

# Latchmore Brook Wetland Restoration Project: Responses from Public Exhibition Event

A Public Exhibition on the Latchmore Brook Wetland Restoration Project was held on the 29th April 2014 at Godshill Village Hall. Attendees were invited to complete a feedback form or given the opportunity to submit their responses online up until the 13th May via the Forestry Commission's consultation website. The information from the exhibition boards was also posted on the Latchmore Brook Wetland Restoration Website. A link from this website to the Forestry Commission's consultation website was also made available.

The first three questions sought contact information from respondents. Questions 4 to 7 requested feedback on four main points, as follows:

- 4 Are there any specific issues about the proposed restoration that concern you? If yes, please outline.
- 5 Do you think that the scope of the EIA is appropriate?
- 6 If answered no to Q.5, tell us what additional topics you consider should be included in the EIA?
- 7 Do you have any additional comments?

A total of 50 responses were received in total. 26 feedback forms were completed at the public exhibition, 21 were completed via the Forestry Commission's consultation website, two were submitted by e-mail to the HLS website (enquiries e-mail) and two were posted direct.

The following table provides a summary of the key issues raised and a commentary on how the comments will be addressed.

## Summary of public consultation responses and how the responses will be addressed.

Responses from public consultation event	How responses have/will be addressed
<b>4. Are there any specific issues about the proposed restoration that concern you? If yes, please outline.</b>	
<p>19 people were concerned about whether there was any need for restoration works at all, and whether the restoration will result in an improvement to the habitat at Latchmore Brook. Several respondents made reference to some previous restoration projects having poor results.</p>	<p>The FC has a legal responsibility under the EU Habitats Directive/ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) to restore habitats in a SAC/ SSSI where the habitat has been assessed by Natural England as being in 'unfavourable condition'.</p> <p>There is a need for wetland restoration as many of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Units at Latchmore are currently classed by Natural England as being in 'unfavourable recovering condition'. They are currently termed 'recovering' as a result of the proposed Latchmore Restoration proposals. Further information on the need for the proposal will be set out in the EIA Scoping Report and the Environmental Statement that will be prepared to report on the findings of the EIA.</p>

Responses from public consultation event	How responses have/will be addressed
	LUC will be commissioning consultants to undertake an independent review of the effectiveness of the restored FC wetland projects. The information obtained from this review will be used to inform the scheme design and Environmental Impact Assessment.
Ten respondents raised the issue of whether this was the most appropriate use of Forestry Commission funds and whether the money may be better spent on alternative projects.	For the reasons set out above the FC are obliged to address issues which are threatening the condition of the SSSI. Latchmore is just one of a number of restoration projects that they are progressing as part of a much larger programme.
Several people were concerned about specific issues relating to the project and the EIA including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact on the hydrology of Latchmore Brook, particularly because the catchment area is large and therefore the hydrology is complex, and assessment methodology.</li> </ul>	Natural England and the FC have had a detailed hydraulic assessment undertaken of the proposed restoration measures for the SSSI Units along the Latchmore Brook. This work was carried out by JBA Consulting. This work will be independently reviewed by a team of qualified hydrologists at Cascade Consulting, LUC's sub-consultants, and further assessment work will be undertaken as deemed necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact on nature conservation/wildlife – including fish, aquatic macro invertebrates, felling of trees.</li> </ul>	LUC's ecologists, supplemented by relevant specialists, will assess the potential ecological effects of the proposed scheme as part of the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA). This will include assessing impacts on nature conservation/wildlife, including: fish, macroinvertebrates and trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A lack of clarity about the scope/methodology of the project; particularly about the fact that there is currently no project map is available for public viewing.</li> </ul>	The scope and methodologies for the survey work that will be undertaken will be outlined in detail in the EIA Scoping Report which will be submitted to the National Park Authority shortly. This report and accompanying relevant maps will be published on the project website ( <a href="http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore">http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore</a> ).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area being unsuitable for the use of heavy goods vehicles, and damage that may be caused by the transportation of the material used to alter the course of the brook.</li> </ul>	Traffic and transportation impacts will be assessed as part of the EIA process. This will include issues such as access to the site, potential increase in traffic generation, impact on highway capacity, road safety, vibration impacts on cobb cottages, and noise impacts associated with traffic using the local roads. Further detail on the scope of the studies will be included in the scoping report.

Responses from public consultation event	How responses have/will be addressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage to paths and public rights of way.</li> </ul>	<p>Potential impacts on the amenity of people using the area (including public rights of way) will be considered in detail as part of the EIA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increased risk of flooding in the surrounding area.</li> </ul>	<p>The effect of the proposed scheme on the water environment, including flood risk, will be considered in the hydrology section of the EIA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of involvement of the public and residents.</li> </ul>	<p>A public consultation event has already taken place, and another public consultation event will take place in the Summer/ Autumn of 2014. A dedicated webpage has also been set up for the project (<a href="http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore">http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore</a>).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A concern that the EIA proposes an inadequate timescale for appropriate surveys to be undertaken</li> </ul>	<p>All surveys are being undertaken in accordance with the best practice guidelines for the relevant topic area.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of mention of the 'Do Nothing' option.</li> </ul>	<p>A do-nothing option will be considered as part of the EIA. This will be reported on in the final Environmental Statement.</p>
<p>Three people responded that they supported the project and hoped that it is successful.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p><b>5. Do you think that the scope of the EIA is appropriate?</b></p>	
<p>Eight people stated that they did not know whether the scope of the EIA was appropriate, mainly due to feeling that more information was required for them to make a decision or the timescales may not be sufficient.</p>	<p>The proposed scope of the EIA will be set out in the Scoping Report which will be submitted shortly to the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA). The NFNPA will then consult with the relevant Statutory and Non-statutory consultees before publishing a formal 'Scoping Opinion'. This Scoping Opinion will form the agreed scope of the EIA.</p>
<p>24 people answered 'no' to this question and, as well as the responses received for question 6 detailed below, comments included:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of confidence in or understanding of the EIA process.</li> </ul>	<p>The EIA process will be undertaken in accordance with all relevant regulations and guidelines, and every effort will be made to make this as accessible as possible.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling that the EIA timescale was too limited to give an accurate baseline.</li> </ul>	<p>The EIA is being undertaken in accordance with best practice guidelines.</p>

Responses from public consultation event	How responses have/will be addressed
<p>Of the 17 people who responded 'yes' to this question, several commented that this was only the case if local people were involved throughout the process.</p>	<p>The public and residents are being and will continue to be engaged with throughout the EIA process. A public consultation event has already taken place, and another public consultation event will take place in the Summer/Autumn of 2014. A dedicated webpage has also been set up for the project (<a href="http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore">http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore</a>).</p>
<p><b>6. If you answered no to Q.5 tell us what additional topics you consider should be included in the EIA.</b></p>	
<p>Additional topics the respondents want to be considered include:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migratory fish species.</li> </ul>	<p>The use of Latchmore Brook by migratory fish species will be established and assessed in the EIA process. Further details on the surveys that have or will be completed will be set out in the Scoping Report.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butterflies.</li> </ul>	<p>The habitats that may potentially be affected by the restoration works and which may support terrestrial invertebrates represent common and widespread habitats in the local area. As a result, the temporary disturbance of such habitats is not expected to result in any significant changes to the composition or distribution of these species or groups within the Study Area or further afield.</p> <p>Therefore, butterfly surveys are not considered necessary for the EcIA. However, potential effects on terrestrial invertebrates, for example in relation to disturbance during works, and the requirement for mitigation such as appropriate seasonal timing and phasing of works, will be addressed within the EcIA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More extensive and detailed hydrology surveys.</li> </ul>	<p>Natural England and the FC have had a detailed hydraulic assessment undertaken of the proposed restoration measures for the SSSI Units along the Latchmore Brook. This work was carried out by JBA Consulting. This work will be independently reviewed by a team of qualified hydrologists at Cascade Consulting who are part of the EIA team and further work assessment work will be undertaken as deemed necessary.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mycological (fungi) surveys.</li> </ul>	<p>LUC is currently carrying out detailed vegetation surveys (NVC) and, on the basis of this information, we will make a decision on whether Mycological (fungi) survey will be required.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downstream areas of Huckles Brook and River Avon SAC being assessed as a discrete topic.</li> </ul>	<p>Potential effects on the Huckles Brook and the River Avon SAC will be assessed as part of the EIA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of heavy traffic moving large quantities of material along narrow, rural roads.</li> </ul>	<p>Traffic and transportation impacts will be assessed as part of the EIA process, including the proposed access routes to the site. As outlined above, this will include consideration of increases in traffic generation, impact on highway capacity, road safety, vibration impacts on cobb cottages, and noise impacts associated with traffic using the local roads.</p>
<p>One response stated that while they felt the areas addressed in the EIA are appropriate, the pre-monitoring data is not detailed enough to produce measureable targets.</p>	<p>All assessment work undertaken will be in accordance with Good Practice guidelines for the topic under consideration.</p>
<p>Three people stated that work that has already been done in the Latchmore area that will have altered the area, giving an inaccurate baseline for the EIA.</p>	<p>The EIA will assess the potential effects of the proposed restoration works on the existing baseline. Any works undertaken prior to the commencement of the EIA will not be assessed as they do not form part of the planning application for which permission is being sought for.</p>
<p><b>7. Do you have any additional comments?</b></p>	
<p>Two people were unsure as to why the SSSI units were declared as in 'unfavourable' condition by Natural England in the first instance.</p>	<p>The restoration works are being proposed because the Latchmore Brook was artificially deepened and widened in the early 20th century. This in turn is adversely affecting the ecology of the catchment. As a result many of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) units in the catchment are currently classed by Natural England as being in 'unfavourable recovering' condition. Natural England undertake conditions surveys of all their SSSIs and report on their status. As part of the EIA, a separate review of the condition of the SSSIs will be undertaken and reported on the Environmental Statement.</p>
<p>One person replied that if this project has similar improvements as those at the Pitswood restoration, they were in support of the project.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Responses from public consultation event	How responses have/will be addressed
<p>Others commented that they were not in support of the project due to how previous works at Ditchend and Amberslade were carried out.</p>	<p>LUC will be commissioning consultants to undertake an independent review of the restored FC wetland projects. The information obtained from this review will be used to inform the scheme design and Environmental Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>Some people suggested that there was a need to be more open and transparent with members of the public, particularly the local community.</p>	<p>The FC and the EIA Team will continue to make every endeavour to be open and transparent with all consultees. The public and residents are being and will continue to be engaged with throughout the EIA process. A public consultation event has already taken place, and another public consultation event will take place in the Summer/ Autumn of 2014. A dedicated webpage has also been published for the project (<a href="http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore">http://www.hlsnewforest.org.uk/info/100/latchmore</a>).</p>
<p>Some were concerned that any interference would be counterproductive, and that trees that have already been removed should be replanted. There was also concern over whether the benefits received from the restoration project would be worth the costs.</p>	<p>The restoration works are being proposed because the Latchmore Brook was artificially deepened and widened in the early 20th century. This in turn is adversely affecting the ecology of the catchment. As a result many of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) units in the catchment are currently classed by Natural England as being in 'unfavourable recovering' condition.</p> <p>The FC has a legal responsibility under the EU Habitats Directive/ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) to restore habitats in a SAC/ SSSI where the habitat has been assessed by Natural England as being in 'unfavourable recovering' condition.</p>
<p>It was suggested that each stage of the project should be assessed and monitored before starting the next phase. It was also suggested that there need to be clear post-project monitoring objectives to confirm that the project has had the desired effect.</p>	<p>The Environmental Statement will set out what ongoing monitoring requirements are required.</p>
<p>One respondent was pleased with the EIA process and was glad to see that the process was being undertaken.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Some people reiterated their concern for the habitat and wildlife at Latchmore Brook and whether the restoration is required, particularly regarding birds, fish, flooding and water quality.</p>	<p>Assessment of the potential impact of the restoration proposals on birds, fish, flooding and water quality will be set out in the Environmental Statement.</p>

<b>Responses from public consultation event</b>	<b>How responses have/will be addressed</b>
Several commented on the fact that Bramshaw Parish Council was not on the list of consultees despite some of the project area being within its boundary.	Bramshaw Parish Council will be included in all future consultation.

**LUC, 23 June 2014**