



**ESSEX RIVERS HUB**  
**Catchment Partnership Meeting Agenda**

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025**  
**10:00 – 12:00**

**Meeting Held at the River Stour Trust's Building, 90 Bures Rd,  
Great Cornard, Sudbury CO10 0JE**

**Present:** Matt Butcher, Helen Dangerfield, Luke Farnish, Steve Giudici, Emma Grey, Paul Hodgkin, Gary Hodgetts, John Kemp, Michelle Landry, Jo Matthews, Clemmie Moule, Tom Palmer, Mandi Savage, Tim Simpson, Dave Smart, Darren Tansley, Andrew Warwick, Sam Westwood

**Apologies:** Becky Baines, James Champkin, Helen Jacobs, Nicola Shearer, Amanda Wilkin, Rob Wise

**1. Recap past meeting's actions**

Clemmie Moule opened the meeting and read through the actions from the last meeting. Those that are outstanding have been included in the new actions list at the end of these minutes.

**2. Introductions and partner updates**

Partners were given the opportunity to update on their organisation's work. Partners who did not have any significant updates have still been included.

- Dave Smart (Essex Waterways) - no update
- Tom Palmer (ECC) - Started his new role at Essex County Council. Historically, ECC have focused on protecting most properties against flood risk as possible but this approach has lead to missed opportunities.
- Jo Mathews (ESW) – No major updates but reminded partners of water companies moving into AMP8.
- Emma Grey (NEFC) – The NEFC are delivering the Pant valley pilot project, creating nature based solutions along 10km of the Pant. There is also a new project right at the top of the catchment.
- Andrew Warwick (CSF) – No updates
- Mandi Savage (CSF) – Pause for capital grants and at this time it is unknown when it will resume. Mandi has attended many events recently including speaking at the agriculture and water event (organised by Hutchesons and ESW) at Lavenham and the Long Melford sustainable farming initiative event. Farm business update events are coming up at Writtle and Lavenham.
- Helen Dangerfield (ESRT) – End of financial year for partnership funding, the ERH is in a good place and moving to actions on the ground. Working groups and projects are ongoing. Fiddlers Hill (wetland creation on a 5ha site along with other measures, partners being the WT, ESRT, ECC and EA) update; planning permission has been granted, the project is to be delivered in the summer. This is a good partnership working showcase.
- Matt Butcher (EA) – The NFM local levy funding window will be opening in April. An event will be held for catchment partners to remind them of this and encourage them to apply and for Q&As.
- John Kemp (RST) – (Host for today's meeting). John discussed a little of the history of the River Stour Trust. The RST used to be about navigation rights and boating (the trust run launches at Sudbury and Flatford). More recently, the group is becoming increasingly focused on water quality. They achieved bathing water designation in the Sudbury with one



of the cleanest inland bathing waters in the country. Anglian Water gave support for support for patch testing water quality and now the trust plan to do testing as part of the ERW. The trust have been a part of the riverfly monitoring scheme and the EA test the area weekly for bacteriological contamination. Michelle Landry, Steve Giudici and Gill Boardman also attended on behalf of the RST.

- Darren Tansley (EWT) – Lost ponds project in the Blackwater: around 80 ponds being created within a 5km radius of Wethersfield, another 500 or so identified as deliverable through FWAG. The area has lost around 10,500 ponds since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Volunteers out for pond assessments. Mink eradication zone extended to Essex in late spring 2024, 154 mink caught since May. Hopefully this will cause a population crash in 2026, with mink in the area very likely eradicated by 2030. Broxwell (R. Colne) project, on hold due to archaeology.
- Gary Hodgetts (AW) – AMP8 now starting, Anglian Water have a favourable budget. Around ½ of the budget for the next 5 years is for river restoration. More details in the near future.
- Sam Westwood (RT) – No updates
- Paul Hodgkin (HEAT) – HEAT are testing water and building community resilience for climate change for the town.
- Tim Simpson (ECC/LNRS) – Tim is part of the ECC SUDs team, improving design across the county, but ECC are awaiting new powers through flood act.
- Clemmie Moule and Luke Farnish (ESRT) – No updates

### **3. Local nature recovery strategy updates**

The LNRS is a mandatory element of the Environment Act (2021). The plan covers all of Essex (this includes some areas beyond the ERH and does not include the Suffolk element of the ERH - the Suffolk and Norfolk plan will be circulated). The draft document has been produced.

Consultation was in August, finishing 5/10/2024.

Interactive mapping is available. Priority areas are now included as opportunity areas within the strategy following feedback. Mapping shows the top 15% of opportunities for each habitat type. Breakdown maps of these habitat types, urban opportunities and species maps are available. One of the habitat types is freshwater which is the habitat type of most interest to this group. Priorities are based upon Lawtonian Principles (bigger, better, more connected), with the primary focus on areas that are of less high quality. The mapping criteria may be changed slightly to reflect the linear nature of rivers with many sites currently not showing up in the mapping that could be useful. Data from the lost ponds project and other ongoing projects is included in this. The measures that are taken into account when selecting priority sites are 6 spatial measures (Pollution, Lost Ponds, INNS, Barrier to movement river buffering, GI creation) and 6 non-location specific measures (Community Engagement, identifying wetland opportunities, citizen science, Awareness raising, funding, CaBA). There are also specific actions for single species. The aim is to have this published by the end of March, though it is very likely this deadline will be delayed.

The next steps, mapping needs to be updated due to precision (granularity) issues and revised to make it more useful for end users. Further consultation through the supporting authorities will take place but there will be no further public consultation. There will also be internal review within ECC.

Questions:

Tom Palmer: How does this strategy compare with our neighbours and how does it link in?

*-ECC have been working closely with the other groups (through NE/Defra). Other authorities well behind Essex, but collaborative working is helping them to catch up. For example, Essex was able to help Suffolk on mapping. There are some links to Kent, London and Herts, all of whom are somewhat behind. Strategies are looking quite different from each other nationally.*

Paul Hodgkin: How does this compare to Suffolk and how have the ESRT contributed?

*-The ESRT have contributed to both. Some advantages to Suffolk/Norfolk being behind in that Essex can help with the mapping. Consultation has been good throughout, both plans are fairly compatible. ESRT to send out information on both strategies. Suffolk not yet out to consultation. Local authorities are also going through a lot of restructuring/devolution.*

Darren Tansley: Consultation has been very good and relevant groups are pleased with feedback

#### **4. Blackwater Catchment plan**

The ESRT, in partnership with the EA, ESW and NEFC are producing a restoration plan for the rivers Pant and Blackwater. Since the last meeting, the fluvial audit that provides the baseline information for the plan has been completed and a workshop held for information dissemination and gathering with local stakeholders. The plan is on course for further consultation at the end of February and for completion by the early spring.

#### **5. Ordinary Watercourse Quiz**

A quiz was held on the topic of ordinary watercourses and was won by Darren Tansley. The quiz was well received though there was feedback that it was rather tricky.

#### **6. East of England NbS Hub Update**

Sam Westwood (RT) presented the RT/CaBA East of England NbS hub planning tool. One use of the Hub will be to fill CaBA requirements showing where partnership projects and opportunities are taking place. This product is owned by CaBA (with free community licences available through ArcGIS online). This tool allows organisations to market projects to funders as well as track projects that are ongoing. Sam covered some specific recent developments:

The tool was originally formed in late 2022, looking at Anglian Water's WINEP project pipeline. Fewer projects than was hoped for entered WINEP but this was a good proof of concept. Strategic mapping is becoming possible through additional data being added e.g. groundwater modelling and where projects can be most effective. Anglian Water providing data from AMP7 on projects that have been completed and AMP8 priority locations e.g. around spill sites or river restoration projects. This will allow prioritisation up to the end of AMP9 (2035). Users can now add data, projects can be added on the public map or without being on the public map as appropriate (i.e. before discussions with landowners). Data can be updated as changes occur e.g. post funding, during construction. Maps can be exported and printed. This mapping will be useful for CaBA meetings, can see current projects (and proposed). Sam asked for feedback on what filters the ERH would find useful and the charts that would be of use, members can contact the ESRT to have any feedback passed on.

Use organisation (info) emails for the community licence for easier access.

Answering a question from Darren Tansley, Sam Westwood explained that projects can be split from intervention i.e. one project can have multiple interventions which can be linked.

Helen Dangerfield raised to the group if the hub is supportive of using the NbS hub as a planning hub. Partners agreed to take this question away for further thought. Exploration of the tool for some feedback. Can we upload previous data (compatibility) or just start from now?

Jo Mathews noted that Water Resources East and ESW are also producing similar tools and raised concern around multiple similar projects. The RT need to consult anyone developing similar tools.

On the legacy of the NbS Hub, ownership is within the CaBA space by the Rivers Trust and they will keep up the maintenance. The data links in with the LNRS datasets. The Scalgo tool, might need to be integrated too as well as citizen science data. It was noted the ERH is the first external group to see the Hub and there was agreement the tool could be very useful for planning.

7. **Self-Evaluation and overview of 2025** - group decided to spend more time on other aspects and to complete this over email

**Actions for the next meeting:**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Completed by next ERH meeting?</b>
1	Explore capacity to incorporate analysis and summary of Suffolk County Council Riverfly Data into Catchment Plan	ESRT + HEAT	
2	Publish the Storymap	CM + SW	
3	Highways and Suffolk County Council representation to be invited to the ERH	CM	
4	Information regarding the Suffolk and Norfolk LNRS to be disseminated to members	CM	Y
5	Information regarding the East of England NbS Hub to be disseminated among partners, partners to all sign up for a community licence for their organisation and input projects and project opportunities. Feedback collected	CM + SW + ALL	
6	Self-evaluation to be completed	ALL	
7	Sam Westwood to speak with ECC/ESW regarding similar mapping systems to the East of England NbS Hub	SW + JM + TP + CM	
8	Share the new NFM local levy information (opening in April)	CM + MB	