

Wales BAP Group Chairs
3rd Meeting
April 27th 2010
Newtown

Present

Diana Reynolds (Chair) – Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)
Chris Lea – Welsh Assembly Government
John Taylor – Welsh Assembly Government / Countryside Council for Wales
Russell Elliott – Countryside Council for Wales
Caryn Le Roux – Enclosed Farmland Ecosystem Group (ESG)
Aethne Cooke – Marine ESG
Barbara Jones – Upland ESG
Nigel Ajax Lewis – Woodland ESG
Jan Sherry – Countryside Council for Wales
Helen Buckingham – Lowland Grassland and Heathland ESG
Helen Wilkinson – Wales Environment Information Steering Group (WEISG)
Peter Jones – Wetland ESG
Stephen Bladwell – Species Expert Group
Peter Frost – Urban and Brownfield ESG
Julia Korn – Wales Biodiversity Partnership
William Somerfield – Invasive Non Native Species group
Len Wyatt – Welsh Assembly Government (Transport)

Apologies

Peter Rhind – Coastal ESG
Chris Tucker – Woodland ESG

Introductions

Chris Lea is the head of the new Sustainable Environment and Evidence Division of the Welsh Assembly Government working to 2 Ministers (Elin Jones the Department of Rural Affairs and Jane Davidson Department of Environment, Sustainability and Housing).

Russell Elliott is responsible for Green Infrastructure, Sustainable Development, Ecosystem Services and the EU Landscape convention within CCW. The aim is to bring all these related areas of work together under **the Natural Environment Framework (NEF)**.

John Taylor is the CCW Director of Policy and has been seconded to the Welsh Assembly Government to work on the NEF.

Jan Sherry is part of the CCW Biodiversity Network and involved in many of the ESGs. Jan is currently involved in linking biodiversity into Spatial planning through the development of priority maps which will help to inform partners of the priorities for biodiversity on their patch.

Caryn le Roux is Chair of the Enclosed Farmland ESG and stresses the importance of biodiversity as an important part of Ecosystem Services rather than delivered by them.

Barbara Jones is Chair of the Upland ESG and recognises the potential for Ecosystem groups to really deliver on action on the ground but it is important to move to the action stage of the new approach.

Peter Jones is Chair of the Wetland ESG and sees the Ecosystem Groups as a much more effective mechanism for delivery of biodiversity than the previous UK approach

Helen Wilkinson sits on the Wales Environment Information Steering group and is keen to explore if the information sharing priorities are right or will these change under the NEF?

Stephen Bladwell Is Chair of the Species Expert group will work to ensure species conservation is integrated into habitat management where appropriate.

Aethne Cooke Provides the Secretariat for the Marine ESG and is keen to determine how the NEF will affect the operations of other Government departments and bodies.

Peter Frost is Chair of the urban and Brown field ESG welcomes the discussion on joined up thinking initiated by the NEF and stressed the importance of urban green infrastructure for people and biodiversity

Helen Buckingham is Chair of the Lowland grassland and heathland ESG and sees the ESGs as set up to work in the wider context in the future.

Nigel Ajax Lewis is representing the Woodland Ecosystem group.

William Somerfield is Chair of the Invasive Non Native Species Group and the work of this group as important in supporting successful delivery across the other groups.

Julia Korn supports the BAP process at all levels through her work for the Wales Biodiversity Partnership and provides the Secretariat for the Biodiversity Policy Group

1. The Natural Environment Framework (NEF)

The Climate Change talks in Copenhagen at the end of 2009 led to increased concern for biodiversity and a recognition that missing the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity is a symptom of something deeper. In response the Minister Jane Davidson published a Cabinet Statement that included the announcement of the development of a Natural Environment Framework for Wales to compliment the delivery of the Wales Environment Strategy.

Timetable

NEF to be written over the next 2 months

Launch of consultation document on Sept 15th at the WBP Seminar in Bangor

Implementation to start early in 2011

The period of development will include dialogue and workshops with a number of different organisations, partnerships and groups. The NEF will ask others to consider if biodiversity is the right starting point in the current societal context. Should we be talking instead about sustainable development with ecosystem services as the bridge between biodiversity and sustainable develop? Within this context it is important to assess if doing the right thing for ecosystem services is also doing the right thing for habitats/species? It is necessary to unpack the benefits of biodiversity for other sectors and then ecosystem services could provide the language to initiate dialogue.

Expertise from the new WBP can help to develop this thinking and answer some of the questions being asked about the evidence we have and the approach we take to prioritising, planning and delivery of action for biodiversity e.g.

Do we know where delivery for Ecosystem Services equates to improvement for biodiversity?

Do we have the science and is it the right science?

Do we make the best use of the voluntary and professional resource available?

Are targets a good thing?

Should we be developing ecosystem service targets to measure progress?

Is it the ecosystem service or the components of the ecosystem we want to protect?

Do we know what keystone species are?

Should we use these as indicators?

Implementation

There are numerous questions to answer about implementation e.g.

Are Government and the Statutory Sector joined up enough to deliver the NEF?

Are tools and information available to support this?

Do we have the evidence to direct implementation?

Is the WBP in a good position to contribute?

What are we already doing and delivering?

What are others doing?

How do we turn aspirations into action – do we need a business process?

What outcomes are we looking for?

How do we measure these outcomes?

Currently the NEF is seeking a mission and contributions to this would be welcome.

FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKSHOP WILL BE CIRCULATED SEPARATELY.

2. Feedback from Wales level groups

Urban and Brownfield Ecosystem group ESG)

JNCC is still developing the definition for open mosaic and brownfield habitats.

Sorrell Jones from the Wildlife Trust is piloting a methodology to assess the location and quality of brownfield sites. At the local seminar in Cwmbran on May 12th practitioners will be asked to help identify potential sites. The key issue for this group are a) resources to deliver b) the need for a Wales species list for this habitat and c) the need for a Secretariat for the group.

Marine (ESG)

The Policy Issues have been identified and discussed at the Policy Group meeting. Action on these will underpin other work. Developing textual targets for Marine Section 42 species and habitats (i.e. not following conventional approach developed for use of the Biodiversity Action reporting System (BARS)).

Actions are being written by Aethne but other organisations with an interest in and /or impact on the marine environment need to identify actions relevant to their remit.

An issue is fitting all this work in with day job and the need to focus on some projects to demonstrate examples with tangible benefits. An example is for native oyster or marine crawfish where proactive work could benefit ecosystems and contribute to development of sustainable fisheries.

Species Expert Group (SEG)

SEG submitted papers to the last WBP Steering Group meeting and updated the meeting on the allocation of Lead Partners in Wales and the need to fill the gaps.

At that meeting a new mentor scheme was agreed (along similar lines to the Lichen project) to develop expertise in that taxa.

The last SEG meeting was a success and will develop how they will drive the species integration work to ensure that ESGs are properly advised and supported on integrating species actions into habitat management wherever possible.

Policy issues were discussed at the last Policy Group meeting and time /resources continues to be a problem for the group. This group currently does not have a Secretariat.

Wales Environment Information Steering group (WEISG)

Prioritising work areas

1. data flow and the development of the Data Sharing Charter for Government/ Statutory bodies. The Charter consists of high level principles and a more detailed supporting Memorandum of Agreement still needs to be developed. The charter is now ready for consultation.
2. Roles and responsibilities for data flow. This work area aims to identify sticking points and address. The aim is to coordinate what is already happening and identify opportunities to work together.
There priorities for this area of work are 6 taxa (including reptiles and mammals) and 2 sectors (Academics/private)

Wetland ESG

The wetland ESG continues to work in partnership with the lowland grassland and heathland ecosystem group on the development of the West Wales grazing Project. Helen Buckingham is driving this work with enormous support from Charles Morgan (PONT). A workshop was held in the region on February 10th and 40 people attended. The project will be looking to put in an application for external funding e.g. to the European LIFE fund.

The Wetland ESG is developing a wetland habitat inventory as spatial information is required by LBAP Partnerships as well as information on action that needs to be taken. Post Doc membership of the group will really help especially if they have GIS experience. Currently the Fen action plan is the only one nearly completed in draft.

The biggest issue for the group is staff time to take this work forward. Membership needs to be more dynamic with the work load shared across the group. Diana Reynolds is working with organisations identifying skill sets that can support the work of the Wales level groups so that the most appropriate person is identified for each group.

Upland ESG

The Upland actions (for the original BAP Habitats pre 2006) are on the WBP website for consultation until May 31st. The Upland ESG will be really focussing down on priority action starting in June through discussion of organisational top priorities. Once this work is completed the final actions will be sent to Julia Korn for posting on the ESG Advisory Pages on BARS.

The actions from the 3 new Upland habitats are being written at a UK level and will be written for Wales following their completion. The money provided by the WAG during 2009/10 included 3 small upland projects. It would be useful if this money could be planned into the financial year in the future.

The current issue remains to be resources in terms of organisational commitment to the group and funding.

Lowland Grassland and Heathland ESG

This group has a committed membership mainly of people who work on the ground. The actions for the original habitats are out for consultation on the WBP website until May 31st.

The next meeting will discuss opportunity mapping, identify large scale priorities that could lead to projects. The actions provide the basis for this work. Juliet Hynes has been a brilliant secretariat and the group will miss her. Helen expressed her thanks to Juliet. Ivy Berkshire was an active member but has also left the group because she has changed jobs within the Assembly.

Enclosed Farmland ESG

The last meeting was dominated by Glastir and the group is asking for hedgerows to be covered in all higher level agreements.

Currently no hedgerow monitoring is taking place and the group would like to explore if this could be done through local authority planning department databases.

The actions for hedgerows and orchards are ready to be discussed at the local seminars and the first tranche of the policy issues were discussed at the last Policy group meeting and are currently with Diana.

Hedgerow link is a UK website and the aim of the group is to open a Welsh 'arm' by getting it translated and making it relevant to Wales.

The definition for Orchards has been agreed at a UK level.

Woodland ESG

Had their 2nd meeting in January and the draft actions will be signed off at the 3rd meeting next week. Work is on-going to ensure work is aligned with the 2nd Woodland Strategy for Wales.

Invasive Non Native Species Group

The 10th meeting will be on June 17th. There is an action audit on the WBP website which was last updated in January. There is also a list of priority species for action in Wales.

Various projects on-going

National Ecosystem Assessment

Looking at large scale UK Ecosystems (e.g. woodlands, moors etc) and the services they provide. The report for Wales is being led by Shaun Russell at the Wales Environment Hub. The hub will host a workshop in the summer where policy options will be discussed. Shaun is able to make data available.

Evidence is important and there has been a 4 way meeting with WAG/CCW/EAW/FCW) about the need to poll evidence. It was agreed that a virtual evidence team should be developed starting with environmental datasets. If WBP establishes an evidence group its Chair could have a seat on the new virtual group above.

Biodiversity Policy Group

The Policy group is currently writing a statement on Ecosystems, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and currently WAG are keeping this and will let Julia Korn know how this will progress before the next Policy group meeting in Aberystwyth on June 15th. The policy issues to be discussed at the next meeting will be Wetland, Freshwater, Coastal and Woodland and all these Chairs need to send their issues templates to Julia Korn by May 28th. There will also be a workshop on the Natural Environment Framework.

Coastal

The draft action plan is ready and will be discussed at the Swansea Local Biodiversity seminar on May 13th. Still struggling to get broad representation on the group of all those with an interest in and/or impact on the coastal environment.

Freshwater ESG

Developing actions and will discuss at the local seminar in Bangor on May 6th.

There is still an issue securing staff time from the various organisations involved and very little direction from the 2010/11 remit letters.

Integrating Species into habitats

It is important to note that the role of Species Lead Partners is distinctly different from that of the Species Expert group.

The Species Lead Partners are responsible for target and action development and advice and guidance on species specific action. There needs to be spatial information identifying where different species need to be targeted

The Species Expert group is responsible for advising and supporting the ecosystem groups and others to integrate species actions into habitat management. This work is developing and Stephen will circulate. Chairs need to receive information relevant to their group remit and a mechanism for doing this needs to be developed. Work in Wales should use the completed work from Natural England as a base rather than reinventing the wheel.

The Natural England work looks at habitat structure and the varying species requirements. It identifies which species groups use specific aspects of habitats and sets the provision of this habitat as a measure.

Integration work will require monitoring of the habitat and the associated species. A pilot using one ESG would be useful. Peter Jones offered Fen

Welsh Assembly Government Trunk Road Agency BAP (TREBAP)

Len Wyatt: len.wyatt@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Presentation circulated with minutes.

It is likely that the TREBAP will be reviewed within the next year pending confirmation of resources and so Len would like to learn about the new approach to BAP and how the TREBAP sits within this framework. The TREBAP could be delivering on some of the Wales level priority actions and contributing towards Wales targets. Because of the nature of its landholding actions are likely to relate directly to road verges. Other opportunities may also occur where land is held beyond the road verge. Planting schemes try and use local provenance plants/trees although supply can be a problem. Currently INNS are not covered by TREBAP.

Points raised during discussion

The ecosystem groups would like spatial information on where habitats are and how these link to the existing connectivity maps and future priority biodiversity maps.

If the TREBAP was on BARS it would be possible to see what action is being undertaken for which species and habitats, the location and the contribution to Wales targets.

Len would like to have access to the phase 2 habitat data. It would also be useful to discuss specific policy issues especially some raised by the Enclosed farmland group.

Further discussion focused on the use of cuttings from verge/road boundary management for biofuel production. In 2005 a trial was carried out on collecting grass cuttings from verges and using them in composting (aerobic and anaerobic) schemes. There were technical problems with the machinery, and it was then relatively costly to undertake - however the quality of compost produced and gas emitted was high. In the future maintaining organisations and others managing land in an area, where composting facilities were available, may wish to review the viability. The project was run by Montgomeryshire WT, Powys CC and the Welsh Assembly Government (Transport) as part of a University project on the production of compost/gas and it won an Institute of Civil Engineering. The report on this is still available.

Actions from last meeting

Diana reported that Glastir does not need to go through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

Julia still needs groups to identify reporting officer

Richard Evans has left the Assembly so a new contact point on research activities is required

AOB

Species Monitoring

Rachel Hodson is leading on a wildlife monitoring project on monitoring associated species across a range of habitats/species.

Date of next meeting

OCTOBER 5TH (Welsh Assembly Government Building, Aberystwyth).

If you are unable to attend then please send a representative.

The meeting will include a workshop on developing and sharing our skills.

Draft 7 July 2010

3rd Meeting of the Wales BAP Group Chairs – Newtown on April 27th

No	Who/Action	Outcome	Progress
1.	Jan Sherry to write a case studies demonstrating BAP successes (less than 200 words) for John Taylor	NEF informed by case studies of what is working well	
2	Julia Korn to write a case study on good practice working through local authority biodiversity champions	NEF informed by case studies of what is working well	Done
3	Diana Reynolds to ask the academics who will sit on the ESGs and the Species Expert group to form a WBP Evidence group, WEISG will also sit on this group. One representative from this group will then be asked to sit on the WAG/Agency Evidence group to ensure priorities fed in at Government level.	Agreement on evidence requirements and sharing of information within WBP and between WBP and government	
4	John Taylor to let Julia Korn know when the CCW Natural Environment Framework (NEF) reference group is set up.	Biodiversity representation informing the development of the NEF	
5	Diana Reynolds to circulate the next draft of the NEF Initiation statement	Wales Biodiversity group Chairs informed of progress of the NEF	
6	Peter Frost to circulate the methodology being developed to assess the location and quality of brownfield sites in Wales.	Decisions on targets and priority actions for the open mosaic and brownfield habitat are based on sound information	
7	JNCC/CCW need to work together on the Wales part of the Open Mosaic habitat definition.	Common definition across the UK for new BAP habitat	
8	Julia Korn to look into different possibilities for providing Secretariat for Wales level groups including the possibility of using post doc students and /or volunteers including contacting the WCVA Cardiff Office Secretariats needed for Enclosed farmland, Marine, SEG, Woodland and Upland.	Consistent and continued support for all the Wales level groups	
9	Diana Reynolds to talk to WAG fisheries department about benefit of some species projects e.g. for Native oyster in producing sustainable fisheries. Diana can then bring this up and discuss at the next Marine ESG meeting.	Delivery of Marine species action to support sustainable fisheries in the future (ecosystem service)	
10	Diana Reynolds to hold a NEF workshop at the next Species Expert Group Meeting	Species needs underpinned by the expertise built into the Natural Environment	

		Framework	
11	Species Expert Group to look at gaps in the Lead partner provision and Stephen Bladwell to report back on gaps that still need plugging	Complete cover of Species lead partners in Wales	
12	Diana Reynolds to send Julia Korn the Policy Issues progress update	Policy Group actions from Wales level groups put on BARS and information on progress shared	
13	Helen Wilkinson to send the draft Data Sharing Charter with Diana Reynolds and Chris Lea	Agreement to the principles within the data sharing charter secured widely within Welsh Government	
14	Diana Reynolds and Chris Lea to start talking to WAG colleagues about the Data Sharing Charter	As above	
15	Diana Reynolds to circulate information on organisations she has worked to identify particular skill sets for the Wales level groups	Identification of skill sets within organisations appropriate to different Wales biodiversity groups	
16	Diana Reynolds to send Julia Korn the names of people that have a greed to become members of Wales level groups following the above exercise	Greater spread of responsibility within organisations for supporting the Wales biodiversity groups	
17	All to send Diana Reynolds ideas for organisations she should work with on skills identification and Wales level group support	Greater sharing of responsibility and work load of ESGs across their membership	
18	Julia Korn send Diana Reynolds a list of all Forestry Commission and Environment Agency Wales staff on Wales level Groups		
19	Julia Korn to update the membership database	Common knowledge of membership of the groups	Done
	Diana Reynolds to see if Ivy Berkshire can be released from her current job in WAG to get involved in the Lowland grassland and Heathland group	Expertise maintained within ecosystem group	
20	Bill Somerfield to circulate the INNS priority species in Wales list	Information shared and opportunities for collaboration projects explored	
21	Diana Reynolds to investigate if WAG volunteer days can be spent supporting INNS action??? – was this about this or was it about providing Secretariat???		
22	Diana Reynolds to let Julia Korn know how the	Clear definitions for Wales of the terms	

	Ecosystem Approach Statement will progress by June 4th.	Ecosystem, Ecosystem Approach, Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity and how they relate to each other. Improved Understanding of their application.	
23	Diana Reynolds to talk to colleagues to find a representative for the coastal group who is involved with the development of the Shoreline Management Plans	Better coverage of stakeholders within the Coastal ESG	
24	Diana Reynolds to check remit letters of EAW and CCW to see if there is reference to WBP and the delivery of BAP in Wales.	Greater government steer to key organisations to direct resources including staff time towards supporting the new approach	
25	Stephen Bladwell to send the Species Integration work to Julia Korn and Julia Korn to circulate to the groups.	Information shared	
26	Peter Jones and Stephen Bladwell to run a pilot on Fen looking at how species needs are integrated into habitat management and how progress can be monitored and reported. (Timescale needs to be agreed here)	Approach to species integration work trialled and developed to work across ESGs	
27	Jan Sherry to see if Gavin Measures from Natural England would come and talk to the next Meeting of the Chairs on their species integration work.	Efficient use of existing information in development of Wales integration work	
28	Julia Korn to include a talk form Natural England on the above on the Agenda of the next meeting of the Chairs.		
29	Len Wyatt to send Julia Korn information he has on habitats associated with the trunk road network.		
30	Len Wyatt to contact Helen Wilkinson about accessing Phase 2 data.		
31	Len Wyatt and Caryn Le Roux to discuss policy issues relating to trunk roads and look for potential solutions.		
32	Julia Korn to contact groups individually where a reporting contact is still required		
33	Diana Reynolds to find out and report back on who will be the research contact at WAG		
34	Diana Reynolds to send contact details for the Wildlife Monitoring scheme		Done

35	Julia Korn to arrange next meeting and circulate details		
36	All attend the next meeting on October 5 th or find an alternative representative.		

Draft .1. May 20th 2010