

Minutes Wales Biodiversity Partnership Steering Group Meeting WBPSG14 12th July 2011, University of Wales, Aberystwyth

Attendees

Name		Organisation
Alys	Edwards	WBP Support Team
Graham	Oliver	National Museum Wales
Trevor	Dines	Plantlife
Diana	Reynolds	Welsh Government (Chair)
Robert	Griffiths	Welsh Government
Russel	Hobson	Butterfly Conservation
Tracey	Lovering	Countryside Council for Wales/WBP Support Team
Deb	Hill	Welsh Local Government Association/City & County of Swansea
Sean	McHugh	WBP Support Team
Nigel	Ajax-Lewis	Wildlife Trusts Wales
Dusi	Thomas	Dŵr Cymru - Welsh Water
Michelle	Van-Velzen	Forestry Commission Wales
Roy	Tapping	Local Record Centres Wales/Cofnod
Julia	Korn	Countryside Council for Wales
Mark	Robinson	British Waterways
Nick	Birula	Environment Agency Wales
Ian	Guildford	Countryside Council for Wales/ South Wales Police
Glenda	Thomas	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Cymru
Alex	Joseph	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Cymru
Sinead	Lynch	South Wales LBAPs
Melanie	Dodd	Association of Local Government Ecologists
Lynda	Warren	Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership
Emyr	Williams	National Parks Wales

Huw	Jenkins	Natur Cymru
David	Jenkins	Coed Cymru
Stephen	Bladwell	RSPB/Wales Environment Link

Apologies

Name		Organisation
Helen	Buckingham	National Trust
David	Parker	Countryside Council for Wales
Mike	Bruford	Cardiff University
Clive	Walmsley	Countryside Council for Wales/Climate Change Commission Wales
Chris	Tucker	Forestry Commission Wales
Robin	Woodyatt	Wales Local Government Association/ Caerphilly County Council
Hazel	Drewett	Countryside Council for Wales
Laura	Jones	North Wales LBAPs
Sean	Christian	RSPB/Wales Environment Link
Tom	Jones	Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd.
Graeme	Hays	Swansea University

Diana Reynolds chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees and thanked them for their continuing work supporting the partnership.

Diana then welcomed the new members of the steering group; Emyr Williams (National Parks), Sinead Lynch (south Wales LBAPs), Melanie Dodd (ALGE) and Lynda Warren (Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership).

Diana updated the group on the staff changes at the Sustainable Environment and Evidence Division (SEED) within the Welsh Government (WG), informing the group that she has now been appointed as full-time Natural Environment Framework (NEF) Programme Manager with Stephen Jackson taking over as Head of Nature Conservation and Biodiversity and Rob Griffiths appointed as Biodiversity Policy Manager. The group was informed that both Stephen Jackson and Steve Spode (SEED) will be joining future meetings of the WBP Steering Group in order to provide direct links between the SEED department and NEF Team.

The group agreed they were happy to welcome the new members to the group and this will now be passed to the Minister for agreement.

WBP has recently offered support for 5 landfill tax grant applications submitted by the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales (WTSWW), and is happy to extend the same opportunity to other suitable projects with a biodiversity or climate change focus. Diana Reynolds in her capacity as Chair of WBP is available to write letters of support for potential bids.

Diana then updated the group on the status of funding for the WBP Ecosystem Groups. She announced that a total of £140,000 has been secured by WG and CCW for this year's grants, which will continue to be administered by Environment Wales (EW), although the current criteria will be reviewed for the next round of funding, beginning at the start of the 2012/13 financial year.

Paper 01: Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) – Current issues and Opportunities: Sinead Lynch

Diana began by confirming the importance of SINCs which are referenced in the Wales Environment Strategy. NEF is designed to meet the outcomes of the Environment Strategy and not replace them. One of the key aims of the NEF is to deliver more for nature alongside a reduction in the bureaucratic burden.

Sinead Lynch introduced the paper to the group. The paper has been produced by the LBAPs in Wales in order to illustrate the need for a joined up approach when dealing with SINCs, which are designated as part of the planning process. The paper highlighted the need for SINCs to be considered and included in national projects such as Glastir (although this has often been difficult due to the availability of data). In future, it is suggested; a National Wildlife Sites System should be established for Wales, which would enable a comprehensive list of sites with supporting data to be available in a consistent format.

Michelle van-Velzen drew the groups attention to the paper submitted to the Steering Group in November 2010, New Woodland Creation in Wales ([Paper to Note G: SG12 November 2010](#)) which laid out the proposals for taking forward new woodland creation in Wales through Glastir, along with the methodology used. The scheme was accessed via a browser on the Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) website, with the aim of limiting consultation to sites where input/consultation is really needed. She emphasised that green areas identified on the browser do not necessarily mean that planting will be acceptable on the site and will need to take account of priority species and habitats. The scheme has been live for seven months and approximately 315 ha have been approved, 95% of which is native woodland with either a biodiversity or carbon option. The average scheme size is 1 ha, although enquiries have been received for larger schemes. It was

emphasised that a significant difference exists between SINC, where the landowner is often unaware of the allocation relating to the land holding, and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), where the land owner has been informed and there is a suitable management plan in place.

FCW have a pilot project running with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA). All sites within the boundary are currently classed as either red or amber on the map viewer. Guidance developed by Gareth Ellis, the Parks Ecologist, has identified green planting zones within the red/amber zones utilising the special planting guidance. The pilot has proved successful and is now being rolled out to other National Parks in Wales. The FCW database will be updated with the BBNPA data by December this year with the possibility of extending the project to Local Authorities who hold comprehensive and robust data.

ACTION 1. Local Authorities with the appropriate data set interested in involvement with the FCW pilot to contact Michelle van-Velzen to discuss michelle.van-velzen@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Sinead noted that there is a need for the SINC data available to be standardised and brought to a level where it can be used nationally. At present the value of SINC data is not being recognised or utilised through the planning system.

Emyr Williams enquired whether the knowledge and approach applied to the woodland opportunity mapping could be transferable to other elements of Glastir.

Glenda Thomas informed the group that there is often ‘a pressure to plant’ with regard to the Glastir woodland creation scheme and this could result in execution of *ad hoc* options which do not take account of wider habitat provision including improved and unimproved grassland. Diana Reynolds responded that NEF treats Glastir as a wider project incorporating carbon, water, soil and biodiversity options and could be developed to address broader sustainable development issues. Lessons learnt from the woodland planting scheme will be incorporated into the wider Glastir scheme.

ACTION 2. NEF team to review the wider Glastir scheme objectives within the context of NEF and transfer learning from the woodland planting approach to the wider objectives of the scheme.

Sinead quoted the example seen in the Monmouthshire local wildlife sites project (Monmouthshire County Council & Gwent Wildlife Trust), which has shown that many landowners are smallholders and not necessarily farmers.

Michelle stated it would be useful for FCW to have a strategic contact within the LBAPs in Wales in order to take forward any actions and Sinead agreed to take on this role.

ACTION 3. Michelle van-Velzen and Sinead Lynch to discuss the inclusion of SINC data in Woodland Opportunity Mapping and take forward.

Trevor Dines enquired whether formal criteria exist for designation of SINC and whether this criteria was uniform across Wales. Issues remain around the sensitive nature of the data (and how it is used nationally); often landowners are unaware of the allocation on their land. There is a need to be clear with the language used; the term designation can often raise alarm bells with landowners as they are normally associated with statutory sites with their associated legal implications. This raises the wider issue of how we communicate with landowners and the wider public and the language used. Plantlife have had considerable experience of communication with landowners and would be happy to share best practice. Sinead informed the group that the technical term should be 'allocation' rather than 'designation' and that the sites are protected through planning policy and are not statutory designations.

Graham Oliver noted that a training scheme for approaching landowners should be developed, in discussion with landowners. It was acknowledged that several similar schemes are already run by organisations such as FWAG and CCW.

ACTION 4. LBAPs requiring advice or information on approaching landowners regarding SINC/Local wildlife sites to contact WBP Support Team.

ACTION 5. Tracey Lovering and Glenda Thomas to explore the possibility of WBP running a series of events around communicating with landowners.

Melanie Dodd informed the group that Wales-wide SINC selection guidance does exist as a framework but is not applied uniformly across all Local Authorities in Wales as regional criteria comes into play. South Wales SINC selection guidelines are applied across south Wales and a sub-regional set of criteria has been developed by the mid-valleys SINC group which includes Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff local authorities. Caerphilly completed a SINC review as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) process in 2007 and the criterion developed to allocate sites was found to be robust in Caerphilly during the formal LDP inspection.

Roy Tapping noted that two Local Authorities in north Wales have used different methodology where sites are allocated reactively as a result of a planning application survey and suggested that a WBP forum should be established to ensure consistency across Wales. Melanie stated that this approach was not wholly different and that other Local Authorities will take the same approach if a new site, deemed of SINC quality is surveyed as a result of a planning application. The way in which landowners are informed of an allocation also differs significantly across Local Authorities.

Roy informed the group that the Local Record Centres (LRCs) in Wales have taken a lead on rationalising Local Wildlife Site GIS data, and have supplied collated information to EAW which could serve as a baseline. Some problems do exist with the data in terms

of site boundaries etc. but the baseline data is available. Cofnod have been progressing a pilot project with Anglesey and this approach could be adopted across Wales. Roy also noted that LRCs could potentially take this forward. Melanie Dodd informed the group that the Mid-valleys SINC group have worked with SEWBRc to produce a SINC data layer based predominately on priority habitat data which, when overlaid with statutory sites, shows a good potential for habitat connectivity. Work progressed by Greater Gwent Biodiversity Action Group (GGBAG) and Glamorgan Biodiversity Action Group (GLAMBAG) confirmed this and found that SINC sites can be extremely effective when buffering and connecting other designated sites.

ACTION 6. Roy Tapping and Colin Chapman (WG) to discuss the format and inclusion of SINC data and how this can be incorporated into ongoing GIS mapping as part of the Living Wales programme.

The reliability of Phase 1 habitat data was questioned and Melanie noted that the majority of SINC sites are based on priority habitats rather than species, which is updating the original Phase one habitat data.

Diana Reynolds enquired whether existing mapping initiatives (CCW Green Infrastructure; Forestry Commission mapping; ecosystem group priority habitat mapping) were utilising SINC data. It was suggested that SINC data could be fed into the Priority Mapping project which has been progressed by Jan Sherry in CCW on behalf of the Ecosystem Groups. Level one of the all-Wales habitat mapping project should accommodate all 42 habitats and associated species.

ACTION 7. ALL to feed in appropriate data for inclusion in the Priority Mapping exercise to Jan Sherry or via the relevant WBP Ecosystem Group contact.

ACTION 8. Diana Reynolds and Rob Griffiths to ensure the Green Infrastructure project is using common data standards to mesh with other mapping initiatives.

Graham Oliver noted that the terminology around SINCS/Wildlife sites is often complex and can alienate those not familiar with the processes and highlighted again the need for improved communication methods. Diana noted that a great deal of work had been done around communication as part of the development of the NEF. The NEF will be addressing issues such as these further down the line and may benefit from input from the steering group. This could be addressed through the work of the re-convened Future of BAP group.

Tracey Lovering suggested the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to address the issues surrounding SINC sites such as data sharing, GIS, consistency etc. Michelle van-Velzen suggested that this should be the responsibility of the WLGA, who should ensure consistency from the start.

ACTION 9. Diana to raise issues around SINC's and potential incorporation into WLGA guidance and decision-making processes.

ACTION 10. Julia Korn to consider SINC's as part of Future of BAP.

Taxonomic Presentation: Lepidoptera: Russel Hobson

Diana gave a brief update of previous taxonomic group awards noting that actions were being chased to take some outstanding projects forward. The seahorse project is investigating exploratory dives in Cardigan Bay and the DNA fungi sequencing project and associated fungi field identification guides are developing.

ACTION 11. Sean to follow up on taxonomic project progress and update the list of completed WBP funded projects on the WBP website.

Diana then welcomed Russel to the meeting, who thanked the WBP for the invitation to speak for a second time and gave a brief introduction to the work of Butterfly Conservation (BC). Russel informed the group since his last presentation to WBP in 2008 the Welsh clearwing moth has now been discovered in the Elan Valley and Gilfach in mid Wales. There have been updates to the s42 list, which now includes 15 priority butterflies and 27 priority moths. In 2008 three challenges were raised: the need for adoption of a Butterfly Indicator to assess performance; improvements in agri-environment schemes and funding.

Since then there has been a improvements in butterfly transects and a draft Butterfly Indicator for Wales has been developed which shows a significant moderate increase, for species where enough data is available using a baseline of 1997. High brown fritillaries are now present on one site, being managed by CCW, BC and the Local Authority and various projects are being progressed for Pearl Bordered Fritillary, which is bucking the UK trend.

Work on the development of Glastir is ongoing and a significant staff resource has been invested in this work. Butterfly Conservation has identified 19 farmland butterflies and moths that could benefit from Glastir – 4 from the targeted element.

Since 2005 Butterfly Conservation has been working with private landowners on the south Rhondda Marsh Fritillary Project in Tonyrefail in the south Rhondda valley. A scoping exercise was conducted prior to the submission of a landfill tax application which showed that the majority of land was not farmed. Highlighting the amount of land which would not addressed through Glastir, demonstrated that the approach needed with landowners should be diverse.

The key issues are also the spring board to solutions i.e. looking at watercourses, dependence on landowner interest, targeting education at schools etc. In addition to a

number of successful training events and conferences held over the past few years a number of successful projects have also been run, including the Moths Count Project which ran from January 2008- 2011, which generated a great deal of publicity. In 2011 the Big Butterfly count will be held from the 16th – 31st July, with the target of engaging 100,000 individuals. This can be accessed online with records accepted from July-August.

ACTION 12. ALL to note the dates of the Big Butterfly Count 16th -31st July <http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/> and get involved.

Butterfly Conservation is currently running a number of successful volunteer projects, such as;

- Welsh Clearwing in Snowdonia and Radnorshire.
- High Brown Fritillary in Vale of Glamorgan.
- Drab Looper in Monmouthshire
- Marsh Fritillary on Lleyn Peninsular
- Silurian Moth in Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire.
- Grizzled Skipper, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Forester moth – Wales wide
- Brown Hairstreak in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

Diana thanked Russel for his useful review of progress and a discussion then followed relating in particular to actions which would benefit butterflies in Wales. The key issues identified included the need to unblock access to Local Authority and WG land and support for volunteer-led projects. It was agreed that there should be a focus on projects with a high level of volunteer involvement, and provision of small sums of money to support these projects would be extremely beneficial.

ACTION 13. Russel and Sean to discuss funding of volunteer projects and progress accordingly.

ACTION 14. Rob Griffiths to put Russel in contact with WG land agents to discuss increased access to Welsh Government land.

ACTION 15. Diana to raise issue of conservation group access to land for monitoring and recording when she meets with WLGA.

Roy Tapping thanked Butterfly Conservation for the way in which they have engaged with LRCs in Wales which has led to the huge amounts of moth and butterfly data now held by the LRCs. Michelle noted that Butterfly Conservation have worked closely with FCW and a report produced detailing the volunteer effort over recent years. This report has reached senior management within FCW and has led to the production of a woodland management handbook for butterflies.

Michelle announced that FCW's new initiative 'Woodlands and You' will be launched on the 13th July 2011 with the aim of opening the way for more people than ever to make the

most of our woodland resource. Members of the group are welcome to use and replicate the material for their own organisations if appropriate.

ACTION 16. Michelle to send the FCW's 'Woodlands and You' initiative link to the WBP Support Team for circulation to WBP to encourage adoption of materials.

Paper 02: Natural Environment Framework Update: Diana Reynolds

Diana introduced the paper and announced that Phase 1 of the NEF is completed, and the work is now more clearly defined following the first 18 months of the programme. The overarching aim is to ensure that Wales has increasingly resilient and diverse ecosystems that deliver economic, environmental and social benefits by placing biodiversity at the heart of everything we do. During phase 1 of the program some habitat restoration has taken place on the ground, with Cadw agreeing to restore 40+ grassland sites and 38 public bodies signed up to the Planting for Pollinators Scheme. The Planting for Pollinators scheme is available to all and anyone interested should contact Clive Faulkner for further information.

ACTION 17. ALL to consider if they are able to implement the Planting for pollinators scheme and contact Clive Falkner Clive.Faulkner@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK if interested.

The NEF Programme Board met on the 4th July 2011 and agreed a timetable for Phase 2 of Living Wales. More papers will become available over the coming months via the NEF portal on the WG website: www.wales.gov.uk/livingwales. Future developments will include a Green Paper explaining key mechanism for delivery, available in Autumn 2011, which aims to develop a sea change in behaviour to implement Sustainable Development. A report will also be available from the regulation and management work stream, due in December 2011. Pilot work is expected to begin spring 2012 in order to examine how NEF can be applied on a regional level.

The Minister has approved creation of a high-level external reference group, the first meeting of which will be held in September. Communication of work internally (within WG) will take place with support from the SD advocates network, Sustainable Environment and Evidence Division (SEED) and through regular meetings with senior managers including Clive Bates, Director General, Sustainable Futures.

Diana announced that WG have developed a decision tool for use by all, which includes BAP as a Sustainable Development (SD) indicator. This tool has been approved as a core tool for the WG Policy Gateway and will be reviewed and amended if necessary, at the end of NEF Phase 2 (approximately 24 months). WG are now seeking organisations to trial the tool and feedback on its effectiveness.

ACTION 18. ALL interested in trialling the use of the decision making tool to contact Diana Diana.Reynolds@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

Communications activity around Living Wales has been slow; a new appointment to the WG Communications team (Hayley James) will address this. Sean to supply Hayley with a summary of discussion and actions relating to NEF Communication at recent WBP SG meetings and Business & Biodiversity task & finish group meetings. Jeanie Gray (Keep Wales Tidy) will be the Wales Environment Link representative on the core Living Wales communication group and Sean will be the WBP representative.

ACTION 19. Sean McHugh to supply Hayley with all relevant communications actions

Julia Korn enquired which departments would be included in the Green Paper on mechanisms for change. Diana stated that the it would be most WG departments as all WG activities have the potential to impact on the environment.

Roy enquired how the development of the NEF is likely to be affected by the change of Cabinet and new Ministers in WG. Diana reassured attendees that there was an ongoing commitment to a landscape-scale approach to conservation within the Welsh Labour Manifesto and NEF was supported by Ministers as a key way of implementing their commitment to sustainable development.

David Jenkins enquired how Biodiversity was being integrated into the SD agenda. Diana stated that a significant part of NEF development is allowing the different elements of SD to mesh together. The offer of help from the SEED in order to bridge the gap between Ecosystem Groups and WG will be helpful. The end goal is a better understanding of biodiversity as a core outcome of sustainable development - activities undertaken are only sustainable if they incorporate positive biodiversity outcomes.

Trevor referred back to the Planting for Pollinators programme and suggested that the appropriate management of meadows should be the way forward as opposed to the planting of non-native flora to attract insects. Diana stated that a significant amount of work has been carried out on the pollinators programme to minimise use of non-native plant species.

ACTION 20. Trevor to discuss details of the WG Pollinators Programme with Clive Faulkner and seek clarification regarding plant species provenance.

It was acknowledged that there was good work coming out of the NEF process but noted that many of the smaller NGOs did not have the capacity to engage or keep up to speed with developments. Diana noted that each NEF work stream has a Wales Environment Link (WEL) representative. Each work stream should be producing three key messages each meeting and that these messages should be disseminated through the WEL contact. Update messages will also be communicated via the Living Wales website (see:

www.wales.gov.uk/livingwales) and feedback can be provided at any time to members of the core team.

ACTION 21. WEL contacts on core NEF group and work streams to cascade 3 key messages arising from meetings to wider WEL network.

Stephen Bladwell enquired if rough timescales for development and implementation of the NEF were known and whether traction was an issue. Diana responded that traction had been achieved quite quickly to date and new Policy Gateway processes should be in place from September but noted that it may take longer to see a difference on the ground. It is expected that Phase 2 will reach completion in 2014, with an estimated 15-30 years for the whole programme to be implemented.

Nick Birula enquired whether the NEF team had identified priority departments to tackle within WG. Diana mentioned that WG have prioritised Forestry, Farming and Fisheries but work will continue with all departments and will be led through Clive Bates and the NEF core team. Diana welcomed suggestions as to which departments should be targeted, or where the group felt the biggest impact could be made.

ACTION 22. ALL to send suggestions for prioritisation of WG departments in relation to NEF engagement to Tracey Lovering and Diana Reynolds.

Roy noted that the approach seemed very top-down, acknowledging that the bottom-up approach would likely be addressed through the communication work stream, building on local successes i.e. LBAP, LRC level. Top-down approach will be more credible once messages come from bottom up. Diana responded that language and engagement could be taken up by the Living Wales Engagement and Communication group and would build on the current LBAP role. The idea is to generate 'more that works' and build on it.

Sinead informed the group that Newport City Council has a Biodiversity in Schools Project Officer, which is 50% CCW funded and 50% funded through a £300 SLA with primary schools in Newport. The role supports learning resources, grounds management activities amongst other things and has proved very successful. Newport City Council has produced a paper on their approach which may be of interest to other Local Authorities in Wales who are interested in taking a similar approach.

ACTION 23. Sinead Lynch to forward paper on Newport Biodiversity in Schools Project Officer to WBP Support Team for circulation.

Diana mentioned the outcomes of a departmental WG biodiversity audit will be taken to the WBP Conference in September, in the form of interactive posters, allowing feedback from attendees.

The group agreed they were happy for the audit of WG departments to be presented in poster format but agreed that ground rules were needed for comment.

ACTION 24. Clive Faulkner to develop suitable ground rules alongside the posters.

Diana stated that a paper is available on the WG website <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/110331nefecosystemservicesen.pdf> highlighting valuation of ecosystem services with further papers on services and scale, based on the National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA). Nick Birula noted that there was a pressing need for ecosystem services to be factored into decision making.

Julia enquired if the NEF phase 2 work will influence the Welsh Government sponsored Environmental Bodies review, currently being undertaken. Diana responded that phase 1 of the NEF programme has informed the single body review work and ecosystem-focused performance monitoring indicators were under development for phase 2.

ACTION 25. Diana to share table with Julia and communicate that NEF is a key area of work for the agencies.

David commented that there should be the capability to look at the negatives - i.e. the money put into any given sector leading to negative impacts such as overgrazing etc. At present focus is on positives and enquired if it is possible to explore if improvement can be delivered by exploring spending options for particular projects and costing of 'ecosystem approach' opposing plans, such as the work on fisheries in the USA. Diana confirmed she was aware of the USA fisheries work and the Catskill water catchment project in New York and this is being fed into the development of the NEF.

Stephen enquired if the GIS work stream will function differently to others and if they had been given deadlines. It was confirmed that the GIS work stream have now been provided with deadlines for the production of a suite of maps, including retro-focusing work identifying what our biodiversity resource looked like 50 years ago, what it looks like now and what it would look like in the present if a NEF approach had been implemented 50 years ago. If this work is successful it will be published alongside the Green Paper later this summer. David enquired whether the Polyscape work is linked with the GIS work stream.

ACTION 26. Diana to check with Colin Chapman whether Polyscape is being utilised by the NEF GIS work stream.

The group agreed and endorsed SEED staff to act as representatives on the Ecosystem Groups and for Sean McHugh and Jeanie Gray to sit on the NEF core Communications group.

ACTION 27. Diana to contact Living Wales Communication team to encourage them to put in place some exploratory work on language and messaging.

Additions to the paper:

Diana announced that WG planning department are developing a SD indicator for planning which will be available for comment in the Autumn and are likely to include a biodiversity indicator.

Economic Renewal Programme (ERP) are currently mapping their sectors, including energy, environment, ecosystem services and identifying strategic actions for the business sector. Offers of assistance from WBP would be welcomed to identify spatially targeted beneficial actions that could provide outcomes for nature and the economy.

ACTION 28. ALL to send contact details to WBP Support Team of individuals or organisations that might benefit from support as part of the Energy, Environment, and Ecosystem services sector.

ACTION 29. ALL to send ideas and suggestions to WBP Support Team of spatially targeted beneficial actions that could provide outcomes for nature and the economy.

Paper to Note A: Wildlife Crime Update: Sgt Ian Guildford

Sgt Guildford introduced the paper and informed the group that Sgt Matthew Howells from the Dyfed Powys Police recently took up the role of a full time Wildlife and Environmental Crime Officer with the Dyfed Powys Police. He will be stationed at Police HQ's in Carmarthen and will have responsibility for wildlife and environmental crime within Dyfed Powys. There are now three full time Wildlife Crime Officers working with CCW across Wales. The Wildlife Crime Enforcement Group has met 3 times and is chaired by Ian Arundale, Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys Police who will facilitate links with senior officers in the police force.

Sgt Guildford informed the group that a one day Welsh wildlife crime conference will be held in the police headquarters in Carmarthen later this year. Invitations will go out in the next few weeks.

ACTION 30. Ian to discuss amending the wildlife crime report to increase focus on s42 species with Chris Tucker.

ACTION 31. Ian to liaise with EAW Crime Team to ensure coverage of full range of wildlife crimes.

Julia noted that the work of the WBP enforcement group will feed in the refreshed Wales Biodiversity Framework.

Paper to Note B: Neath Port Talbot Planning Officers Award Scheme: Rebecca Sharp.

Diana introduced the paper with the aim of encouraging best practice among other Local Authorities. Nick Birula noted that he was interested in how this process had been developed and measured and enquired if this methodology could be incorporated through the Sustainable Development indicator for Planning.

ACTION 32. Diana and Rob to discuss with colleagues and encourage use of Neath Port Talbot case study in development of SD indicator for Planning.

Roy Tapping noted that considerable efforts into planning application scrutiny in Wales takes places but often the outcomes are unknown and the weighting given to submitted evidence (e.g. s42 species) is unknown. LRCs comment on a selection of planning proposals as do many other environmental organisations and statutory bodies. It is important to recognise the overall process is managed by the local authority planning departments. An indicator of planning loss/gain would be very useful and would encompass s42 species and habitats rather than focus solely on European protected species and habitats.

ACTION 33. Roy to consider how LRCs can assist with monitoring local authority planning habitat loss/gain.

Melanie noted that it a requirement of the LDP to perform an annual review, which is then fed to WG and enquired whether this report could be shared once produced.

ACTION 34. Diana and Rob to discuss with colleagues and establish whether elements of this report could be shared.

Paper to Note C: Natur Cymru: Huw Jenkins

Huw introduced the paper and informed the group that it 2011 is the ten year anniversary of Natur Cymru. Natur Cymru would welcome suggestions for articles or stories from WBP, some of which can be covered for free.

WG part-fund Natur Cymru and in recent years work has included the production of YouTube films highlighting ecosystem services including slurry injection on a Denbighshire farm in collaboration and EAW, and work with Cardigan Bay Marine Wildlife Centre. Previous articles are available via the Natur Cymru website <http://www.naturcymru.org.uk>

Huw informed the group that membership has been growing steadily and at present the publication has 100 subscribers more than last year. However there is a need to maintain

the momentum. As such, a meeting is being held on the 13th July 2011, where ideas for improvement will be discussed.

Suggestions for future articles and films included evidence of change in woodlands as a result of fencing, marine articles and articles highlighting the work of the Ecosystem Groups. Local authority biodiversity networks could also request articles and potential filming opportunities. It was suggested that support materials could be produced by Natur Cymru for LAs and/or Ecosystems Groups such as an overview of LAs impacts on ecosystems.

ACTION 35. ALL to send suggestions for articles or stories to Huw Jenkins or the Natur Cymru Team.

ACTION 36. WBP Support Team to circulate Natur Cymru opportunity to Local Authorities

ACTION 37. Rob to investigate what services should be provided for 2011/12 Natur Cymru funding

Paper to Note D: *Dikerogammarus villosus*: Nick Birula

Nick introduced the paper, informing the group that *dikerogammarus villosus* has now been confirmed in two sites in Wales since November 2010: Cardiff Bay and Eglwys Nunydd in Port Talbot. Robust monitoring mechanisms have been developed by the EW and to date no further sites have been confirmed, despite the fact that EAW have sampled 49 additional sites in 2011.

Scientific understanding of the potential impacts of the species is limited. However, a Wales-wide task and finish group has been established to consider the likely impacts in a UK context. Site owners and managers are working together to ensure correct controls are in place and these controls will need continual review.

Multiple agencies are working to bring together definitive and up to date information. The Defra led 'Check, Clean, Dry' campaign is also being promoted throughout the UK <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/index.cfm?pageid=337> with a general message about aquatic biosecurity.

Mark Robinson enquired if the likely impacts of *dikerogammarus villosus* were clear. Nick stated that there is an anticipated high level impact but this needs to be aligned against other factors such as habitat type, hydrology etc. Oxford University are currently conducting research around this issue with the results due in six months time. Mark stated that there were concerns from British Waterways regarding the canal network and catchment areas; they have been in contact with Defra to discuss reservoirs.

ACTION 38. Nick Birula to provide Mark Robinson with relevant contact details.

ACTION 39. ALL to refer to the ‘Check, Clean, Dry’ campaign and the information on the GBNNS website.

Paper to Note E: WBP Planning and Budgeting: Sean McHugh

Diana presented the paper and asked whether the group was happy to endorse the proposed budget. The budget was agreed by the group.

The group was asked to approve the dates for Wales Biodiversity Week 2012- scheduled for the 09th – 17th June 2012, and the date of the 2012 WBP Conference scheduled for the 12th – 13th September 2012, both of which were endorsed by the group.

ACTION 40. ALL to note the dates for WBP Wales Biodiversity Week and WBP Conference in 2012.

ACTION 41. ALL to complete booking form for the WBP 2011 Conference and return to HALLIWELL@tsd.ac.uk as soon as possible.

It was suggested that members of the British Irish Council (BIC) could be invited to the WBP 2011 conference at the unsubsidised rate and this was endorsed by the group.

ACTION 42. Sean to send Steve Jackson an amended booking form for BIC invites.

Robert Griffiths enquired about the evaluation procedure for WBW. Sean replied that an evaluation would take place of this year’s event and a report produced.

Paper to Note F: Future of BAP Update: Julia Korn.

Julia introduced the paper and informed the group that the Future of BAP Group has recently been re-established to look at the opportunities and challenges presented by the development of the Natural Environment Framework and the ongoing review of environmental bodies.

The primary task of the group will be to review the Wales Biodiversity Framework and ensure its integration into delivery mechanisms for the NEF including through the work of any new environmental body. The Terms of Reference of the group, along with the minutes of the first meeting are available via the WBP website. The work of the group will focus initially on a review of the structures and processes (section 7 of the Wales

Biodiversity Framework) and will be holding a workshop at the WBP Conference in September.

An LBAP sub-group will also be established in order to ascertain the views of LBAPs throughout Wales and the work will be progressed by the WBP Support Team.

Diana noted that the NEF Programme Board has endorsed the use of local partnerships as a core method for addressing biodiversity loss and confirmed that the Future of BAP group will report to the WBP Steering Group and NEF Programme Board once its work is complete.

ACTION 43. ALL to send any suggestions regarding barriers to successful delivery and solutions to Julia Korn j.korn@ccw.gov.uk

Paper to Note G: Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) Update: Alys Edwards

Alys Edwards introduced the paper and informed the group that the BARS developments currently being undertaken will add new capabilities to the system, with the aim of making the new system more accessible and transparent. This redevelopment of BARS reflects a fundamental shift away from the current focus on recording biodiversity action plans. The primary aim of BARS going forward will be to record and report information about actual action in place to benefit biodiversity. A BARS session and interactive stand will be available at the WBP Conference in September and a training programme will be rolled out later in 2011/early 2012.

It was noted that how BARS is used as part of the NEF needs to be addressed and it was agreed to bring a discussion paper to a future Steering Group meeting once the development is underway.

ACTION 44. ALL requiring further information on BARS development or data availability should contact Alys Edwards (a.edwards@welshwildlife.org) to discuss.

ACTION 45. Alys to provide BARS discussion paper to SG15 or SG16 depending on progress with development.

Feedback from Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership (WCMP) Lynda Warren

Diana welcomed Lynda to her first meeting and thanked her for agreeing to be the new WCMP representative on the WBP Steering Group. Lynda explained the role and remit of the WCMP, which works through representatives of organisations or sectors with an interest in marine or coastal issues. The aim is to cascade information out to interested parties. The WCMP meets 3 times per year with any work progressed through smaller

sub-groups. The most recent work of the partnership has focussed on the Marine Planning consultation and responsibility for the Stakeholder and Citizen Advisory Group (SCAG), part of the Wales Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) Project. The next meeting of this group will be held on the 20th July and will be attended by the Minister.

It is anticipated that the format of the WCMP may change over the next few months in order to reflect the policy changes in Wales, including change of government, NEF, the Marine Strategic Framework Directive and to ensure an integrated approach to marine and terrestrial work.

Rob Griffiths enquired what level of engagement the WCMP had with WG Fisheries department. Lynda stated that although WG Fisheries had previously been engaged with WCMP, since the abolishment of the Sea Fisheries Committees (SFCs) the level of interest has declined. Diana has an upcoming meeting with Phil Coates in his new role within WG Fisheries and agreed to raise the issue of engagement with WCMP.

ACTION 46. Diana to raise WG Fisheries engagement with WCMP as an issue when she meets with Phil Coates.

Feedback from Standing Committee

Diana informed the group that the recent UK Standing Committee meeting is in the process of being reorganised. Further news will be provided at SG15 in November 2011.

Issues from LRCs Roy Tapping

Plant Link Cymru (PLINC)

LRCs have held two successful meetings with PLINC, to look at an improved structure for the management of plant data in Wales. This useful exchange focused on practical and technical solutions addressing issues of data flow between National Schemes and Societies, the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), individual recorders and LRCs.

Issue: LRCs would like to present a paper to WBP illustrating the role of volunteer recorders in the data flow process. This is aimed not only to highlight the effort made by volunteers but also illustrate the complexity of data flow currently and new recording initiatives e.g. iSpot.

ACTION 47. LRC to prepare paper for November SG meeting highlighting the complexity of biological data flow and volunteer recorder effort

LRC Wales synchronised database

For some time Welsh LRCs have collated data from each LRC, for use by national partners such as CCW and EAW. Data is currently collated periodically following a set

of manual standard procedures. Welsh LRCs have been progressing work to seamlessly integrate their data, through a synchronised database. Work on this has recently stalled due to a lack of internal resources.

Issue: There appears to be a growing requirement for a synchronised LRC database, allowing data to be more efficiently reported both to partners and recorders. LRCs ask WBP to explore ways of resourcing the synchronisation and believe that supporting this work would allow for the creation of a ‘Wales Relevant’ species dataset, which could be used at the local, regional or national scale.

Funding and a Pan-Government Agreement

Responses to the Living Wales consultation suggested that coordinated funding between the LRC’s main national partners could deliver greater access, through a pan-Government Agreement, to LRC data across WG and the Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies (WGSBs). Although initial discussions have taken place between WG and WGSBs, LRCs have not currently been made aware of the outcomes of these discussions. We hope that a solution can be agreed as it will hopefully allow greater access to data for WG departments, including data for use in Glastir and the NEF. Aside from uncertainly over funding from national partners LRCs face pressures from Local Authorities to reduce or freeze Service Level Agreements (SLA). Therefore as LRC costs increase annually, SLA payments fail to keep pace with these increases.

Issue: LRCs urge pressure towards a pan-Government Agreement, believing this to be spirit of NEF. Also this would hopefully open data access to WG departments, such as agriculture, who currently are unable to utilise the data. LRCs believe that greater security over national funding will help place pressure on Local Authorities to fund LRCs more consistently.

ACTION 48. Helen Wilkinson to liaise with Alison Smith (DE&T) and Mark Goddard (CCW) to resolve some of the issues around constructing the pan-Wales LRC agreement.

Environmental consultants accessing data from the NBN Gateway

LRCs are gathering a growing body of evidence to show that environmental consultants are making use of the NBN Gateway, rather LRC services. This is despite the Gateway specifically stating that the data should not be used for commercial purposes. LRCs provide a much more comprehensive access to detailed data than the Gateway and as such they are often specified by Local Authorities (especially in “pre application discussions” a requirement of Tan 5).

Issue: LRCs urge that where possible and required, Environmental Consultants should be directed to LRC services.

ACTION 49. ALL to direct ecological consultants to LRC network in place of raw NBN gateway data which is not at a sufficient resolution to satisfy survey requirements.

ACTION 50. WBP support Team to circulate LRC script to local authorities to encourage them to put SLAs or other suitable arrangements in place.

Taxonomic training courses

LRCs would like to thank WBP for the financial support offered to coordinate and run taxonomic training courses over the past two financial years. Throughout this period each LRC has run a series of specialist training courses delivered by volunteer and paid experts. This training has provided opportunities for participants to increase their experience in areas generally not covered by other training. LRCs continue to provide a series of courses this financial year, with the hope that WBP will continue to give its financial support

Actions and Minutes from SG13

The minutes from the last meeting were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Diana informed the group that of 59 Actions 47 were either completed or underway. The exceptions being the communications actions which Hayley and Sean will be working on and the following:

ACTION 26: All to discuss ToR with line managers/CEOs in order to agree inclusion in job descriptions and/or provide any further feedback on the ToR to Diana Reynolds.

Julia noted that the Future of BAP group had agreed to look at the Terms of Reference for the WBP Wales-level groups.

ACTION 51. ALL who have not done so already to discuss revised ToR with line managers.

ACTION 52. Steve Jackson to discuss inclusion of involvement in WBP ecosystem groups in CCW job descriptions with David Parker

ACTION 23: Encourage use of teleconferencing facilities

ACTION 53. WBP Support Team to investigate free teleconferencing facilities including Skype and circulate details.

ACTION 46: Graham Oliver to circulate further details of 'Unknown Wales' event once available

Details of the Unknown Wales Conference are now available via the National Museum Wales website http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/whatson/?event_id=5098

AOB

The issue of WBP funding was raised, and the problems with carrying forward funds from one financial year to the next. Diana agreed that this should be possible and will raise with WG colleagues.

ACTION 54. Diana to raise issue of WBP funding restrictions with WG colleagues and feedback to WBP and CCW.

Trevor announced that the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) have employed a BSBI Welsh Officer.- Polly Spencer-Vellacott who will be based in CCW's Mold office and her role will include supporting vice-county recorders and providing technical support.

Stephen added the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) also has two new members of staff in Wales, who will be hosted by Bangor University.

Date of next meeting:

SG15 10th November 2011, Glyndwr University, Wrexham

SG16 21st February 2012, South Wales, location tbc

Diana thanked everyone for attending and for their hard work between steering group meetings and closed the meeting.