

**EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**Environment Group Meeting**  
**17 July 2006**  
**At the Regional Assembly Offices, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire**

**Summary of key points and actions arising**

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**Attendees:**

**Members:**

John Bull	Chair
Sharon Palmer	Environment Agency
Alex Bowness	GOEM (sub for Rowena Limb)
Anthony Streeten	EM Heritage Forum/ English Heritage
James Luger	Emda (Sub for Anthony Payne)
Hugh Fenton	EMAGE
Gwent Paylor	Business
Ruth Fish	Countryside Agency
Terry Miller	EM Churches Forum

**Advisers:**

Alison Hepworth	EMRA Secretariat
David Slinger	Environment Advisory Group (Chair)

**Consultants:**

John King	ADAS
Francis Hesketh	TEP
Marc Jackson	TEP

<b>Item</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Matt Doran, Frank Lucas, Rick Keymer, Richard Leafe, Austin Brady, Sue Buckingham, Terry Miller, Cllr Roy Mayhew	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Notes from the last meeting and matters arising</b> Notes were agreed. No matters arising .	
<b>Items for Discussion</b>		
<b>3.</b>	<b>Green Infrastructure for the East Midlands: A Public Benefit Mapping Project (Presentation by Francis Hesketh and Marc Jackson, TEP)</b>  A presentation was given by Francis Hesketh and Marc Jackson of The Environment Partnership (TEP) on the final findings of the project to give us an overall picture of the "hot spots" around the region in terms of benefits from GI delivery. Copies of the flyer produced as a summary document were circulated at the meeting.	

	<p>Copies of the Q&amp;A from 31 May Seminar to be sent to all who attended ( and posted on the EMRA website). <b>Action: AH to check that this has been done.</b></p> <p>The final amendments will be made to the report and distributed electronically to the steering group. This will also be posted, along with the flyer, on the EMRA website, once finalised and a link forwarded to all members of EG/ EAG. <b>Action: AH to agree final report with SG and Matt Doran (Chair) and make available on EMRA website with link to EG/EAG.</b></p> <p>A presentation of the findings of the project, along with proposals for future areas of work will be agreed with the steering group and presented by Alison H to the Policy Board in September. <b>Action: AH to agree format of messages to go to Policy Bd with SG and Chair.</b></p>	<p>AH</p> <p>AH</p> <p>AH/ MD</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>East Midlands Soil and Environmental Resource Review (Presentation by John King, ADAS)</b></p> <p>A presentation was given of the findings of the project by John King of ADAS. The project aimed to provide a high level look at the region’s soils and their complex relationships with water and habitats, in the context both of adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change and also “spongey landscapes”.</p> <p>The aim was to provide a tool for raising awareness of the importance of these issues to regional decision makers by giving an overview and bringing together information on land use and management, along with the drivers for change (both in terms of threats, but also opportunities), based on the European thematic strategy for soil protection and the impacts soils have on these.</p> <p>The consultants were unfortunately not able to deliver on all of the project specifications and the final report is expected to make clear what was and what was not possible for the money on the table. Since this was a first attempt by any region to do this, it will provide useful learning points for other regions and Defra (one of the major funders of the project) is keen to use this as a pilot to roll out to other regions.</p> <p>The final project will be made available shortly once the steering group have agreed the final wording. Once agreed, it will be posted on the EMRA website and a link forwarded to members of EG/ EAG. <b>Action: AH to agree final report with SG and Carl Hawke (Chair) and make available on EMRA website with link to EG/EAG.</b></p> <p>The key points arising out of the project will help inform the revision of the RSS (Regional Plan) and the consultants doing the SA/SEA for the RSS are keen to have sight of the report as soon as it is</p>	<p>AH</p>

	<p>agreed. <b>Action: AH to forward link to document on website to SA consultants.</b></p> <p>It is intended that a simple flyer (similar in nature and style of content to the PBA flyer) will be produced as the tool for general awareness raising amongst regional decision and policy makers. This will be posted on the EMRA website once available and a link forwarded to EG/EAG members. . <b>Action: AH to agree flyer with SG and Carl Hawke (Chair) and make available on EMRA website with link to EG/EAG once published.</b></p> <p>Alison H will make a presentation of the key findings and proposals for further areas of work to the Policy Board in September (once agreed with the steering group). . <b>Action: AH to agree content of report to Policy Bd with SG and Carl Hawke (Chair).</b></p>	<p>AH</p> <p>AH/CH</p> <p>AH</p>
5.	<p><b>Local Area Agreements (Alex Bowness, GOEM)</b></p> <p>Alex Bowness presented this item to the Group. This has been discussed by both the EAG and also the Regional Biodiversity Forum, however there was no time for in depth consideration of individual LAAs. There are inherent difficulties in getting environmental input to these due to the structure defined for their content.</p> <p>Also included under this item was a 4 page analysis by Defra of all the LAAs across the Defra remit.</p> <p>There are 9 shires and 4 unitaries in the EM region. This is a growing agenda and increasingly important. There is a need to ensure that environmental issues are going up the agenda in LAAS and avoid environmental groups being scrapped.</p> <p>How can we influence the environmental content of LAAs? It was agreed that the EAG be asked to form a sub group to take this work forward on behalf of the EG. Ruth Fish offered to chair this group. Group to meet before the autumn. <b>Action: Ruth Fish to form sub group and meet before the autumn.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Alex Bowness to forward table to share with group.</b></p> <p>Securing the Regions Futures includes money to include environmental work. <b>Action: Alison to talk to Yvette as to whether there is anything that the EG can do to help take this forward.</b></p>	<p>RF</p> <p>AB</p> <p>AH</p>
6.	<p><b>RSS Review Update</b></p> <p>This was a quick verbal update by David Slinger to let members know what is happening in the RSS Review currently.</p>	

	<p>The series of Spring Seminars is now complete. Details of the discussions of each can be found on the EMRA website. Those on Water Management (11 May) and Environmental Infrastructure (31 May) were particularly successful and well attended, as was the Housing Seminar.</p> <p>The Environment Advisory Group has also been helping make suggestions to update the environmental content of the text of the RSS to take account of new strategies that have emerged, environmental capacity to assist in the SDEA process and wording on a GI/EI policy for inclusion in the revised text. Outcomes from both the GI and Soils projects will be fed in to the process as appropriate. Details of the latest RSS text wording revision and SA details can be found on the EMRA website.</p> <p>The revised Regional Plan will be presented to the Joint Board in early September, followed by a period of public consultation until Christmas.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Announcement of the new Chair of the Environment Group</b></p> <p>As reported at the last EG meeting, this was the last meeting to be chaired by John Bull, who is stepping down as Chair of the Group. It was proposed at the last meeting that nominations be invited from any EG member. Only one nomination was received and therefore the Group agreed that the new chair of the Group will be Matt Doran.</p> <p>David Slinger led the Group in thanking John as outgoing chair for all his hard efforts.</p> <p><b>Action: Alison H to forward the signed “thankyou” card” to John, once signed by the EG and Secretariat, as well as any former members who wish to sign.</b></p>	AH
<b>Items for information:</b>		
8.	<p><b>Update report from the various sub groups</b></p> <p>Alison Hepworth presented the report updating the Group on the ongoing work of the various sub groups on environmental work.</p> <p><b>i) Environment data needs</b> – work by this sub group is ongoing to produce a report for circulation and agreement in order to influence the next round of monitoring for the RSS and State of the Region. <b>Action Charlotte Gault (chair of sub group) to ensure that this happens.</b></p> <p><b>ii) Climate Change Steering Group</b> – Following a presentation on the initial findings of the PBA project to the CCSG, it was decided that members of EG/EAG are to be invited to join the CCSG at their annual meeting, along with the RBF later this year, to discuss mutual</p>	AH/CG

	areas of work. <b>Action: AH to ensure that these linkages are made at the appropriate time.</b>	<b>AH</b>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Proposed Consultation responses on behalf of the Group:</b></p> <p>Responses on various national consultations were proposed to the group. These were:</p> <p><b>i) England’s trees, woods and forests: a consultation document (Defra)</b> – Defra consulted on the review of the England Forestry Strategy to inform the development of a new strategy for England. It was agreed that a response being developed by the EAG will be approved by the Joint Board for this consultation. <b>Action AH to draft response with input from EAG/EG.</b> See Appendix 1 for the response letter as submitted to Defra.</p> <p><b>ii) Outdoors for All?: Draft Diversity Action Plan (Defra)</b> – it was agreed that EAG be asked to develop a response on behalf of EG, to be agreed by chairs of both EG and the Policy Board. <b>Action: AH to coordinate response as outlined above.</b></p> <p><b>iii) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)– consultation on Guidance documents (DCLG)</b> – It was agreed that a response will be developed on behalf of the Joint Board. EAG to contribute to this response in terms of both planning environment issues and also any issues for the wider regional environment. <b>Action: AH to coordinate these responses from EAG on behalf of EG and ensure they are fed in to the response being developed on behalf of the Joint Board.</b></p>	<p><b>AH /EAG</b></p> <p><b>AH /EAG</b></p> <p><b>AH/ EAG</b></p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>Final consultation responses on rural consultations (various)</b></p> <p>Copies of the final responses made on behalf of the EG were included as part of the report under this agenda item.</p>	
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>i) World Environment Day at the July EMRA meeting</b> The Environment Agency will be taking a stand along to the EMRA full meeting to be held at Pera, Melton Mowbray on 21<sup>st</sup> July. Assembly members will be encouraged to sign a pledge on the day. It has been reported that the Midlands EA region is top of the league table on number of pledges so far this year.</p> <p><b>ii) Regional Biodiversity Strategy</b> Copies of the strategy were distributed at the meeting. A launch is to take place later in the year.</p> <p><b>iii) Proposed LIFE+ Seminar</b> It is proposed that the Environment Group are to host a seminar for</p>	

	<p>the East Midlands region, now that agreement has been reached on the EU budget, for the LIFE+ programme (the successor to LIFE).</p> <p>It is now up to individual countries to draft their National programmes – in UK this is being done by Defra and a public consultation is anticipated later this year. It has been suggested by Richard Woods, our EMEO rep, that for the EM, the EAG and EG be used to shape this consultation, involving Defra.</p> <p>It is proposed that the date of the next EG meeting would be appropriate for such a seminar and it is proposed that the seminar take place in the afternoon, following the EG meeting in the morning. EAG members will be invited to attend – it is important to stress that members of both groups are the target audience, and should cover most of the organisations needed to attend.</p> <p><b>Action: AH to take this forward with RW for 23 November and circulate possible programme to EAG/EG.</b></p> <p><b>iv) EC DG Environment work on Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection</b></p> <p>Richard Woods also wished to inform the EG about the setting up of a soil group through EPRO. This group is working directly with the commission draughtsman on soil within DG Environment for the European Commission. This is an opportunity for the EG to influence the forthcoming Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection, particularly with reference to the Soils Review Project. A questionnaire, attached to the working document on the thematic strategy will be completed and returned on behalf of the Group to Richard by 31 August. <b>Action AH to complete and return questionnaire to RW by 31 August and forward copy of working document to EG/EAG for information</b></p>	<p>AH/ RW</p> <p>AH</p>
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#### Meeting dates for 2006 – 2007

Environment Advisory Group	Environment Group	Policy Board	HPT Board
6 July	17 July	1 September	7 September
2 November	23 November	8 December	22 January 2007
8 February	1 March	13 March	2 April
19 April	10 May	25 May	13 June

NB All Environment Group/ Environment Advisory Group meetings will take place at Melton commencing 1000 unless indicated otherwise. For Policy / Joint Board please refer to the emra website for details.

Further meeting dates to be agreed shortly with the Chair.

## Appendix 1 Forestry response



14 August 2006

England's trees, woods and forests: a consultation document  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Forestry Policy Unit  
Area 5D, Ergon House  
Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 2AL

For the Attention of Maria Grace

Dear Maria

### **England's trees, woods and forests: a consultation document**

Thank you for inviting comments on the above and I am pleased to set out below an officer response to the consultation. This response is submitted by the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) which is the designated Regional Planning Body for the East Midlands.

We are pleased to be asked to contribute to the way the Government delivers its policies for trees, woods and forests over the coming decade.

The regional expression of the England Forestry Strategy in the East Midlands is the Regional Forestry Framework "Space4Trees" published in 2005. This has been developed as an integral part of the Sustainable Development Framework for the Region, known as the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS). As such, it has been developed in close association with the Regional Spatial Strategy (to be known as the Regional Plan) and also the Regional Environment Strategy, both of which also form an integral part of the IRS Framework.

We welcome the recognition that trees, woodlands and forests will play an increasingly important role in a sustainable England, particularly the part they play in helping to deliver our regional priority to ensure delivery of Green Infrastructure. This complements work ongoing in the East Midlands region on Public Benefit mapping of green infrastructure, which our partners in the Forestry Commission have played a key role in the development of.

We would like to emphasise the importance of urban trees, and the need to promote the role of trees and woods within a network of green infrastructure in and around our towns and cities.

Long term management of woodlands on the urban fringe will be a key element of this, as will the recognition of the role of urban trees in the development of the wider agenda of extensive ecological networks.

We would also wish to emphasise the value and role in linkages for biodiversity of properly managed hedgerows.

As mentioned above, Space4Trees is an integral component strategy within our regional Sustainable Development Framework, the IRS and its objectives and targets are reflected in the Regional Spatial Strategy, currently being reviewed, known as the Regional Plan.

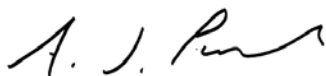
We support the recognition therefore that policies for trees, woods and forestry will be integrated into wider land use and planning policy through regional policy documents, such as those within our IRS, including the Regional Plan. This principle of synergies with other wider strategies and targets is one which EMRA supports.

The setting out of a high level statement of policy that clearly sets out Government's National priorities will be of great assistance in the East Midlands's efforts to move towards a sustainable future.

There is, however some concern that the prospect of abandoning a National target for woodland creation will have a major negative impact on this region – as we have the lowest level of woodland cover and well established projects to deliver new woodland (such as the National Forest). There is the risk that a lack of a National Target will divert or reduce resources available to the regions for woodland creation.

I trust that you find these comments helpful.

Yours faithfully



Andrew Pritchard  
Director of Planning and Transport  
East Midlands Regional Assembly