MINUTES: BOARD MEETING – Monday 7th June 2019

Board Members Present: Liz Ballard (Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust) - Chair, Dr Kate Hammond (Sheffield Hallam University), Brian Tinnion (independent), Pete Wall (Dearne Valley Trust), Crispin Thorn (Forestry Commission), Paula Tweed (Barnsley MBC), Trevor Mayne (Barnsley MBC), David Edwards (Doncaster MBC), Melissa Massarella (Doncaster MBC), Robert Burnett (Natural England), Jenny Barlow (Environment Agency), Dave Aspinall (Sheffield City Council)

Also present: David Renwick (National Lottery Heritage Fund), Ian Cracknell (Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust)

Apologies: Robert Burnett (Natural England), Alison Holt (Natural Capital Solutions), Jane Stimpson (DMBC), Jenny Barlow (Environment Agency), Jon Follows (Environment Agency), Emma Wells (SCC), Tom Wild (University of Sheffield)

2. Minutes of last meeting, actions and matters arising

A clarification was made by PT re item 5: Duty to co-operate – supplementary documents were out for consultation, 18 out of 20 of which have been adopted.

CT named Abdul Gaffa as EA’s local contact for HS2 who is based in York.

LC is retiring and therefore stepping down from her role as Vice-Chair of the LNP. LC introduced Dr Kate Hammond as her replacement who is a planner with a particular interest in green infrastructure and regional development.

PG is leaving RMBC and will also step down from the LNP. KB will continue in his place.

3. Biodiversity offsetting – discussion of experience

David Renwick, Area Director North at National Lottery Heritage Fund gave a presentation to the LNP on what is funded and detailed new changes to the structure and application processes with examples of funded projects.

Following the presentation, PW asked about the challenge of landscape scale conservation applications with small window of opportunity, e.g. grouse moorland for sale with a view to rewilding. DR responded that fast track acquisitions can be done, but important to clarify it isn’t possible to fund everything - agri-env schemes still need to play a part. DR highlighted need for new ways of working and tapping into funding, noting that though historically philanthropists have mainly favoured funding the arts, the new generation of philanthropists are more nature-focused. Land purchase is a good pitch, yet just 5% of current philanthropy goes to environment. DR noted the Key Fund in Sheffield – LB responded on difficulty accessing these funds but highlighted the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation’s emergency purchase fund. LB asked for more detail on how the new application programmes will be announced and rolled out. DR responded applications for £3-£50k will have no deadline, with an enquiry form, advice and support available. £100k would have a decision time of 8 weeks, £250k decision time would be 12 weeks, reduced to 8 weeks in 2020.
From April 2020 onwards an expression of interest stage will be added. If over £250k with expression of interest, applications will be advised on whether worth going ahead.

LB raised National Recovery Networks – current Defra discussion document refers to Heritage Fund re: delivering NRNs. What is the current relationship with that work? Is there opportunity on northern scale to look at this approach and do work to drive this? DR responded will be able to deliver work around map, partnerships and new ways of working. Challenges are growth, struggles, Northern Forest programme to set up and governance. Could fund NRN map of northern England. A number of maps have been noted but really needs one map everyone can buy into. LB highlighted link to NBN Atlas and data recording programmes re: NRN. LC raised project at SHU looking at availability of data across recording sources but unable to get hold of required data, frustrating for a project critically based on real science. LC’s major concern is a resulting inability to establish baselines in order to know the best way forward.

### 4. Defra/Natural England Nature Recovery Network proposals

LB introduced Defra’s recent NRN document and webinar which she and DE took part in and summarised as a very open discussion. LB felt SRWT’s thinking on NRNs to be at the same level, if not further ahead than Defra’s vision. Project Team to deliver over the next couple of years with a new version of the document to be published in September. Question over who will do mapping – has to be Natural England. LNPs have been suggested but do not have national coverage to manage. WT’s talked about maps sat with LAs so work with Local Plans, strategy etc. CT said FC’s national team involved, document is a discussion paper and not policy. LNP mapping and strategy – hopeful these will coalesce with NE proposals, otherwise will be a challenge. Some positivity in their open approach for this.

LB, SRWT looking at options re Laughton review re more, bigger, joined up and connectivity – 8 different models. At some point have to decide which model and data etc then tackle challenge of data quality at record centres. Data came up as a frequent topic in the webinar.

**Actions:**

- LB/IC to share SRWT response to NRN consultation.

### 5. Northern Forest update

LB summarised NF as currently having governance issues and not sure what to do with SY. To galvanise in SY will need lots of support to help deliver through existing organisations, but there is a notable lack of understanding re: concept. Needs resource, ability to facilitate with person responsible. Have referred this back to NF. Governance review being done, person doing this spoke to Liz by phone, also to have call with Nick Selwood following board completing governance report.

LC pointed out that ecologists looking at greatest gain would be concerned with water, not tree planting and not on forestry basis which is often seen to be destructive to scrubland etc.

CT responded that he has been involved in NF governance workshop. No one-size-fits-all approach and not forestry in core sense. Capacity is an issue. West Yorkshire have taken on new staff to deliver, will be slower where there isn’t capacity and the board need to understand this. Opportunity in terms of ambition, meadows and single tree projects with Woodland Trust.

Potential impact on habitats and species taken very seriously. Need to flag gap – is there any resource? Key question for NF as might start quicker where resource is available – SY could be gap. LB reiterated need to establish NF position.
6. Urban Tree Challenge Fund

CT shared details of new fund for open large block applications. Less than 0.5ha, peri-urban areas. Expressions of interest, part of govt’s ambition for 1m urban trees by 2022. Details available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/urban-tree-challenge-fund, closing date 28 July 2019.

7. SYLNP Strategy - update on website and maps

IC presented the updated SYLNP website, hosted on SRWT website. IC has now uploaded natural capital maps as a 4th page of the site with a photo for Barnsley, so all four LNP boroughs are now visually represented on the site. It was agreed for the site to go live.

**Actions:**

- IC to look into URL/firewall issue reported by PT
- All to share and promote website, add as link on websites etc: www.sylnp.org.uk

8. HS2 updates

LB/IC previously shared SRWT’s response to the draft ES consultation. LB met with HS2 on Sheffield and Rotherham route, had very good feedback on LNP report from ecologists, seen as very useful document. Would be good to try and ensure SY gets opportunities. LB also obtained EA/FC draft ES consultation responses which will be shared with the LNP.

KB and BT highlighted recent updates on

BT raised the Combined Campaign Group Yorkshire and NE Derbyshire group’s ‘High Speed North’ scheme which they claim is a cheaper, less environmentally damaging alternative.

**Actions:**

- IC to circulate EA/FC HS2 draft ES consultation responses

9. Duty to Co-operate updates

PG was recently made aware of possible DPD on growth space scoping which KB will be able to report back on.

DE updated that Doncaster’s Local Plan goes to cabinet in July.

PT shared that 18 out of 20 policies have now been adopted, including biodiversity and sustainable travel.

No SCC representatives were present to report on Sheffield’s local plan.

**Actions:**

- KB to report back on growth space scoping
- EW to update on Sheffield Local Plan

10. AOB/future agenda items

LB highlighted ‘The Time Is Now’ mass lobby event on the Environment Bill taking place at Westminster on 26 June. PT noted that Stephanie Peacock MP for Barnsley East recently raised this issue in Parliament.

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PT suggested a future agenda item on Biodiversity Net Gain. LB responded that the LNP are interested in leading on this issue and learning from Doncaster. Agreed to invite Melissa Massarella to present and also invite Trevor Mayne.

Actions:

IC – to invite Melissa Massarella to deliver presentation on Biodiversity Net Gain and also invite Trevor Mayne

Future agenda items:

New Chair and Vice Chair
Northern Forest update
HS2
Biodiversity Net Gain
Environment Agency presentation on EDF funds to protect SRNs.

Date of next meeting

Doodle Poll of potential dates to be sent out following the meeting.

Actions:

IC - send Doodle Poll for next LNP meeting date in September