



**West of England Nature Partnership**  
Joining up the dots for nature

## WENP Steering Group Meeting

Manvers Street, Bath // 14 December 2017 // 11:00-13:00

### Attendees

Selena Gray (Chair) – SG	West of England Nature Partnership
Heather Elgar – HE	West of England Nature Partnership
Anna Prior – AP	West of England Nature Partnership
Ian Barrett – IB	Avon Wildlife Trust
Lucy Rogers – LR	Avon Wildlife Trust
Mark Minkley – MM	Bath & North East Somerset
Savita Willmott – SW	Bristol Natural History Consortium
Richard Ennion – RE	Bristol City Council
Silole Menezes – SM	Wessex Water
Alan Kellas – AK	WENP Nature, Health & Wellbeing Working Group Co-Chair

### Apologies

Brian Glasson	South Gloucestershire Council
Chris Head	West of England Rural Network
Amy Coulthard	Natural England
Tom Boden	National Trust
John Flannigan	North Somerset Council
Dannielle Sinnett	UWE
Ruth Barden	Wessex Water
Richard Cresswell	Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership

### Minutes

---

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

### Restoring Nature

---

**Environmental Data Review (HE):** The independent review is to understand how environmental data is currently collected, provided and used in the West of England, and how it might be best managed moving forwards. A workshop held in November looked at shared challenges and produced a shared vision statement. An online survey is currently live to collect quantitative information on data needs in the West of England. In-depth individual interviews are being held to understand more qualitative aspects. Recommendations will be shared in February.

**LR** added that a case had been made to Defra for ecological mapping to be rolled out nationally. We should reengage with Defra on this in the New Year to best align efforts.

**MM** noted that governance is an important consideration coming out of the Environmental Data Review. This relates also to the structure of WENP and is something to pick up on the Away Day.



**Lawton Group (IB):** The Iconic Wildlife & Landscapes (IW&L) Group has not met for some time. An initial 'Lawton Group' meeting was held in the Summer with environmental NGOs and statutory bodies to look at how to create strong ecological networks across the West of England. The proposal is to merge these groups and focus on ecological networks and NIAs. A meeting is planned for 9<sup>th</sup> January to determine how to work together on this. This then needs to link up with IW&L group to ensure previous important activities and focus aren't lost.

The value of the IW&L Group was noted for its momentum, providing linkages and determining the Severnside NIA. It was suggested that the Lawton Group develops sub-streams looking separately at ecological and cultural networks, that then come back together.

It was noted that more engagement is needed among planners to ensure the the importance of GI and the benefits of the ecosystem services approach are well understood.

**Actions:** HE to circulate the Environment Agency Natural Capital presentation shared at the recent Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership Steering Group meeting.

**Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership (BACP) (SM):** A quarterly newsletter has been launched. Main recent output has been two workshops looking in detail across the catchment to identify 8-10 strategic projects to pursue. Three strategic projects were identified for the year: River Rode Restoration led by Bristol Avon Rivers Trust; sustainable prescribing business case led by Eunomia; and the Bristol Frome Improvement feasibility study, which has multiple partners. Several other smaller projects have come forward.

**MM** mentioned that he sits on the BACP Steering Group so can ensure linkages to the GI Plan.

**Actions:** HE to circulate the BACP newsletter.

**Adaptation and Resilience Framework (SM):** Looking at the latest climate change risks and asking how local organisations are considering these. This is to understand where the gaps are, and how to collaboratively develop adaptation management strategies and policies to begin to address these risks. There are gaps in local evidence, and not much capacity to produce local evidence, in particular regarding heat stress. Forest Research will be conducting an urban heat study in Bristol next year. Also gaps in national guidance and policy, particularly how to effectively communicate new Climate Projections data, which has been raised with Defra.

## Spatial Planning

---

**GI Plan (MM):** Project Initiation Document (PID) awaiting sign off from the Heads of Planning Policy. The GI Plan needs to be understood as one of three pillars, alongside the Joint Transport Study and the Joint Spatial Plan (for housing) to move the growth agenda forward in the West of England. Once resources are in place, need to bring stakeholders together. The Lawton Group will be critical to ensure that decisions are made on the right evidence.

**HE** summarised the key components of WENP's draft **response to the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)**. Overall positive wording, but many mitigations from the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) rely on the GI plan, so the GI



plan must be sufficiently resourced and hold sufficient weight in the planning system to be effective. The GI Plan must also identify implementation and monitoring mechanisms. WENP are also currently formalising how consultation responses are signed off at Board level when there may be conflicts of interest.

Action: HE to share draft JSP response, including note on transport, around Board and Steering Group before January.

## Economic Development

---

**Natural Capital Trust (NCT) (HE):** Working to finish report for Defra in January, in time for the launch of the 25 Year Environment Plan. Currently testing concept with Pioneers and other LNPs to understand viability and replicability. Also holding interviews with local Developers to understand if the proposed 'Nature Levy' is an attractive mechanism. The NCT Working Group is meeting in early January to discuss this proposed feedback and changes to the report. In terms of local implementation, should be considered alongside other efforts, e.g. the Natural Capital Planning Tool, as mechanisms for delivering the GI Plan.

It was felt commitment from UAs to run with NCT is limited, and work is required to engage with planners and developers, and to resolve some of the more complex detail around how it would relate to CIL and other mechanisms.

SG noted that a clear next step is a workshop to ensure everyone understands the concept and to work through some of the detail. The NCT also rests on a combined vision of priorities for restoration and enhancement. HE added that a copywriter has been commissioned to write a summary and advocacy document for the NCT.

It was suggested that the NCT should be first trialled through one of the UAs, ideally against the SDLs.

Actions: HE to work with NCT Working Group to complete the report for Defra. Final report and copywriter version to be circulated around the Steering Group. Plan for wider engagement event in Spring to understand how the NCT can work in the West of England, and develop options to pilot the NCT against specific sites.

## Health and Wellbeing

---

**Nature, Health and Wellbeing working group (AK):** The involvement of Dominic Mellon and Selena Grey has been very welcome. The group's value is in creating linkages between strategy and practice, but how the work can develop depends on resources. The intention is to continue meetings three times a year in different settings. Key work streams include potential development of a **guide** to local intervention projects. Discussions with Wellaware are on hold but to be revisited. Another potential work stream is developing a commissioner-ready, **green care offering**.

SG suggested that one of WENP's aims should be to get some of the activity around green care commissioned by CCG.



**West of England Nature Partnership**  
Joining up the dots for nature

**South West LNPs (HE):** Developing a **Joint Statement of Intent** between local LNPs and local Health and Wellbeing Boards and a **campaign** to better inform practitioners and the public around nature and health. An aim is to produce a set of short commissioning guides, training and practical tools to support the integration of nature for health. There are opportunities to explore linking this with our aspirations for a local guide.

**Green space accessibility mapping (HE):** Since the initial working group ('Momentum Group') met in August, we've spoken with other regions who are doing similar mapping. Clear challenges between an aggregated, comparable view versus representing quality which requires detailed site visits. Proposed methodology aligns to ANGSt standards (routing) and builds on the OS Greenspace maps. An ask back to holders of the original data is to populate OS Greenspace where there are local gaps. Maps will include stock of green space, those places which are sufficiently accessible to green space and those which aren't, which will be shared with UAs.

**SG** added that these maps could feed into the GI plan.

**RE** commented that Bristol City Council has developed its own standards (from 2008) in preference of the 300m in ANGSt – which is a psychological tolerance of parents for their children to roam freely. Asked people their preference of certain types of green space, and how far they'd be willing to travel to access each type of green space.

It was noted that quality is important - if low quality (unsafe, poor maintenance), in effect inaccessible. However, assessment of quality is not possible within scope of this project, but important to understand how maps can build on previous work.

**Actions: RE and MM to share methodologies with HE. HE to explore potential of developing case studies and if there is Defra funding to support this.**

## **Delivering Outcomes**

---

HE mentioned that the WENP **website** is currently being refreshed.

HE discussed initial ideas for the **conference**. GI is a timely theme but work needed to agree on conference aims and outcomes to best target content and audience.

**Actions: HE to convene working group to develop conference.**