**GOVERNANCE REVIEW: THE NEED FOR A Stakeholder Forum**

1. **Background**

The present governance structure for the WFD pilot Ribble Life consists of a ‘project board’. The board consists of 50:50 EA and RRT members, with a maximum of 3 members from each party plus a Chair. The EA chair the meeting but the chair has no voting rights. Both parties may have in attendance a member of staff to observe and take notes. Other organisations can be invited to the board with the agreement of both parties.

The Project Board has met on a monthly basis to date, steering the project, making decisions and being responsible for implementing/approving any changes which affect the scope, timescales or costs to the project plan.

It was suggested at the outset that the project board would pull together a ‘Strategic Sounding Board’ for the project from the public and private sectors. The scale and objectives for the sounding board were not defined.

Following the initial launch event in October 2011, 27 people representing 26 different organisations indicated they would like to be involved in a project sounding board, although the exact terms of reference and purpose of this group were not made clear on the day, as per the evaluation feedback.

Stakeholders who attended the launch event, which included 40 interested organisations or individuals from the public, private and voluntary sector has been communicated with via a regular monthly email bulletin and also have access to the Ribble Life website [www.ribblelife.org](http://www.ribblelife.org)

1. **Proposed (revised) Governance Structure**

Since the Ribble Life launch event in October 2011, the project has remained flexible to reflect the diversity of partners and projects within the Ribble Catchment. A number of key stakeholders; herein defined as ‘Communities of Interest’ i.e. organisations with an interest or ‘stake’ in how the Ribble Catchment is managed, have been met on a 1-2-1 meeting basis by members of the project board.

These meetings have allowed for more targeted discussions around ‘Communities of Interests’ priorities across the Ribble Catchment. The project is now at a point where we need to bring these ‘Communities of Interest’ together in a proposed Stakeholder Forum or Exchange.

1. **The Ribble Life Pilot**

Ribble Life is the name given to the Defra funded pilot scheme aimed at exploring better ways to engage with people and organisations to improve the water environment at a local catchment level within the Ribble Catchment. The development and implementation of a Catchment Action Plan (CAP) is central to the pilot and will be launched in December 2012 and will be developed to guide the management of the catchment’s water environment in a joined up way.

**Ribble Life aims**

* To ensure that improvements to rivers in the Ribble catchment support a healthy local economy
* To share information and communicate effectively across the Ribble catchment
* To work together to maintain and improve the biodiversity of the Ribble catchment
* To reduce pollution and improve the quality of water in the Ribble catchment
* To enhance the amenity value of the Ribble catchment

1. **Ribble Life Stakeholder Exchange**

A Stakeholder Exchange is proposed to support the development and successful implementation of a SHARED Catchment Action Plan for the Ribble by:

* 1. Enabling expert information and advice on pollution and water quality, biodiversity, recreation and amenity, the economic benefits of the rivers and other key issues in the catchment to be openly exchanged.
  2. Encouraging mutual understanding and respect for the variety of users who benefit from the land and water resources within the catchment
  3. Strengthening links between Ribble Life and other initiatives.
  4. Taking appropriate action through joint commitment and combined effort.
  5. Contributing to the monitoring, evaluation and future development of Ribble Life and its associated Catchment Action Plan.
  6. Encouraging others to participate in the improvement of the Ribble catchment, by raising awareness and acting as advocates.

**The Stakeholder Exchange will not:**

Replace methods that the Environment Agency and the Ribble Rivers Trust have established to deal with issues about their services raised by individuals.

**Membership**

The Stakeholder Exchange will consist of representatives from the following sectors and as defined in the River Basin Management Plan:

|  |
| --- |
| **SECTOR (based on RBMP breakdown)** |
| Agriculture and Rural Land Management |
| Local & Regional Government |
| Mining & Quarrying |
| Navigation |
| Recreation & Sports |
| Urban & Transport |
| Water Industry |
| Fisheries & Angling |
| Conservation |
| Industry, manufacturing and other business |
| Central Government |
| Environment Agency (EA) |
| Other |
| Public |
| *Education & Research* |

Membership will be reviewed on an annual basis, or as deemed appropriate by the Chair and Project Board. The suggestion is to have a rotating member (Nigel to include more details here as to how this should and will work).

**Timing and frequency**

The Stakeholder Exchange will be held quarterly, starting with an inaugural meeting in July 2012, hosted and chaired by Dr. Nigel Watson, Lancaster University.

Each meeting will be combined with a site tour to look at issues and priorities within the Ribble Catchment.

**Role of the Project Board (project team)**

* The Project Board will administer the meeting.
* The Project Board will publicise meetings to stakeholders two weeks before the date as a reminder.
* The Project Board will be responsible for arranging the venue and funding any incidentals. As an open meeting, it is not anticipated that attendees will be given expenses to attend.
* The Project Board will also be responsible for summarising the outcome of the meeting for future publication in newsletters, website, etc.

**Other suggestions/points from meeting with Dr. Nigel Watson**

* Statement as to why a Catchment Action Plan is needed is to be sent out with initial invite to attend stakeholder exchange.
* Postcards to capture essence of issues within the catchment (linked to website and stakeholder mapping portal – key issues symbols).
* Demonstration of interactive catchment action plan (please see details below on how to access and view the interactive plan. NB; the site is not yet live but a test site).

Click below then log in using the details provided:

<http://ribble.testing.scape2.vm.bytemark.co.uk/user>  
  
username: jo.spencer  
  
password: kQWbB35g