MINUTES: SYLNP BOARD MEETING – Thursday 27th July 2023, 10am – 12pm

Virtual meeting on Zoom

**Board Members present:** Liz Ballard (Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust) – Chair, Helen Batt (EA), Anthony Downing (EA), Catherine Hammond (SHU), Laurie Heykoop (SYMCA), Melissa Massarella (Doncaster MBC), Erika Phoenix (DCRT), Neil Pike (NE), Brian Tinnion (independent), Paula Tweed (Barnsley MBC), Crispin Thorn (FC)

**Also present:** Ian Cracknell (SRWT) – Secretariat, Sarah Bird (PDNPA), Ruth Brearley (NE), Rowan Longhurst (SCC), Jackie Lowe (EA), Helen Markland (DMBC), Matthew North (SRWT), Claire Wilson (BMBC).

**Apologies:** Hazel Earnshaw (YW), Alison Holt (Natural Capital Solutions), Angus Hunter (SCC), Michael Johnson (SCC), Andy Lee (RMBC), Pete Tomlin (SRWT), Tom Wild (University of Sheffield), Mike Winstanley (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust)

(N.B. first names are used in the minutes to differentiate attendees with matching initials)

WEBSITES TO ADD  
<https://www.greenfinanceinstitute.co.uk/gfihive/toolkit/developing-a-business-case-and-financial-model/wildlife-trusts-habitat-banking-investment-model/>  
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-biodiversity-credit-prices

https://sheffnews.com/news/funding-to-explore-bringing-back-the-eurasian-beaver

https://doncatchment.wordpress.com/2023/07/25/don-catchment-rivers-trust-is-awarded-a-987000-grant-by-the-national-lottery-heritage-fund-and-match-funders-to-implement-the-all-hands-on-the-don-project/

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>  
https://www.naturenorth.org.uk/business-case/healthy-northern-rivers/

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

Land banking report from RB – IC to circulate following meeting

Paula T raised need to differentiate attendees with same initials, IC will update previous mins

HB will have new capacity in new secondment role, leading on [Healthy Northern Rivers](https://www.naturenorth.org.uk/business-case/healthy-northern-rivers/) (urban area) as part of Nature North.

MN noted overlap between SY and PDNPA, so have agreed how to work re: a single list of contacts.

RL noted willow tit conference postponed. SB asked if can share details when rescheduled.

**3. BNG**

HM - habitat banking city centre site. Looking at some other sites in borough to bring forward. Awaiting guidance from central government, expected 31st October. Heard will be info on Conservation Covenants, Defra group on this re: ways offsite BNG can be legally secured.

Paula T – went to consultation on Biodiversity SPD, seeking 10% minimum BNG to be adopted before becoming mandatory in November. Internal steering group re: habitat banking for as much BNG as possible, looking at council sites, models/options for setup of company, whether arms-length or not.

EP – trying to run BNG awareness session either online or in-person through catchment, interested in any input and info on sites etc from partners.

HM – haven’t had to tackle that side of BNG but is scope for, worth speaking to EA about how this could best operate. Would be good to see more schemes coming forward for river units. Looking at land we already own that we could deliver schemes on.

LB – recommend speaking to Roy Mosley at SRWT. Is challenging to bring forward river units.

SB – just starting to get to grips with BNG, ecologist leading on with her support, planning and policy, operating guidance for them on applying metrics. Looking at habitat banking, unsure of scope re: habitat needed and whether Peak District can provide or not. Starting discussions with Dearne catchment, would be interested in others’ learnings.

LB – wondering if broadly worked out how many units needed? Have you sold any yet?  
  
HM – could do that but not easy, grassland and scrub proving to be main areas, small areas of woodland. We have not attributed any units yet, have collected money via tariff but not allocated to site.

MN – training at officer level on UK Habs and relationship to BNG. Julie Riley, previously of SRWT and Wildscapes is MoRPh trained and led this. Re: Helen’s report, we supported trees and sorted development, EIA being sent off. New offer throughout SY – any trees or scrub, we can do the heavy lifting.

LB – needs to be river equivalent of BNG metric

HM – need to find units, urban rivers where opportunities are, keen to be involved, network and share learning on this.

AD – sharing knowledge on river units as we discover more, BNG on River Sheaf and Blackburn Brook. Awaiting further guidance and view to workshop on this, complications with ownership, delivery of infrastructure re: ownership of both banks.

LB – seems worth setting up a separate subgroup – HM, JL, HB, AD, EP, SRWT staff.

EP – happy for collaborative effort on this.

SB – Cheshire WT have been through process and sold units, looking at other sites in Peak District. Want someone at Cheshire WT to speak to, Derbyshire WT quite far down process.

LB – had NERF project looking at sites for BNG units, SRWT have had approaches for units but not ready yet re: risks. Just approached Finance Earth for forecasting through 30 year lifetime as risk re: price at appropriate level for BNG uplift, approved legal advisor for agreements on Conservation Covenants, S106 etc.

HM asked if LB could share costings from Finance Earth – LB replied first meeting happening today, but once underway happy to share info. CW interested in this too.

LB – Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust far ahead with this – some financial modelling. SRWT have purchased area of land in Peak District part of Sheffield, looking at baseline assessment but unsure of BNG units. Ultimately want to be NRN mapping for this, delivered by being strategic with BNG units as delivery mechanism.

**Actions:**

**LB** to share Finance Earth costings with HM and CW.

**4. NRN and LNRS**

LH summarised recent developments such as the MCA’s official appointment as lead on LNRS for SY. Currently trying to establish governance mechanism for nature recovery going forward, working with colleagues and LAs. Defra defined role for LPAs in LNRS – MCA is responsible authority, 4 LAs, PDNPA and Natural England are supporting authorities.

LH shared a presentation slide of their current proposed governance model, which incorporates input from the pilots and discussion with WY who have a model in place.

The proposed model showed the MCA Board as the formal forum on decision making, taking proposals to sign off and agree interaction timings, then steering group providing oversight and an advisory panel, officer and head of service group taking advice from advisory panel to generate diverse board discussion and perspectives – farming sector/NFU, local community, academics, Defra family (other than NE), youth voice, non-expert or nature-recovery engaged perspective – providing advice to steering group, then better of advisory group discussion, under four working groups: concept, evidence, engagement and delivery:

* concept – natural capital, ecosystem services, BNG, what outcomes do we want from LNRS, terminology, ‘wider environmental benefits’, should we be thinking about climate mitigation/resistance, materials, mapping, governance, how to revise in future years
* evidence – ecological expertise, natural capital mapping, SRWT work on NRNs, call for other evidence to bring together, GIS skills, interactive map or stakeholder use, public licensing, right platform, evidence and data challenges
* strategy – BNG, perspective of Friends of groups and community groups, other unrepresented voices, website, terminology and language
* delivery – BNG, SY natural capital mapping report, policy analysis, what public can do, funding. Defra have hinted this should be groundwork rather than a fully featured plan.

MM - advisory panel needs wider representation. Suggestion is that government will provide advice on this for each area, do any reps know what these will be for SY?

RB – still awaiting national info on this – further advice in spring 2024. Some info released sooner - wider environmental benefits likely under this timeline.

NS – could the Sheffield Green Spaces Forum chair be one of advisory group as working closely with Friends of groups etc.

LH - 241k fund, putting community before governance model, in place because some strategy requirements quite descriptive. Looking at review of SY data to identify what other data would be needed for interactive map and web page needed, licensing and granularity will be key issues.

LB – SYLNP referred to as partners in early info on LNRS, we flagged need re: LNP and LNRS, awaiting info on guidance, process – becoming timely to question what role of LNP will be in governance process and in parallel with LNRS resource – provided by SRWT but might now fall in to governance strategy.

CT – highlighted that the FC has some dedicated resource to support the LNRS process through a newly created team of Nature Recovery Advisors with Jim Smith covering Yorkshire. He noted the importance of the connection with LNP and a key issue identified in the LNRS pilots was the need to effectively engage with land managers and those with a wider interest in supporting nature recovery.

LB – landowner aspect, good to see NFU involved, nature friendly farming – we need to be involved and be ambition of how we bring others into strategy.

SB – is intention of structure to remain once LNRS completed? If not, would still see role for LNP going forward. Who in LNP are in group being proposed? If a lot of crossover, pause LNP and shift with some amends to advisory group and review?

MM – added could be seen as what LNP looks like, could change in future iterations of LNRS, delivery aspect, LNP role can change but need to avoid duplication to strengthen its function.

LB – we do not need to have an LNP – Peak District paused their LNP for a period of time. If feeling is advisory group with mirror LNP, seems should just be advisory group rather than LNP duplicating.

NS – also agreed re: analysis on overlap. LNP/governance structure gaps, what are they? LNP needs to be led by someone independent of local government, independent chair able to hold these bodies to account – checks and balances in LNRS scheme may not be enough.

LH - in agreement with all points, clearly lot of duplication with governance and LNP, way to do is advisory panel different to working groups, probably different people, conscious of limited resource/time. Paring down LNP for a time may be way of doing this.

LB – governance framework put together with LA framework but not shared more widely, consultation/comment – will be that point publicly but MCA comfortable, need LAs/supporting auths to be voluntary basis to start, with funding remuneration needs delivery plan, will be different needs. LNP not being consulted with on LNRS governance – seems at odds with all previous work on stakeholder opportunities, not LAs that have previously put work into shaping LNRS.

LH – not got that far yet. Organisations with official role get first, then look at wider groups later on.  
  
SB – timescales re: contacting LAs to set up, is lead contact for 6 LNRS! Once have idea who might be involved in groups, might be point to bring to LNP to look at this and what LNP role could be?  
  
LH – publicly all organisations on call would need someone involved in some way. Would be good to have non-formalised invitations and then announce publicly after board meeting agreeing structure.

CT – FC has a statutory duty to have ‘due regard’ and we remain ready to support RA’s in the development on LNRS’s.

LB – after MCA board meeting in early September might have more idea of groups and who on, if LNP meeting in October might be good time to look at this model, who’s on and whether a role for LNP into 2024? Potentially face-to-face meeting.

Actions:

**LB/IC** – plan focus of next meeting to be future options or governance of LNRS

**5. Regional Climate Forum**

CH provided a report by email which was circulated following the meeting.

**6. SY Woodland Partnership update**

MN talked through the annual reports and KPIs which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

A discussion took place re: Community Forest Partnerships.

**7. Partner updates**

EP – DCRT Don project, doing habitat improvements on Don with monitoring plan – can share info separately.

SB – been collating responses to PDNPA nature recovery plan consultation, final comments. Summary and suggested changes to go to steering group next week, with a final draft end August. SB is going on secondment, commissioned by Defra on special ELM test, backfilling post, will be in post September. Also working on delivery plan, will be bringing input into 6 LNRS, time and resource main constraints. Can share summary of ELM test, to keep on contact list.

NS – national advocacy work re: trees and woodlands as part of LNRS to keep on radar, good attendance from govt at Parliamentary session. Commissioned from Nature North to do natural capital session on urban planting.

RL – successful in Yorkshire beaver study funding, flood and feasibility work to kick off and progress nature based solutions and closer work up at Blacka Moor.

LB – lottery bid re: inclusion and diversity, EDI Support Officer recruitment, working across patch to give more co-creation opportunities.  
  
MN – tender to consultants for training put on hold, to be done with SYMCA and Sheffield Futures, input on needs analysis.

**Actions:**  
**EP** – to share info on DCRT Don project with IC to circulate with LNP

**8. AOB/future agenda items**

Future agenda items:

BNG

NRN & LNRS

SYWP report

Farmer/landowner mapping update

Partner updates

Date of next meeting:

TBC late Sept/early Oct 2023

Doodle Polls for next dates to be circulated by Lynn Campbell at SRWT.