



West of England Nature Partnership
Joining up the dots for nature

WENP Board Meeting

Wessex Water, Bath // 13 March 2019 // 10:00-13:00

Attendees

Selena Gray (Chair) - SG	West of England Nature Partnership
Ian Barrett - IB	Avon Wildlife Trust
Karen Renshaw - KR	Bath & North East Somerset Council (sub for Mark Minkley)
Richard Cresswell - RC	Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership
Richard Ennion - RE	Bristol City Council
Rachel Williams - RW	Natural England
Savita Willmott - SW	Natural History Consortium
John Flannigan - JF	North Somerset Council
David Villis - DV	South Gloucestershire Council
Ruth Barden - RB	Wessex Water
Ross Kennerley - RK	Woodland Trust
Heather Elgar - HE	West of England Nature Partnership
Jessica Lee (Guest presenter) - JL	West of England Combined Authority

Apologies

Mark Minkley	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Sally Hogg	Bristol City Council (interim representing Public Health for 4 UAs)
Marion Steiner	Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire CCG
Russell Ashfield	National Trust
Tom Boden	National Trust
Richard Kent	North Somerset Council
Laura Ambler	West of England Combined Authority / LEP

Items

Local Industrial Strategy

JL presented the context, rationale and progress of the Local Industrial Strategy. Evidence review is currently out for public comment. Stakeholder workshop at UWE on 21st March.

Discussion about how WENP can best support integration of a natural capital approach. Defra has shared questions to support LNPs across the country to assess how well emerging Local Industrial Strategies align with commitments in the 25 Year Environment Plan. Board agreed WENP should submit a formal response to the evidence review.

Action: RK to share learnings with JL and WENP Board from Heart of the South West (Devon)



Action: HE to lead audit on how other regions have integrated a natural capital approach into Local Industrial Strategy or green infrastructure plans

Action: HE to share previous Landscape Enterprise Network proposal with JL

Action: WENP to support WECA to help develop narrative of the importance of the natural environment to the economy (HE to lead first draft)

Action: HE to coordinate a formal WENP response to the current call for comments

West of England Green Infrastructure Plan

HE shared written update from Sarah Jackson (Project Manager for the Plan). No formal discussion in absence of Heads of Planning Policy representation.

Nature Recovery Network

HE provided overview of methodology document for sign-off. Board agreed the document should be signed-off in principle, but that the recommended targets should be subject to fine-tuning in discussion with UA ecologists. This needed to be done in the next few weeks. It was agreed it was appropriate to start sharing the concept and initial mapping with wider stakeholders now to help unlock new investment and partnership opportunities and to feed into current discussions across key current opportunities including net gain, GCN district licencing, bat mapping and GI Plan to ensure we're maximising opportunity for strategic approach.

At recent South West LNP Chairs & Managers meeting, it was agreed to develop shared principles for Nature Recovery Networks to ensure there is coherence and appropriate consistency across the region. HE shared early view of draft principles with the expectation that the South West LNP Chairs & Managers will seek agreement and publication of the final version within the next month (considered important to have shared principles soon in context of 25 Year Environment Plan, the Agricultural Bill, Environment Bill, potential mandating of net gain, and significant planning across the region). HE will seek WENP Board support for this document.

Next step for the Nature Recovery Network is to agree a set of ecological priorities for the WoE. Board agreed it is appropriate for the Nature Recovery Network supported by WENP to develop a clear set of ecological priorities. Whilst it is anticipated that these will align to the emerging priorities in the West of England Green Infrastructure Plan, they will not necessarily be identical, given the broader range of issues considered in the GI plan. RC shared that BACP is providing a view of water priorities to feed into the GI Plan; this would be similar but for ecological priorities. HE shared initial suggested priorities reflecting previous prioritisation exercises in the region (including Biodiversity Action Plans, Natural Character Area opportunities, and previous WENP prioritisations). Board agreed to convene a wider stakeholder workshop to test and refine these priorities, based on an explicit and transparent methodology for prioritisation that will be developed by a smaller group (all Board Members are invited to be involved in this process). It is important to recognise that the Nature Recovery Network documents are complementary to the GI Plan, and may require separate communication processes. The Board was asked to note that it is intended to launch the Nature Recovery Network at the WENP Forum on 6th June.



Action: HE to review targets with KR and share updated version with Board for sign-off

Action: HE to coordinate ecological priorities workshop and pre-meeting to agree methodology

Action: HE to share emerging South West Nature Recovery Network principles ahead of publication

JLTP4 response

Board discussed initial draft shared in advance by HE. Board agreed to amend the response to add the following; concern on potential combined effects of development and transport as a general issue; to note that the full HRA has not been published as part of the consultation, and to request view of this when published; to note that on view of full HRA WENP might wish to make additional comments.

Action: HE to redraft response reflecting this discussion and share with Board for further comment ahead of submission

Reflection on JSP response

Discussion on process of response to previous JSP consultation. Acknowledgement of inevitable potential conflict where WENP is commenting on Unitary Authority partner plans. Reflection that discussions on controversial issues need to be minuted clearly and clarity needed as to the position of key stakeholders on WENP Board whose position may need to be clearly noted on consultation responses.

Away Day

WENP Away Day is scheduled for 10th April. Important time to reflect on what we want the Partnership to be and achieve. Encourage all Board members to attend if possible.

Action: All to confirm if able to attend

WENP Forum

We have secured space at the Arnolfini, Bristol for WENP's Forum on 6th June. This is during the Festival of Nature. HE shared an initial proposal of the day's agenda for discussion. Board agreed Nature Recovery Network (or how to make nature's recovery happen) is the appropriate overarching theme, with deep dives into role of policy (session on GI Plan if appropriate), natural capital approach/accounting, different stakeholders, different scales, etc.

Action: HE to send a newsletter hold the date

Action: HE to coordinate the Forum



Action: RW to investigate if possible to secure Tony Juniper as speaker/official launcher of NRN

Natural Capital Trust

Discussed process of sign-off for NCT report. The final report was submitted last year to Defra as part of WENP's contractual commitment following review and sign off by the Board. Defra have not yet published the full report. In the Interim the Board agreed that the summary document (previously also signed off by the Board) should be available on our website with clear communication that this is exploratory rather than a commitment to implementation.

Action: HE to check when Defra plan to publish and advise we are otherwise planning to publish summary document

Environmental Data Review

It was unclear what further action has been taken in this area. Agreed to put on agenda for next Board meeting in June.

West of England Wildlife Index

HE provided update on progress. Intern from University of Bristol supporting with this work. Aim to have ready for WENP Forum / Festival of Nature in June.

Nature, Health and Wellbeing

Update on workstream lead by Green Care Strategy Group. Board agreed in principle to publish 'Mainstreaming Green Care' pamphlet which effectively acts as a ToR for the Green Care Strategy Group – with the caveat that there may be small changes proposed at next Green Care Strategy Group the next week. The final version will be circulated to the Board.

The West of England Practitioner Network for Nature, Health and Wellbeing has been launched (a key action of the Strategy Group with Michéal Connors of Natural Academy as key lead). An inaugural meeting in February was a great success and now planning next meeting with continual learning element. We have been successful in a grant application to the West of England Academic Health Science Network to fund the Network until January 2020 alongside online network element through the Hyvr platform.

RB provided update on the B&NES trailblazer initiative to help address childhood obesity in the Somer Valley which is working with GPs to signpost to diet & exercise, with opportunity to enhance green spaces and test green care interventions.

Partner updates



Natural England (RW): Tony Juniper as new Chair. GCN district licencing – have modelled data and now engaging with UAs regarding potential uptake in phase 2. Useful if 4 UAs in WoE joined in tandem.

Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership (RC): Zoe Hancock is shortly on maternity leave. Ali Morgan is covering for a year, seconded from Wiltshire Council.

Bath & North East Somerset Council (KR): Continued working on net gain and habitat regulations – in JSP and processing with Local Plans.

Bristol City Council (RE): Shortly adding cattle as grazers in Stoke Park. Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation now legally exists – will be launched formally in June. Awaiting to hear if successful with Parks Accelerator bid.

Woodland Trust (RK): Bristol tree strategy progressing well. Catherine Brabner-Evans moving to Defra.

Wessex Water (RB): Have submitted business plan to Ofwat to 2020. Good opportunities around biodiversity investigations and more SSSI management (have large SSSI landholdings in WoE). Wessex Water has signed up to be part of a national commitment delivering 11 million new trees across 10 companies – this is ~0.5 million trees in next ten years across Wessex region.

Natural History Consortium (SW): Planning City Nature Challenge and Festival of Nature. Planning first ever virtual science festival element with Bath University.

Avon Wildlife Trust (IB): Focus on Nature Recovery Network and Environment Bill (ensuring strong enough). New nature reserves opening – Goblin Combe and Hutton Hill. Successful in funding for B-Lines. Waiting to hear back from HLF regarding My Wild City.