

NOTES OF MEETING

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION CLIMATE PARTNERSHIP

Thursday 29th February 2024, 4.00pm

Attendees:

Chair Gideon Ben-Tovim	Nature Connected, Climate Partnership
Vice Chair Cllr Gill Wood	Deputy Portfolio Holder LCRCA, Wirral BC, Climate Partnership
Rachel Waggett	LCRCA, Lead Officer - Environment (meeting admin)
Mark Knowles	LCRCA, Mersey Tidal - Energy & Industry Lead
Sean Maher	LCRCA, Place & Net Zero Policy Officer
Sean Joughin	LCRCA, Investment Analyst
Holly Harwood	LCRCA, Management Graduate
Cllr Liz Grey	Wirral BC
Jeni Brittlebank	Environment Agency
Annie Merry	Faiths for Change
David Shields	Value Match
Megan Bennett	Knowsley BC
Ros Rice	Extinction Rebellion
Andy Evans	Friends of the Earth
Nick Thompson	CPRE – The Countryside Charity, Sefton Coastal Landscape Partnership
Megan Bennett	Knowsley BC
Rob Allen	United Utilities
John Leggett	Working on Mersey Tidal project with LCRCA
Annie Ockelford	University of Liverpool
Stephen Sykes	2030 Hub
Lucy Northey	Wirral BC
John Leggett	WSP (supporting LCRCA with Mersey Tidal preparation process)

Apologies received from:

Nicky Crosby	Extinction Rebellion
Mark Booth	United Utilities
Andrea Watts	Sefton BC
Peter Owen	Energy Projects Plus
Cllr Paulette Lappin	Sefton BC

1. Welcome and introductions/ apologies for absence

GBT (Gideon Ben-Tovim) welcomed attendees and attendees introduced themselves as above.

2. Notes of last meeting for agreement

Minutes from previous meeting agreed.

3. Matters arising

Nick Thompson refers to discussion at the last meeting and the 'streamlining' of planning regulation. Comments were made by Cllr Phil Harris and Nick would like to offer to discuss opportunities with him and will contact Cllr Harris directly.

4. Update on progress of the Community Environment Fund (*Sean Joughin and Holly Harwood - LCR Combined Authority*)

Sean Joughin shared slides (attached).

Thank you to the Climate Partnership for supporting the Community Environment Fund in the past and pleased to share the latest round of funding soon to be launched.

92 projects have been funded in the first two rounds. This time the level of funding is slightly lower but still significant at £350,000 in total.

The new delivery partner now appointed is Spacehive, a community fundraising platform with plenty of experience in delivering funding schemes. Project proposals will be uploaded onto the Spacehive platform and seek support from their community to demonstrate local community need and support for the project. This should secure long term buy in to projects which is so valuable in securing benefits for communities.

Seeking to support projects of different sizes:

- Stream 1 = £1k - £5k
- Stream 2 = £5k plus (up to £30k)

The Fund will be launched around mid-March and project proposals can be uploaded straight away.

Keen to reach out to those groups who have not accessed this funding before and make the funding as accessible as possible.

Questions and discussion:

- *Do applicants have to raise money in order to apply?*
We'd like to see applicants try to raise community funding, as it's a really obvious way to show support. But we are aware that this won't be possible in some cases and given pressures due to cost of living crisis. So it is not required.
- *What evidence do applicants have to provide of community support?*
Fundraising is one way of showing evident support, but on the Spacehive platform there is a way to 'like' and support the project, which is another way of showing community engagement. Obviously for the larger projects we'd expect to see a lot more effort on support and fundraising activities. Noting that LCRCA ultimately keep the control and decision making, so this may not run exactly as other Spacehive initiatives.
- *Dr Annie Ockelford asked is there anything that the UoL can do to support some of these community groups to put in applications? This is something that the University do often and have considerable skills. They would be willing to work with groups to help support them to put in their applications.*
This would be very welcomed - SJ and HH to be in contact with AO on this matter.
- *How long is the fund application open for? How will this work in terms of showing support?*
Applicants will need to submit their project within the timescale, it will then be verified for deliverability and then there will be a period of time for them to gain additional support.

David Shields noted that proportionality is important bearing in mind the community groups that are the ideal target to apply for this fund. The Spacehive platform looks intuitive and easy to use which will be helpful.

Gideon Ben-Tovim noted that in the past there has been no requirement for match funding so need to ensure that there are no real or perceived barriers to grassroots community groups, in as much as is possible.

Case studies and examples of past projects "what good looks like" would be really helpful to inspire new projects. Could also help prospective applicants to answer some of the questions well, such as how they will monitor the success of their projects or embed social value.

LCRCA is keen to ensure that this programme is as impactful as possible.

ALL TO NOTE: If there are any Climate Partnership members who would be willing to help guide the development of the Community Environment Fund then please let us know and we will be very grateful for support.

5. Update on Mersey Tidal scheme (Mark Knowles, LCR Combined Authority)

Mark Knowles shared slides providing an update on the Mersey Tidal scheme (attached).

The intention is to move the Mersey Tidal project into the Development Consent Order (DCO) process (the planning process for projects of this size/scale) which will include more public engagement.

The DCO process is different to standard planning processes because much of the public participation is done at the start, rather than at the end of the process when plans are fully developed. LCRCA are keen to work closely with all stakeholders particularly the environmental stakeholders whose knowledge of the area is so useful.

Whilst no similar project has been done in the UK to date, there are two projects elsewhere (France and South Korea) that the team are engaged with to learn lessons and inform the design. Current studies are based on a 600MW tidal barrage scheme. The current design is based around a system that is navigable so lock mechanisms would be built into the design. As this would be a fixed link across the river, it provides a potential opportunity for connectivity. Current assumption is that it would form an active travel corridor, this concept is still in development.

The integration of the project into the energy transmission system is important and the benefit of this scheme in this respect is its predictability of energy generation output, unusual in renewable energy.

Questions and discussion:

- *What are the design parameters you are working to with respect to sea level rise over 120 design life?*

Agreed this is a critical question on two fronts; need to design the structure to cope with potential rises in river and sea level, this has been built into the design. Secondly, to what extent the tidal scheme could protect against coastal impact or minimising impact? That wasn't an original scope of the scheme, but it's possible that this could be achieved. The team are working with technical stakeholders and advisers in this area to determine what the potential is.

- *Need to take into account the environmental impact of salinity changes – increased closing of the Thames Barrier is affecting the salinity of the Thames with environmental impacts of that, so as an observation this could be an impact if the barrage is going to be used in a defensive manner.*

We know climate change is going to cause change in the bay and the river no matter what we do, so we need to understand what these impacts are going to be and how a tidal project could interact with the changing environment. This is something that is being modelled in detail.

- *Has Natural England been approached to give their opinion, because they will be crucial to deliverability especially in these highly protected areas (Ramsar sites).*

Yes, Natural England has been engaged right from the beginning as a key stakeholder. As the project moves forward we will have more detail on location, design, potential impacts which we will work closely with them to understand.

Discussion about the Swansea Lagoon noted that the Swansea project did reach a DCO successfully which is seen as positive and lessons can also be learned from their experience.

Mark Knowles noted that it is still too early to be definitive on the environmental impacts, but the team have been really pleased and appreciative of the engagement from a huge range of environmental stakeholders. The Mersey is a very complex and nuanced environment, being able to tap into that local knowledge has been so much appreciated. As a result, the maps and picture of

the environment that is emerging is very detailed and very helpful. The next phase will build on the contacts and relationships already in place.

Rob Allen noted that United Utilities have already been engaged in this process and have hosted the South Korean delegation at Sandon Docks treatment works to help with the fact-finding phase. UU are carrying out a comprehensive water quality investigation in the River Mersey in the next few years and are keen to continue to engage to share information and understanding.

Nick Thompson noted that no significant environmental objections appear to be emerging at this stage and therefore would propose that the Climate Partnership give full support to the next phase of the project.

It was noted that the active travel link would be a huge potential benefit and whilst the design will change no doubt (perhaps to become more beautiful!) think that the project is looking really good indeed. Mark Knowles noted that some of the elements of the structure won't be purely utilitarian, there is the potential to embed design creativity and beauty into what is a functional structure that has to survive a very hostile marine environment.

The opportunity for local design input was highlighted as a potential resource, for example the footbridge at Princes Dock involved design students from the Universities, which might be a good opportunity for using local talented people (albeit this was a different scale).

Gideon Ben-Tovim summarised the views of the group that at this stage of the project, Climate Partnership is very supportive of the proposal and the process, especially the active involvement of the environmental stakeholders and community groups.

6. AOB

Ros Rice asked that an update on hydrogen is brought to a future meeting. There was an update on Hynet and the wider hydrogen picture in the past, but it seems that there has been a lot more progress in this area and it would be good to hear the latest. Nicky Crosby had sent an email with some outstanding questions resulting from the last update so it would be good to respond to those if possible. This request was supported by Andy Evans.

Mark Knowles agreed that there has been a lot of movement in this area of work so very happy to bring an update back to the group at a future meeting.

Nick Thompson reported that they are working on proposals for a city region-wide walking trail. This has been scoped by an LJMU intern who has done a great job in gathering support for the project. A potential bid for funding (have done something similar in GM where they secured £250k funding from National Lottery) is now being prepared.

7. Next Meetings

Thursday 21st March 2023 4pm – 5.30pm