

Beddington Farmlands CAMC meeting – 13th October 2023 – 13.00 – 15.00 – Google meet invitation

Attendees:

<p>CAMC members: Cllr Tim Foster (Chair) Cllr Dave Tchil (Vice Chair)</p> <p>Norman Jones (Hackbirdge) Lysanne Horrox (Hackbridge) Karen Williams (Beddington)</p> <p>Derek Coleman (BFBG) Tony Burton (Wandle Valley Forum) Mathew Frith (London Wildlife Trust)</p> <p>Thames Water: Rosemary Waugh</p>	<p>London Borough of Sutton officers: Simon Latham Andy Webber Simon Chalcraft David Warburton Charlie Owens</p> <p>Valencia: Andy Stokes Grant Scott</p> <p>Secretariat: Andrew Turner</p>	<p>Stantec: Greg Pitt Steph Dufour Ed Higgins Iain Adderton Natalie Malettras</p>
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Item		Action
1.0	Introductions & Apologies	
1.1	Cllr Foster welcomed members to the meeting, noting that the tone for this meeting of the CAMC would be something different to previous sessions, there was a real concern around all elements of the project.	
1.2	<p>There were a number of apologies share ahead of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marcus Kohler (MKA Ecology) - Richard Aylard (Thames Water) - Spencer Palmer (London Borough of Sutton) - Cllr Barry Lewis (London Borough of Sutton) 	
2.0	Farmlands restoration update	
2.1	Cllr Foster summarised a number of questions that had been prompted by the briefing submitted by the London Borough of Sutton ahead of the CAMC. Andy Stokes responded.	
2.2	Andy noted that there were some points of note to make including that the Planning Performance Agreement between Valencia and the London Borough of Sutton did not include matters related to the restoration progress, further to this the summer had seen weather that made the restoration programme extremely challenging. Valencia remained committed to delivering the programme of works in 2023, Andy confirmed he had received personal assurances from Valencia’s shareholder on this matter.	

2.3	<p>Andy explained that he felt the briefing note gave a comprehensive summary of the key issues, but there were areas to respond to. With regards to the cattle grazing, Valencia were grateful for the support from David Warburton but did not agree with the reporting of the cattle welfare situation. Valencia had learned a number of lessons relating to contractual clarity and these would be reflected in the revised Restoration Management Plan (RMP).</p>	AS/DC
2.4	<p>The delivery of the pathways was substantially complete, and whilst there were snagging items to be remedied, the re-use of concrete from the site was a prudent approach and was successful.</p>	
2.5	<p>Valencia had received correspondence on the 29th September from the London Borough of Sutton citing further concerns around the progress made on the Farmlands. Valencia would be preparing a response, but Andy noted it would not be appropriate to comment further on ongoing legal matters.</p>	
2.6	<p>Andy reinforced that he felt Valencia were acting with due diligence and in the best interests of the Farmlands site, so as to not remake the masterplan without robust technical work to validate the assumptions and proposals. This was something he felt Viridor would not have completed and it would see a better overall scheme delivered.</p>	
2.7	<p>Marcus Kohler’s contract with Valencia was up to date, and payments had been made recently. Andy noted the value, expertise and benefit Marcus brings to the Farmlands and whilst not commenting on individual consultant contracts he was in dialogue with Marcus to extend his contract.</p>	
2.8	<p>Andy confirmed that Valencia were committed to maintaining access for the Beddington Farm Bird Group, following the cessation of the lone working app provided by Viridor. Andy explained that Valencia might be able to take a different approach to that of Viridor. Derek Coleman welcomed this news and they took an action to pick up the matter offline.</p>	
2.9	<p>Andy noted that Valencia would use a model of relying on contractors and experienced consultants to deliver the Farmlands project, feeling that there had been excessive focus placed on the departure of Jason Bean, who has received another opportunity in the sector, with Andy noting that staff turnover was a part of the industry.</p>	
2.10	<p>Lysanne sought to understand the levels of support that Charlie Owens had onsite. Andy confirmed that Neil Gannon was the site manager, with Clive Barber acting as the project manager. Andy confirmed that there was a need for long term management but he would review the delivery of the Farmlands, before developing the longer term management approach.</p>	
2.11	<p>Tony Burton asked Andy if there was a working tractor on the site and if Valencia believed they would have progressed the restoration to the extent enforcement action would be avoided. Andy confirmed that there was an operational tractor on the site, and that he would not be drawn on ongoing legal matters. Tony also noted that on other projects</p>	

<p>2.12</p> <p>2.13</p>	<p>where he had been involved, the weather over the summer had not significantly impacted the project timeline.</p> <p>Cllr Tchil sought to know how the budget was being managed, he cited the concern of external consultants potentially eroding the money available to deliver the scheme on the ground. Andy confirmed that Valencia worked in a different way to Viridor and there would be budget available to deliver the scheme compliantly.</p> <p>Cllr Foster offered David Warburton the opportunity to respond to Andy’s comments. David explained whilst there was positive feedback in this meeting, there were differing levels of success on the site, whilst there is a tractor it often was not operational and did not have the appropriate equipment, MKA Ecology’s contract was due to expire and whilst Jason was not driving the project he did have land management experience.</p>	
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Beddington Farmlands Warden update</p>	
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>Charlie Owens was experiencing technical difficulties, but submitted a short written update:</p> <p>Since the last CAMC six guided walks had taken place with five of these being part of the Wandle Fortnight, another had looked to showcase the bat populations on the Farmlands. Charlie explained that the feedback had been largely positive.</p> <p>There had been a number of volunteering days with those attending helping to remove the invasive species, monitor the cattle and conduct bird recording.</p> <p>Charlie remained available to support the Stantec team in their planning work along with working with the Beddington Farm Bird Group to establish the optimum locations for the additional bird hides.</p> <p>Minor fence line repairs have been undertaken along with developing the programme of works for the winter months to be delivered by the volunteers.</p>	
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Planning workstream update</p>	
<p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Greg Pitt, Ed Higgins, Steph Dufour, Iain Adderton and Natalie Maletas from Stantec were introduced and delivered a short presentation on the planning workstream.</p> <p>Greg presented slides outlining the overarching programme, and the emerging masterplan was presented. It was confirmed that the slides could be shared along with the minutes, however the masterplan would require further refinement before it could be shared.</p> <p>It was reconfirmed that a new planning permission would be prepared and submitted to replace the existing RMP along with conditions 41 and 43 of the existing planning permission, this would also see variation to the existing s.106 along with a new s.106 agreement. Greg noted that the team were working on preparing the submission to present to the London Borough of Sutton planners on 6th November, before a public</p>	<p>AT</p>

	<p>consultation and submission before Christmas. It was anticipated that a determination would be reached in mid-2024.</p> <p>Greg also noted that the Stantec team had conducted a number of meetings with the statutory stakeholders including the Environment Agency since the last CAMC meeting.</p> <p>4.3 Ed Higgins delivered a presentation with the emerging masterplan, noting that Three Corner Field was now included within the scheme. Ed explained the access routes across the Farmlands including the permissive footpath and the network of footpaths across the landfill. It was noted that gated controls would manage access from cycles and to restrict access at certain times of the year for ecological purposes.</p> <p>4.4 The meadowland would be divided into parcels to enable management of cattle, and there would be predator fencing installed around the wet grassland and lake habitats. There would be a pedestrian and vehicular access to a hard standing (the former landfill tipping pad) where storage for machinery, an office and livestock handling could occur.</p> <p>4.4 Steph Dufour explained that the Stantec team were working through water balancing calculations including evaporation and infiltration. This work had determined that there would be no need for formal abstraction, and an associated permit from the Environment Agency. This caused surprise from David Warburton given the importance of the Main Effluent Carrier (MEC) to the River Wandle, Steph confirmed that conversations with the Environment Agency were ongoing.</p> <p>There would be a network of pipes flowing from the MEC through to the northern wet grassland. There was also concern around the approach taken to managing Three Corner Field with considerations around lining the lagoons to retain water. David encouraged the proposals to look more holistically at the whole Hundred Acre habitat.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the southern wet grassland. It was confirmed that the current assessments focused on utilizing landfill rainwater run-off, ground water and the Wandle overflow channel to provide water to this habitat.</p> <p>4.5 Steph Dufour confirmed that further work was required, but the next steps were to analyse the historic data from the Wandle overflow channel (in Beddington Park) to understand the potential for this to form a core part of the habitat sustainability proposals. It was understood that the winter water flows would be sufficient to sustain the wet grassland. There as concern over the reliability of this water source.</p> <p>4.6 It was confirmed that the locations of four further bird hides were being developed, with one near to the southern wet grassland requiring further assessment owing to the contours of the site.</p> <p>There would be further tree planting to enhance the established native scrub, along with management to avoid predator habitats forming to an extensive level. The parcels of land within the meadowland would offer sightlines for the lapwing and target species.</p> <p>Iain Adderton explained that the islands across the lakes would require management, but across the lakes and wet grassland there would be plentiful habitat for little ringed plover</p>	
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	<p>and lapwing. The wet grassland habitats would include ‘wobble edges’ to encourage habitats for bird foraging.</p> <p>There was commitment to developing a sacrificial crop and hedgerows suitable for passerines, including tree sparrow should they return to the site.</p> <p>4.7 Tony also sought to understand what provisions would be made to enhance the visitor experience in the future. It was noted that the pathways, whilst appearing narrow on the masterplan were 3m wide with a further 2m either side as a mown grass strip. Once the hedgerows had established the fence lines could be removed to further open up the visual access and reduce corridor.</p> <p>Tony also questioned what future proofing was being conducted for large visits and potential facilities. Ed Higgins confirmed that this would form part of the access strategy. Tony asked if the viewpoint could be referred to as the Wandle Vista viewpoint responding to community aspiration.</p> <p>4.8 David sought to understand if further ground water monitoring would be conducted. Steph confirmed that this would be the case. David also questioned the approach of creating scrapes on the landform, having previously been told standing water on the site would not be sustainable.</p> <p>4.9 Andy Webber sought to put on the record that he was concerned and disappointed that the London Borough of Sutton was seeing the information presented for the first time at the CAMC, despite seeking an assurances that this would not be the case and that public consultation would not take place until the planning department would be content with the proposals.</p> <p>The timeline presented was broadly in line with that presented at the formal pre-application meetings, however the London Borough of Sutton had hoped for a determination in early 2024, with the programme presented indicating slippage to this.</p> <p>4.10 Natalie Maletras and Iain Adderton confirmed that scrapes would be explored towards the north east of the site where contour lines made these small informal habitats possible. Natalie also sought to place on record that the proposals would not include reservoirs, this term could be confusing to stakeholders.</p> <p>4.11 There was a discussion around the extent to which the Main Effluent Carrier (MEC) overflow channel and MEC would utilized to sustain the northern wet grasslands. Tony noted that the MEC was a major source of pollution for the Wandle.</p> <p>4.12 Lysanne shared considerations around access and asked if there was still the intention to resurface the whole permissive footpath. It was confirmed that the Valenica leased stretch would be resurfaced.</p> <p>4.13 It was confirmed that the access point into Hackbridge station was included within the proposals. Lysanne expressed surprise that the previously discussed east / west access towards the south of the site had been replaced with a crossing to towards the north. Grant Scott explained that during the masterplanning process the Conservation</p>	EH
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<p>4.14</p>	<p>Management Scheme objectives were reviewed along with deliverability of the crossing and this would be the most appropriate part of the site to cross from Hackbridge to Beddington.</p> <p>Cllr Foster offered Andy Webber the opportunity to share a planning perspective, Andy noted that members should acknowledge the information presented may not be a realistic programme. Grant Scott responded to confirm that the information presented was a refinement of previously presented information to the London Borough of Sutton rather than new information.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
<p>5.1</p>	<p>Lysanne confirmed that the community had been working to investigate the cause of recent flooding in Hackbridge. Following the departure of Adrian Frost she did not have a relevant point of contact for Valencia.</p> <p>Andrew confirmed he would introduce Lysanne to Clive Barber.</p>	<p>AT</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p>	
<p>6.1</p>	<p>It was proposed that the next meeting could be combined with a site visit to enable members of the CAMC to see the progress made on the site. It was noted that the 9th November would not be suitable. Andrew took an action to revert to the CAMC with a fresh date.</p>	<p>AT</p>