

South Yorkshire Local Nature Partnership

MINUTES: BOARD MEETING – Thursday 11th May 2020

Board Members Present: Liz Ballard (Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust) - Chair, Dave Aspinall (Sheffield City Council), Kevin Burke (Rotherham MBC), David Edwards (Doncaster MBC), Dr Catherine Hammond (Sheffield Hallam University), Melissa Massarella (Doncaster MBC), Crispin Thorn (Forestry Commission), Brian Tinnion (independent), Paula Tweed (Barnsley MBC), Pete Wall (Dearne Valley Trust), Emma Wells (SCC), Tom Wild (University of Sheffield)

Also present: Garreth Bruff (Sheffield City Region), Ian Cracknell (Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust), Vicki Harrison (Environment Agency), Laurie Heykoop (Sheffield City Region), Craig Thomas (Natural England), Chris Wilson (SCC), Anthony Downing (Environment Agency)

Apologies: Jenny Barlow (Environment Agency)

2. Minutes of last meeting, actions and matters arising

LB noted date error re: previous minutes.

CT to add small update to minutes re: HS2 by email

TW added amend to minutes re: update in AOB - nature-based solutions

HS2 subgroup – PW in touch with Chris Marshall (NE) and Joseph Buckman (EA) re: potential scheme at North Ings.

3. SYLNP Strategy & Sheffield City Region Update

LH detailed SEP consultation due to be published end March but paused due to Covid-19, don't yet have a consultation date. Currently focussed on developing Coronavirus recovery action plan for SY region. Asks to central government and other stakeholders, working with PWC, due mid-June. Interviewing different stakeholders across region inc. LAs, academics, Chambers of Commerce, third sector i.e SY Community Foundation – how seeing the crisis and what they think and hope may happen from it. Likely to look at skills, class of 2020 re: students looking to move on and barriers to that, support for different industries, some being hit harder than others but seem ok for now. Support measures – what not already being done that SCR can ask central government to do. Economic with social elements, spatial inequality, types of work, activities that can take SEP back to where it was before.

TW asked about Manchester and London Mayor statements on using the opportunity to promote pedestrian/cycle links – is anything happening on this in Sheffield? LH replied SCR Mayor and Active Travel Commissioner Dame Sarah Storey wrote a letter to PM re: opportunity to develop travel strategy, extra funding expected from central government. Transforming Cities Fund, £116m announced in March, large amount for travel.

LB asked re: nature-based solutions, climate emergency, environment plan etc – some regions thinking more coordinated in regional plans etc? LH replied not part of plans/discussions but have been touched upon. Can ask PWC how much environment to be part of conversation as may still

SYLNP Chair: Liz Ballard. Tel: 0114 263 4335, Email: l.ballard@wildsheffield.com

Interim SYLNP Secretariat: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, email: i.cracknell@wildsheffield.com

be opportunity, will check and report back.

DA asked if still target for 1m trees? LH confirmed is still target, not yet come to fruition. Can test proposals with Mayor's office, could we complete to that? LB replied would be good, ties into greener growth recovery plan – someone has to plant and maintain trees, ties into carbon/climate agenda. Also noted as example re: social/economic focus of PWC report, appearing to miss out environment - classic third part of triangle, opportunity to reframe through economic recovery. LH responded that if anything can be shared re: green recovery that would be welcomed.

LB asked how important green space has been during lockdown – something else to mention and ensure this recorded spatially across region. LB asked if DA and KB have seen uptake increase? DA replied has seen huge increase in Sheffield. Downside is need to put up large number of notices re: social distancing, which may change. KB echoed DA's comments and MM also added her agreement re: Doncaster. PT added Barnsley has also seen increase in use of local green spaces as well as cultural facilities like Cannon Hall and would also echo what has been said. LB summarised would be good to see SY take lead on this. LH responded will send plan to be circulated once published. KB added could PWC contact someone in LNP with environmental background to bring different context to the report?

Actions:

LH - to check with PWC re: SY recovery plan, scope to include environment, nature-based solutions, climate emergency etc. Opportunity for LNP input?

4. GCN District Licensing

Craig Thomas introduced himself, Habitat Delivery Strategist at Natural England working with Wildscapes (SRWT consultancy) and others to put in new ponds across region.

For every £8 spent on licensing, only £1 is spent on habitat – rest goes on plastic fencing, moving newts etc. Looking at mechanism to provide better outcome for species. Cheshire and Kent were first areas, other areas going live recently or will. Craig showed a map which illustrated where most GCN found. 150 LAs with most GCN by mapping/survey data. Looking at historic licensing returns plus discussion with LAs to create risk zone map. Also Strategic Opportunity Area Map – where we'd like to put ponds. Fringe areas, where density of ponds less, habitat will connect populations.

The project began with a blank sheet – GCN decline is due to loss of ponds since 1960s. Not necessarily terrestrial habitat – right ponds in right place. Money determined by impact, how much pond might need to compensate for. Carried out by habitat project delivery officer external to NE. Craig noted red zone can't enter DLL due to nationally important populations. Every pond monitored for first 4 years. Ponds must remain suitable for GCN for 25 years with 3 year, 8 year, 16 year and 25 year interventions as part of maintenance.

NatureSpace is private company so profit element, economies of scale – not the case for NE model, NE standing over licensing process in majority of cases. Assured would be handed over to LAs but not possible in many instances due to cuts and other issues. NE looks for allocation data for modelling, receives heads up re: applications, developer sends impact detail to NE, discharge of duty DLL. NE approached approaches stepping stone where LA may be able to take on themselves. NatureSpace is a hybrid of traditional/NE model. The presentation concluded and was opened up to questions.

DA said feels like working well, sense putting pressure on NE to deal with re: capacity etc. Why couldn't DLL have been rolled into BNG that developer put through planning process?

SYLNP Chair: Liz Ballard. Tel: 0114 263 4335, Email: l.ballard@wildsheffield.com

Interim SYLNP Secretariat: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, email: i.cracknell@wildsheffield.com

Craig replied DLL 3 years, BNG some way behind. Similar approaches which is good and working closely with BNG colleagues. GCN is informing Net Gain and challenges over last 3 years re: resourcing. If organisations don't have resourcing then project would fail – this is why NE stepped in.

LB asked if producing GCN conservation strategy, pond provision seems key aspect. From Wildlife Trust view if looking at SY, is putting in ponds main point or collective effort to promote conservation at landscape scale?

Craig replied all about ponds. Providing map for all to focus on, can help evidencing population and climate change, working through habitat bodies inc. LAs, delivering suitable habitats through creation or restoration. Looking at map at landscape scale, creating for SY but not done yet. NatureSpace has spoken to LAs but not able to roll out as quickly as desired. Map does not exist yet but when created would provide risk zone map based on survey/licensing data, provide maps for where habitat goes, then publish and work to data.

MM commented had some initial presentations with NatureSpace and NE, at time DMBC favoured partnership with NatureSpace as inc. some staff resource input. Situation has changed re: NE as license holder. Did hear some contracts issued for pond creation in Doncaster area, NatureSpace had to step back as did not have economies of scale. Focussing on Net Gain in interim. Need awareness of what should be promoting and what's on offer for developers.

Craig replied he is aware of those conversations and believes DLL better than traditional approach. NatureSpace is good scheme, not going to compete but wants to see DLL in SY. 50-60 ponds in Essex, 100+ in Cheshire – should be favourable to happen here.

CW added Craig gave presentation in February as did NatureSpace, SCC decided DLL way to go but unsure which model. Best to adopt initial meetings on but hit brick wall with Covid-19. Perhaps now time to decide which model for SY?

Craig replied is possible for LA to take forward re: tariff they are charging and resource thereof. Still happy to stand in as interim for however long required. NE model allows flexibility here.

PT was not aware of any progress with this at BMBC, would welcome wider SY approach.

KB added NatureSpace previously seen as chosen option for RMBC but unsure since then, Net Gain in interim. Agreed SY approach seems preferable.

LB summarised seems to be interest from all 4 LAs to explore this, Craig replied happy to meet with 4 LAs to take forward.

LB added GCN in round, monitoring for SY would be real positive – population, impact of development and mitigation. Monitoring should show success and hopefully increase in population. Added to contact SRWT if anything we can do towards this.

Actions:

LB/IC to share 4 x LA rep email addresses with Craig Thomas to fix up.

4. SY approach to BNG

GB recapped is SY wide T&F group to develop a consistent approach to BNG across SY. Brief for HoP early September/October, consisting of 3 elements: 1) High level policy principles 2) Joint

SYLNP Chair: Liz Ballard. Tel: 0114 263 4335, Email: l.ballard@wildsheffield.com

Interim SYLNP Secretariat: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, email: i.cracknell@wildsheffield.com

mapping exercise 3) Joint metric, i.e. Defra 2.0 in principle, agreed together and tailored to meet needs in SY. Work programme to bring back to HoP, not completely comprehensive, may be more work on legal agreements etc. Links to GCN and SEP, working together at SY level, tree planting target, evidence base for good decision making etc.

LB added NRN mapping. CW offered to help progress through T&F group. LB raised Nature North – 2019 NLHF region to set up environmental sector leaders and organisations in north to work collaboratively with 11 LEPs. Conference in Rotherham held autumn 2019, involves RSPB, TWT, WT, NE, EA, National Parks etc. Strategic level like LNP to have more dialogue with mayors at city region level and LEPs. Developing national manifesto for north, nature-based solutions in economic plans as well as social etc. Contact LB for more info

KB asked re: Rotherham lead? LB replied as at SY level, LNP feeding in through TWT. No local government representation, output to local government. LNP will provide opportunity to input. Uncertain what will come out of it, if get hold of draft manifesto will share. IPPR drafting report – people increasingly asking how we can ensure environment covered at regional level policy.

Actions:

LB - to share Nature North manifesto when published

5. SCR and LA climate emergency action plans

LB incorporated comments from those interested in taking further by email, if anyone has any final comments looking for feedback whether worth sending on to more senior contacts or wrong time re: Covid-19 etc – could wait for a month or so?

MM updated DMBC trying to work out route to send report once finalised. Personal view is should go now, but could see if better in a month's time?

PT unsure if seen, not been escalated to senior manager, probably best to hold off? LB suggested to Trevor, keen to talk to Anthony Devonport. PT working with Paul leading on project, Covid-19 recovery times here have impacted.

LB will email all contacted re: taking forward on piece by piece basis by Council, if people not keen let's see how progresses.

CT noted opportunity to link to ambitions across SCR and green recovery considerations.

PT added work will definitely continue, still plan to plant 1m trees by 2022 but no updates over recent weeks.

KB also had no update for weeks. Asked prior to meeting, hoping to have more of an update in next week or so.

MM raised DMBC working on new environment strategy, positive development.

TW asked is there a time limit on contribution from Northern Forest? LB replied wanted mapping done this year.

GB detailed 4 LAs contribution to net zero climate target looks like on hold but commitment there. Do have full-time colleague working on this at SCR, can update at future meetings. LB asked how do they translate from policy to delivery? GB replied with in combined authority – working on energy strategy, progressing and been agreed, developing plan with LAs. Have to get policy and

SYLNP Chair: Liz Ballard. Tel: 0114 263 4335, Email: l.ballard@wildsheffield.com

Interim SYLNP Secretariat: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, email: i.cracknell@wildsheffield.com

strategy right, then rolled out to LAs. Working with universities on how to put policy into delivery.

LB note challenge seems to be getting targets embedded in policy. 1m trees in city region for example, will that move from policy into delivery? Can be a Catch 22 cycle.

MM exemplified in Doncaster various woodland creation etc into environment strategy for funding. How works can't say but important to flag environmental asks up. Agree with TW re: timeframe is important, value for money element of offer important, as stands agree with.

GB replied points re: economic recovery plan as SCR energy strategy will have commitment and targets for SCR, carbon budget is approach being taken, will be good to see how this had become more sustainable. As SEP develops will be looking for those commitments.

Actions:

IC to reshare climate emergency links from CT, DE and PT

7. Woodland felling in SY

LB detailed enquiries received by SRWT re: tree felling in bird nesting season, landscape changes re: licenses etc. Most of us involved in tree management/felling in some way. LB wanted to know whether others get calls, where to go and what to do, whether Forestry Commission dealing with illegal felling concerns?

1. Pristine woodland clear felled in July 2019, concerns re: several species there, bats etc. Semi-native woodland, why had to happen then – license issue. WT questioned but nothing proved to be illegal, but did pose questions as to why had to happen then.

2. Clear felling of another site over winter - what sanctions there would be for that kind of action?

CT replied have seen increase in reporting/activity. Happy to share data on this, in process of considering re: FC response, when doing felling whether against Wildlife & Countryside Act. Not covered in felling license, just tree species, restocking.

KB added report of trees being cut down at wildlife reserve. Police told local residents was nothing to do with them, despite a man up a tree on site with a chainsaw. Having discussions with SYP about concerns as very unsatisfactory.

CT replied whether criminal acts or H&S, some just civil matter re: permission. Happy to provide some stats, is route available for proof and prosecution.

LB replied would like to see data. Messaging could be shared locally by LAs etc covering different aspects.

KB will report back issues re: tree damage.

Actions:

CT to provide data on tree felling reports/activity

8. AOB/Future agenda items

DE noted Doncaster Local Plan – Statement of Common Ground requiring signature. LB to respond.

DA asked CT whether officers working from home as trying to contact with a colleague. CT confirmed this but added could be old email address as were changed so will help to facilitate.

BT and PW had some conversation on HS2, will forward.

Future agenda items:

SCR Natural Capital in SY Project update
Great Crested Newt district licensing follow up
SYLNP Strategy Review
BNG update
Northern Forest
Tree felling in SY

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