertaken by the EIA team to ensure that it is undertaken in line with relevant guidance and by independent assessors.

FoL also asked whether a camera monitoring system would be used as part of the surveys. JS confirmed that Marianne (MB) is currently working with Natural England to

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confirm the most appropriate survey/monitoring techniques that are financially viable.

EH confirmed that over-wintering and breeding birds would be surveyed over the year, during their correct monitoring seasons. The surveys would take a snap shot of time and would be supplemented by and compared with historic data and the surveys would be undertaken in line with recognised guidance.

FoL debated the time periods that ecology surveys would be undertaken over. EH outlined that the approach to the ecology surveys for this work were not unique and that they are practice standards. SY emphasised that the EIA will not be submitted with any known gaps as that would compromise LUC and Cascade's professional integrity.

Consultation, Information Sharing and Stakeholders

FoL stated that they were delighted with the approach to consultation and would like to engage and share information with LUC and Cascade and hoped that information sharing would be two way.

FoL highlighted that they have a substantial amount of local information available, such as bird surveys and archaeological surveys, and would be happy to provide volunteers to help with survey work. They emphasised that maximum transparency was needed and that at their last meeting with the FC it was mentioned that information would not be made available until the planning application was submitted.

SY mentioned that information cannot be released until LUC and Cascade are 100% certain of its accuracy and that it has been appropriately QA'd. Information and findings from surveys are not normally released until the planning application is submitted. This is due to a number of reasons, including that many of the topics (e.g. ecology and hydrology) inform one another's findings and predicted impacts. LUC/Cascade will discuss this further with the FC.

FoL raised concerns regarding the statutory consultees and New Forest NPA and the potential conflict of interest as they are partners on the HLS programme. SY stated that any potential conflict of interest is for the NFNPA to resolve. It was noted that this is not a unique situation as LPAs can often be the developer and the determining authority. LPAs normally have relevant procedures to follow in such cases.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

SY outlined the process of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and stated that it is for the NFNPA to determine whether a HRA is required. The first stage will require screening to establish if there are any likely significance effects and if Appropriate Assessment is needed. If it is Appropriate Assessment is needed, this would be undertaken by the NFNPA using information prepared as part of the EIA. FoL recommended that this should be a stand-alone document that is submitted with the

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EIA.

The FoL confirmed that the NFNPA would be challenged if they believe that a HRA is not required.

General

FoL highlighted that transport was one of the initial issues that led to opposition to the scheme, and that if the preferred option looks to move +10,000 tonnes of material there would be significant concerns. SY reassured the FoL that the preferred option will be assessed appropriately.

FoL asked for an update on the programme. JS mentioned that there had been slippage in the programme and that all stakeholders would be kept up to date as the work progressed. A website is being set up to keep interested parties update on the progress with the EIA.

FoL asked how the success of the project will be determined. MB explained that the aim of the project is to achieve favourable status for the SSSI parcels with time. FoL stated that while they understood that 'favourable' is the tick box that needs to be achieved for Natural England, this is not good enough. EH confirmed that the ecology surveys will be in more depth than the standard approach adopted by NE to assess the status of the SSSIs.

FoL expressed concerns regarding effects on Southern Damselfly especially in the tributaries of the brook. EH confirmed that the necessary surveys would be undertaken.

FoL stated that an accidental pond has formed on the north side of the stream half way down the valley and has become a rare and important wildlife habitat.

FoL asked whether the original proposal was still a possibility and JS stated that it was.

FoL stated that similar projects in the area have failed as the works were flawed, and that the drainage at the top of catchments needs to be addressed first. MB noted that the proposed works would commence from the top of the catchment. It was suggested by FoL that monitoring/gradual change was believed to be a better option, and that it was hoped the FC would adopt a more appropriate and adaptive approach that could be reversed if needed.

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