

**EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
Environment Group Meeting
10 May 2007
at EMRA, Melton Mowbray**

Summary of key points and actions arising

Attendees:

Matt Doran	(Chair), EMEL
Sue Buckenham	(Sub for Mark Felton), Natural England
Anthony Streeten	Regional Heritage Forum Chair
Hugh Fenton	EMAGE/ Business
David Slinger	Environment Advisory Group Chair
Sharon Palmer	(Sub for Mark Sitton), Environment Agency
Alex Bowness	(Sub for Rowena Limb, GOEM)
Charlotte Gault	Regional Biodiversity Forum Chair
Terry Miller	East Midlands Churches Forum
Steve Owen	URSUS Consulting Ltd
Alison Hepworth	EMRA secretariat

Item	Topic	Action
1.	Introductions, welcome and apologies Apologies were received from: Cllr Roy Mayhew, Northamptonshire CC Kevin Baillie and James Luger, emda	
2.	Action points from the meeting held on 1 March 2007 and matters arising: Austin Brady's item on Sherwood – Alison Hepworth to discuss with Austin. Biodiversity Duty – still awaiting guidance – CG to flag up as an agenda item at the appropriate point. Item 3a – emda's Innovation Strategy agenda item by Kevin Baillie – delayed till next meeting Item 6 – Revision of Group MoU – Alison Hepworth to discuss with Nigel Rudd.	AH/ABr CG KB AH
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:		
3.	IRS Refresh and SD Champion Body consultation: Steve Owen (URSUS) updated members of the Group on progress to date, outlining the 3 areas covered in the consultation process. The list of questions can be viewed on-line at www.eastmidlandssdconsultation.co.uk URSUS have been appointed to identify key issues and identify who needs to be involved in the consultation process taking place this year. EG members are invited to pass this link on to any organisation they think fit. The first question on the questionnaire relates to the IRS Refresh. This involves the	ALL

<p>current IRS Vision for the region, the identification of regional priorities and the SD Big idea/ challenge for the region.</p> <p>The second main part of the consultation is the proposals in “<i>Securing The Regions’ Futures</i>” for a SD Champion Body and the role, form, function and membership of the Promoting SD (PSD) Group which currently reports to the Regional Communities and Policy Board.</p> <p>Discussions by members of the group followed. Please note that a full list of the bullet point notes made of the discussions is included below as Appendix 1 below.</p> <p>IRS Refresh: The Chair informed members of the Group of the need to discuss the IRS refresh questions and agree a response for the PSD Group. The Chair explained that the focus is on the ‘big idea’, and the following points and suggestions are a synopsis of the points raised.</p> <p>Vision The Group’s discussion highlighted the importance of the following::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vision should concentrate on the integration of the various elements contained within it • Climate change and environmental capacity were two key issues that should be in the Vision • The Vision should state clearly the timeframe for the Vision, thus allowing progress to it to be judged. • The BIG IDEA for the region should focus on developing the Environmental Capacity concept for the region as a whole • AH to circulate the joint statement on environmental capacity, produced last year by the Environmental Partners • Strategic approach – identify something not happening. Members of group – talk to own colleagues and report back • Next steps – create time limited sub group from Environment Group and EAG. Alex Bowness to confirm the timeline for the Big Idea work <p>Regional SD Champion Body The Group agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SD critical Friend body should be independent of existing structures and given sufficient secure, medium term funding to deliver on their role. Failure to provide this will mean that the Critical Friend will be ineffectual. • There doesn’t necessarily have to be a standing committee – the Critical Friend role could be performed on a periodic basis. However, concerns were raised about how this would operate and the disadvantage of “snap shot” reviews. • The IRS refresh requires that the Policy and Communities Board looks at the structure of Groups feeding into to ensure they are fit to deliver the IRS. Suggestions on reorganisation focussed on the removal of CCSG from PSD, its 	<p>AH</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>ABo</p>
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	links with Environment Group and Energy Group and unanimous agreement that EG and EAG should not be merged.	
4.	<p>Update from project sub-groups on the work programme:</p> <p>4.1 Green Infrastructure The success of the conference needs to be a strong message to the RCP Board, along with an analysis of the types of people who attended. There seemed to be a large number of private businesses. Another key point was the amount of the attendees who “stuck it out “ to the end of the day! Next steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to get the GIN website up and running • get the questionnaire on the website and advertised to all who attended • finalise the details for the seminars in Sept/ Oct and advertise • Get the Public Benefit Mapping Project on the EMRA website • Have a further steering group meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to discuss the results of the workshops (highlights to RCP Board) ○ discuss the way forward ○ discuss the SSPs PB Mapping project underway ○ Make linkages re the Growth Points work on GI ○ Make linkages to the developing work on wider EI (Water Infrastructure) – see item 4.6 below) • Alison H to get a date set for the steering group to meet. <p>A limited number of copies of the Public Benefit Mapping Project CD are available from Alison Hepworth for those who were unable to attend the conference. The report should be available on the EMRA website shortly.</p> <p>4.2 Soil Management No progress was reported – a meeting is shortly to be arranged to further work up the project proposal. A meeting was held on 8 May between EMRA, LGEM, emda and a representative of the Romanian County Councils, with whom EMRA has agreed a Joint Work Programme. This project (and the Environmental Evidence Base below in section 4.3) were both discussed in relation to possible co working and expertise sharing.</p> <p>4.3 Environmental data needs and an Environmental Evidence Base for the region The proposal for an Environmental Evidence Base for the Region is being taken forward with the help of funding from emda. Consultants are working on a gap analysis of data held around the region and will prepare the groundwork for a possible LIFE+ or other European funding bid later in the year. They will also run a workshop in September for the region.</p> <p>4.4 Landscapes No progress reported, but the funding is in place and this project will be taken forward shortly by Natural England.</p>	<p>AH</p> <p>AH/ MD</p> <p>AH/ CH</p> <p>SB</p>

	<p>4.5 Local Area Agreements (LAAs) Meeting due to take place on Tuesday 15 May to discuss taking this forward. The need to relate any proposed work to the work that REM are undertaking with LAAs was stressed. Timing of any kind of proposal re Environmental LAA awareness raising is critical, as some LAAs are being developed as we speak. We may miss the boat if we don't get something in the pipelines soon. The idea might be to think from the consumer's point of view. We may not be talking about seminars.</p> <p>4.6 Water Infrastructure A sub group met on 8 May to discuss this issue. Whatever is proposed needs to avoid duplication of effort, but be seen as adding value to the region. The group discussed the Water Cycle Strategy that has recently been produced for Corby (in "Water Services Infrastructure Guide – A Planning Framework" – copies available online at: http://environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/anglian/484767/1198793/?version=1&lang=e) A possibility for work might be to produce a toolkit to aid the Growth Points in developing their own Water Cycle Strategies, in tandem with the Green Infrastructure work. A scoping meeting is proposed to be held end June/ early July with the following people to be represented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Water Companies o EA o LA Growth Points o Emda o EMRA o Developers o GOEM Growth Points reps o Sustainable Design and Construction Group o Housing Group 	<p>HF</p> <p>SP</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Updates on regional activity: 5.1 Climate Change Steering Group The Nottingham Declaration now has a 100% sign up in the region of LAs. A celebration event is being planned at Conkers (in NW Leics) in June. UKCIP is working on the wording of the declaration in order to widen the sign up to none Local Authorities. The EA is keen to sign up, but EMEL feels it is unnecessary for them as environmental NGOs, and are keen to keep the attention on LAs, but congratulate the LAs and are happy to work with them to deliver on their commitment.</p> <p>Sharon P to check with YD re EA involvement in the event</p> <p>The CC Coordinator, James Schrodell, ends his secondment at the end of May. A replacement is being sought, but there will unfortunately be no overlap as there is unlikely to be anyone in post before September.</p> <p>The Programme for Action is shortly to be finalised and out to consultation, with a targeted audience. The final document will be launched at the Expo on 16 October.</p>	<p>SP</p>

	<p>The Group requested that the Environment Group is consulted on this at the next meeting on 12 July.</p> <p>5.2 Behavioural Change Group The workshop for the project entitled “Investigating Behavioural Change with respect to Sustainable Development in the East Midlands” will take place on 17 May at the Sysonby Knoll Hotel in Melton Mowbray.</p> <p>5.3 Regional Housing Group It was agreed by the Group that they are happy for the Advisory Group to take on responsibility for linking to the RHS review process, with progress reports to be fed through as appropriate to this Group.</p> <p>5.4 Regional Biodiversity Forum Charlotte Gault was welcomed as the new chair of the Biodiversity Forum. She informed the group that the Forum has been undergoing a process of revising the Terms of Reference with regard to the structure and function of the forum.</p> <p>5.5 Water Framework Directive The group discussed the report on the Humber RBD Liaison Panel, noting that the scope of the task is very wide. The WFD Board report was also discussed and it was agreed that a response should be drafted by the chair to the effect that the Group notes the work that EA is doing and that we are well aware that the WFD process relates to the work of this group.</p> <p>It was also noted that an item on the WFD needs to be a future agenda item to both the RCP and HPT Boards via the Advisory Group and this Group. Alison to discuss how best the message can be put to both boards.</p>	<p>SP</p> <p>EAG</p> <p>AH/MD</p> <p>AH</p>
6.	<p>Messages for the Regional Communities and Policy Board:</p> <p>a) IRS Refresh – the big idea suggestion is “Living within our environmental capacity”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision - The Group’s discussion highlighted the importance of the following:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Vision should concentrate on the integration of the various elements contained within it ○ Climate change and environmental capacity were two key issues that should be in the Vision ○ The Vision should state clearly the timeframe for the Vision, thus allowing progress to it to be judged. ○ The BIG IDEA for the region should focus on developing the Environmental Capacity concept for the region as a whole ○ Strategic approach – identify something not happening. Next steps – create time limited sub group from Environment Group and EAG. • Regional SD Champion Body - The Group agreed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The SD critical Friend body should be independent of existing structures 	

and given sufficient secure, medium term funding to deliver on their role. Failure to provide this will mean that the Critical Friend will be ineffectual.

- There doesn't necessarily have to be a standing committee – the Critical Friend role could be performed on a periodic basis. However, concerns were raised about how this would operate and the disadvantage of “snap shot” reviews.
- The IRS refresh requires that the Policy and Communities Board looks at the structure of Groups feeding into to ensure they are fit to deliver the IRS. Suggestions on reorganisation focussed on the removal of CCSG from PSD, its links with Environment Group and Energy Group and unanimous agreement that EG and EAG should not be merged.

b) Connecting People and Spaces - The success of the conference needs to be a strong message to the RCP Board, along with an analysis of the types of people who attended. There seemed to be a large number of private businesses. Another key point was the amount of the attendees who “stuck it out “ to the end of the day!

c) Soil Management - A meeting was held on 8 May between EMRA, LGEM, emda and a representative of the Romanian County Councils, with whom EMRA has agreed a Joint Work Programme. This project (and the Environmental Evidence Base below in section 4.3) were both discussed in relation to possible co working and expertise sharing.

d) Environmental Data needs – the work of this sub group will dovetail nicely to inform the work on filling gaps in data and information for the IRS Refresh process.

e) Evidence Base for the region - The proposal is being taken forward with the help of funding from emda. Consultants are working on a gap analysis of data held around the region and will prepare the groundwork for a possible LIFE+ or other European funding bid later in the year. They will also run a workshop in September for the region. This project is split 80% around Biodiversity data and 20% wider environmental data needs.

f) LAAs – the group are still keen to be ready to do some kind of awareness raising on the environmental elements of LAAs once the new guidance comes out. They will be discussing how to do this and will be discussing with REM how this work would complement the work they have underway on LAAs.

g) Water (Environmental) Infrastructure – the group are discussing the possibility for a piece of work around the growing need to ensure that water infrastructure (an element of wider environmental infrastructure) is integrated into the housing growth development planned in the region. One idea might be to produce a toolkit to aid the Growth Points in developing their own Water Cycle Strategies, in tandem with the Green Infrastructure work.

	<p>h) Climate Change – Nottingham Declaration – the Environment Group is keen to assist in the celebratory event for the ND and could (if given sufficient notice) wheel out a big gun from the EA to stand up and say they will also sign up.</p> <p>i) Water Framework Directive – The Group wish to highlight the need for a future agenda item of great importance on the WFD to both the RCP and HPT Boards via the Advisory Group and this Group. Alison to discuss with Yvette how best the message can be put to both boards.</p>	
7	<p>Tit bits/ grapevine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposed – preview of National Trust’s Climate Change photo Gallery at Nottingham Castle on 18 May, to include announcement on the new Climate Change Bill. • The Environment Agency’s World Environment Day (5 June) is this yyear to have a business orientation. • English Heritage - the bill drafting team are currently working on the Heritage Protection Bill. The Heritage Forum will be responding to the questions in the White Paper. Heritage Counts 2007 – the Heritage Forum Steering Group are collating information – this year Learning and Skills is the headline theme. There will be both a National as well as a regional report as well as web based information. • Group members agreed that 1030 would be a better start time for these meetings in Nottingham, in order to enable those travelling by public transport to get to the meeting more comfortably. 	
8.	<p>Forward dates and venues for meetings: - are we seeking an Nottm venue? – emda/GOEM, etc? Thursday 12 July 2007 10.30 am to 1.30 pm EMRA Conference Room Melton Mowbray</p>	
9.	<p>Any other business None</p>	

Appendix 1 - IRS Refresh consultation

Full list of bullet points of group discussions on the following:

Vision:

- Climate change not mentioned
- Quantify ways of achieving vision
- A specific Climate Change challenge is about taking stock of our carbon emissions - how to go about 'carbon accounting'
- Energy – specific challenge – measure long term
- Mitigation – need to be more specific the vision seems to cover adaptation better than mitigation!
- No timelines identified for either the vision or the priorities– clarity required – is the vision achievable?
- Reference to adaptation – clarity needed
- The vision and priorities need to develop over time to keep pace with what regional partners see as the focus for priorities. These change over time. Key concepts are emerging– include GI, environmental Infrastructure, environmental capacity – opportunity to enhance environmental deficit/biodiversity
- Huge conflict – overuse of our regional environmental capital in pursuing a good quality of life and a vibrant economy.
- Suggestion that the word “vibrant” in the vision be swapped for “stable” as per the UK SD Strategy new emphasis.
- This vision could refer to any region. The key point is to focus on integration – doing things differently is the key in order to integrate other aspects.
- Time lag between our aspirations being converted into policy and actually achieving sustainable development
- Building boom – impact on environment and energy efficiency – links to new builds possible future crisis water/energy. Industry – need coercing to move forward - Build in dynamics of relationship – measures, sustainability
- Building better landscapes – new vision around design incorporating GI
- No reference to coastal issues – gap
- Who is the vision for? Are they signed up to it? How is it being disseminated? How do we measure our progress? Define parameters of vision
- We need to have a challenging vision against which all policy and action can be measured.
- **BIG IDEA: Living within our Environmental capacity** – central aspect in vision – encompasses so many aspects of the IRS and underpins the planning process as well as the approach to economic development needed. We could easily illustrate how it helps the IRS in the round. This could be a standalone project if not accepted as the Big Idea. Aligning decision making processes – monitoring role

- Some form of offsetting mechanisms to enhance and balance. This may be a net figure – not absolute.
- The word “capacity” could be added to the second priority after “environmental”.

Regional SD Champion Body:

- Functions of the PSD Group are valued and seen as important.
- The section of the PSD Group Terms of Reference referring to the need to ensure horizontal linkages across with all groups under the Board were strongly endorsed, but Members felt this wasn’t being delivered in practice
- Agreed there is a need for a group that delivers cross-cutting projects for SD
- Need for better communications between groups especially about cross cutting work areas.
- Possible need for external challenging friend body to Policy Board – clear role that the PSD cannot perform
- The Policy Bd is the custodian of the IRS which is our SDF.
- Individual critical friend broad role – of Policy Board and others – the critical friend needs to look at other big players in the region, but also the Planning and Scrutiny Boards.
- Identify critical friend linkage to 2nd tier of RCP Board structure
- Critical friend should be a friend of Policy Board
- Needs proper resourcing – issue – security of long term role – separate resource/body needed with long term secure funding for this role – not on a year to year basis and not funded by EMRA/ emda or GOEM but independent (National?)
- The funding stream for a SD Champion body needs to be separate from the people it is being a critical friend to.
- Key link to PSD Group of this critical friend
- PSD is valuable as a pure delivery group
- New body – identify funding/timescale/employed by who/buy in/independent
- Structure – complexities – group on adhoc basis/continuity/analogy
- Options might be:
 - Revitalise the PSD Group to be more independent
 - Scrutiny Board to extend its remit
 - Regional Communities and Policy Board to play the scrutiny role
- The Environment Group however were unanimous that neither the RCP Board nor the PSD Group can undertake the “critical friend” role
- This must be separately and long term securely funded.
- Need to ensure separation of roles and interests
- EMRA could take overall ownership of everything then could periodically invite, on a periodic basis, a group of genuinely independent people to come forward and scrutinise the SD role.

- There could also be a reference group relating strongly to the PSD Group, but as a pure reference group.

Group members further considered group structures.

- EM Climate Change Steering Group would be better linking with the Environment group on adaptation and the Energy Group on mitigation (the Framework for Action would enable this)
- Or the EMCCSG to sit alongside Environment and Energy Groups but not under the PSD Group, which has a far different role ie delivering projects, not policy/ strategy
- Links need to be devised - communication – critical between groups
- After IRS refresh, it is suggested that the Policy Board then look at structure – need to ensure all groups are ‘fit for purpose’
- Members agreed that environment group and environment advisory group should not be merged
- Option – energy feeding into climate change – free up energy group to report into other group – e.g. Health and affordable warmth strategy