

# South Yorkshire Local Nature Partnership

## **MINUTES: BOARD MEETING – Wednesday 4th November 2020**

**Board Members Present:** Liz Ballard (Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust) – Chair, Jenny Barlow (Environment Agency), Melissa Massarella (Doncaster MBC), Crispin Thorn (Forestry Commission), Brian Tinnion (independent), Paula Tweed (Barnsley MBC), Tom Wild (The University of Sheffield)

**Also present:** Claire Argent (Natural England), Garreth Bruff (Sheffield MCA), Sam Cooper (Forestry Commission), Ian Cracknell (Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust), Anthony Downing (Environment Agency), Andy Godfrey (Rotherham MBC), Lisa Kerslake (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust), Chris Wilson (SCC)

**Apologies:** David Edwards (Doncaster MBC), Daniel Hartley (Sheffield City Council), Alison Holt (SHU)

### **2. Minutes of last meeting, actions and matters arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

LB asked GB re: previous action for LH re: conversation with themes in SCR plan re: nature based solutions. How are nature based climate solutions to be delivered in the plan, where are conversations happening? Is there an environment board?

GB – yes, Transport and Environment Board - relatively new board following restructure, needs discussion on how LNP fits in. To be chaired by LA leader, but unsure who.

TW highlighted potential gap in plan and SCR consultation response follow up where formal representation needs to happen.

GB – There is a mechanism to do through Transport & Environment Board. MCA is organisation for 4 LAs, are represented – need to make formal link to board. If SEP formalised by New Year will be a good timeline.

GB to take as action to follow up.

LB asked CA who would be best BNG contact? Kate Wheeler was confirmed as the current contact.

LB asked PT re: SY Forest data? PT needs further update from TM. TW added understands is still possibility to access data, just how to untangle ownership issues. PT to share update with IC.

GB re restructure, Transport & Environment Board now has remit, will cover commitments on net zero and energy strategy, woodland creation etc from MCA – themed on biodiversity and natural environment, green recovery from Covid-19 - £2m funding ask from govt informing their spending review.

LB asked if any updates re: HS2? LK, PT, MM & CW have no update. BT has not heard anything from PW. Birmingham to Leeds on hold, Birmingham to Mancs is focus, Northern Powerhouse. LB added is now part of proposed 'Transport In The North' integrated rail plan.

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LB updated re: GCN DLL, SRWT/Wildscapes working with NE, funding for more ponds to be installed in SY, raised opportunity for additional pond sites. Need to be signed up to NE method.

AG confirmed RMBC had a series of meetings on this and decided NE option not viable, also has closing date of 20 March. Nature Space option was voted for and would need to start whole process again through any change to this.

MM asked how DMBC can get involved. LB replied need to identify sites.

LK said has been offered sites in YWT area.

LB replied we will ask Wildscapes to speak to LAs and YWT.

PT has report in system re: sign up to NE scheme – won't reach cabinet until January. LB replied thinks end March.

LK – difference between LA signing up for DLL and then what happens to money coming in for ponds – not necessarily linked. LB clarified is for NE front-loading of ponds.

CW asked to be put down as SCC contact for pond creation.

### **Actions:**

**GB** - to report back on mechanism for LNP input and response to Environment Board/SCR Renewal Action plan

**PT** – to send IC update from TM re: SY Forest data

**LB/IC** - ask Wildscapes to follow up on GCN DLL with LAs and YWT

### **3. Source to Sea update – Jenny Barlow (EA)**

Jenny was unable to display her presentation due to technical issues so agreed to talk through the project and share the slides with a briefing note following the meeting. EA developing realisation cannot keep building walls for flood defences, need broader toolkit for resilience against extreme weather. Role nature at landscape scale can provide to existing defences for climate resilience, nature emergency, green recovery, carbon etc. Working with GB and SCR re: regional investment strategy, nature based solutions for SY infrastructure. Dan Jarvis has spoken in Parliament on this, Source to Sea got a positive response, lot of support across the board for this ambitious approach. Concept launched in February 2020, now have £40m ask on investment programme - River Don from Peak District to Humber Estuary. Timeline staggered re: scale, now to 2031. Programme recognises different approaches - £3.5m Sheffield, £4m Barnsley/N.Sheffield, £3m Lower Don.

Early days, whole range of nature based solutions inc. upland/lowland blanket bog, sustainable management, flow of water and nature in catchment. Needs input from all partners to shape/align for SY and scale up, existing opportunities currently in or planned. Approach to Upper and Lower Don different, e.g. peatland restoration upland to more engineered approach at Lower Don.

Next steps – SY CEOs signed up, tie up regional investment strategy with SCR, investment portfolio to bring together through catchment plan. Climate focus, tie up with regional policies, doing review of modelling, impact of 2-4° on Don, fluvial impact, what options and approach

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based on risk. Money allocated to Upper Don, feasibility forecast for Middle Don, Lower Don feasibility. Upper Don moving ahead quickly as has had more development time and catchment elements have only come on in recent months – need LNP input. Need business case, prove benefits and work at regional scale, grant in aid, staff time at EA etc.

LB asked when it would be known if you have funding?

JB replied because in 3 sections, each develops business cases so not a pot. Goes in programme for national government with all other schemes, gets provisional approval will then need business case to prove. Is biggest funding EA have had for this work and not done at this scale before. Will be developed at different times, will get initial allocation, each business case then developed. Delivered start of 2021, funding provided on programme how sits with £5.2bn nationally – each area. Some of not grant in aid, some partnership - is going to be part of in £40m pot

LB asked would it be helpful to have separate discussion with LNP, and if so when? JB replied yes and asap – how on regional level, priorities. Starting scoping docs for each element, more input will shape into what everybody needs. Scale up opportunity, more detail provided now to scope ambition the better.

TW: good to see nature based solutions included, should be multi-beneficial and connect to biodiversity. Hard flood defences are not nature based solutions. Also looking at how environment programme links, multiple benefits so include more into programme.

BT: trying to make link between HS2 and this, quite a lot that will run through flood zones in SY, big opportunities. Dearne Valley, flood areas that will help Don.

LB: this shows how we need overarching spatial view: HS2, Source to Sea, Woodland Creation – similar interventions. How do we look at in round? Hopefully spatial mapping will help.

GB: Mapping is important, example of where LNP can help with SCR and MCA. Much more strategic across SY, where impacts are across LA borders as move forward with catchment plan and conversation with JB will help get to this.

#### **Actions:**

**JB** – to share details and briefing note

**IC/JB/LB** – following receipt of details to set up meeting

#### **4. Approach to woodland felling – Sam Cooper and Crispin Thorn (EA)**

Unfortunately Sam experienced technical difficulties with his connection during the presentation, so it was agreed to carry over this item to the next meeting.

#### **Actions:**

**SC/CT** – to present item again at next LNP meeting

#### **5. SY Woodland Creation Proposals**

LB briefly recapped re: Woodland Creation discussion and work with appointed Woodland Creation Officer Matt North. LB displayed work structure which came from this, added funding

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coming through from Barnsley now too. Post to be hosted at SRWT, day-to-day management with LB and Trust, hoping that as Programme Manager Matt will be fairly independent. Different groups/areas of interest, WC Forum for SY – 3 or 4 meetings, workshop/discussion focussed approach. In discussion feeling was to shift group to help Matt deliver on ground, business plan, targets etc to support him – LB called this Programme Management Group. In addition is strategic group, esp. funders, SCR/MCA – office space/virtual sitting with team, and WT, their funding, bigger picture of Northern Forest, more outward-facing. Will be other forums – Nature North, other WTs work outside of SRWT/YWT. Sits with LNP, group will have oversight, will attend meetings, report in to LNP. Work of Programme Management will come in through Matt to LNP.

CT: FC should support both Programme Management and connect in with WT. Keep relatively light, nature based solutions, spotting links etc.

BT found some old SY Forest brochures 'Growing the SY Forest'. Opportunities for woodland creation – 38 sites identified and SY Forest Partnership Review. Recommend Maltby Colliery – one of best still needing restoration, owned by Hargreaves. LB recommended BT speaks directly with MN.

GB – MCA part funding, looks sensible as approach, light touch to enable Matt to work with his team, policy team, renewal action plan, transport team etc on each relevant initiative without creating too big a structure. GB still needs formal agreement on who will manage WC Officer – will pick up and get formalised.

### **Actions:**

**BT** – to speak directly with MN re: Maltby Colliery.

## **6. Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain in South Yorkshire;**

CW: got comments across to TW for Heads of Planning briefing note, commented on ITT evaluation – tender for mapping is live, mid-Nov.

LB: Nicky Rivers/Pete Tomlin at SRWT trying to marshal together LA data in background. LB and AH tasked for speakers on Net Gain from other areas, LB contacted Ann Selby CEO at Lancs WT but is leaving so not best placed to do – Krista Patrick at Manchester Combined Authority? Have emailed Env. Finance – did some good webinars for WT recently, would be good approach – awaiting response. LB asked all if have any other suggestions to please let her know. AH was to speak with Env Bank, no update on that yet.

MM and HM both awaiting update on dates for BNG.

## **7. AOB**

LB: discussions around tree health/disease, recent workshops – would be good for info sharing to be more strategic re: tree health.

CT spoke with Jim Smith – in his team flagged trying to work with colleagues on tree health event in New Year. Ash chalara etc – date to work in with Sheffield, 15<sup>th</sup> January maybe? To give advice, how to factor in resilience etc. Changed eligibility of woodland creation grant, previously focussed 30ha, then down to 10ha – now down to 5ha. Productivity requirement now dropped. Biodiversity – good for Matt North and others to get involved/input.

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TW: concerned about water quality – recently EA and various partners released data re: degradation of water quality, statement was that testing got better. Problems, not just degradation. Redmires had first ever algae bloom, may be related to tree felling in Derwent catchment. TW wrote to Dan Jarvis in personal capacity with concerns on this.

LB: amount of testing is sporadic, especially spatially and lacking detail – could be augmented with simple water quality testing. Diffuse pollution, modifying. Nature North are creating Great North Bog and Great North Rivers proposals – have picked up.

CT: Thoughts for future meetings on this issue, rivers and waterbodies – where are we in SY , how can we improve position? Where can trees and woodlands push forward and ensure strong regulatory action – identify pinch points and causes.

LB: Will try to find right person through AD/JB. Diffuse pollution is difficult, farm to farm, landowner to landowner discussion required on ground.

TW: Wrote a report for European Commission, could do presentation for SY? LB to look for agenda opportunity.

PT: AOB item from Trevor Mayne – marsh harriers have bred at Old Moor for first time!

**Actions:**

**TW** – to send EC water pollution report to IC

**Future agenda items:**

SCR Renewal Action Plan  
LNRS  
BNG update  
Mapping update  
Woodland creation – introduce Matt North  
Tree felling in SY  
Tree health issues  
HS2  
Water pollution

**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