



## Management Working Group (MWG) meeting

**19th November 2021 - 10.00 – 12.00 Microsoft Teams**

**Chair:** - Elizabeth Milne

**Attendees:**

Rufus Howard - University of Kent/ Greenfriars, Sustainability Consultants

Kate Rice- Southern Water

Pater Garrett - Medway Council

David Scully - Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Claire Tester - High Weald AONB

Hazel Sargent - Folkestone & Hythe Borough Council

Hannah Simmons - KCC (minutes)

Chris Drake - KNP Coordinator

Lawrence Ball - KWT (guest)

Maya Butler - NE

Paul Hadaway - KWT

**Apologies:**

Alan Johnson - RSPB

Sue Beale - Natural England

Alice Pinfold - Environment Agency

Kathi Bauer – SERT

Nick Sangster -KCC Countryside Management Partnerships

### Actions

Item	Action	Who	Deadline
LWS	Question on Gill Stream plants to be asked back at Trust. Claire can provide more on plants information if needed.	Lawrence Ball	ASAP
Marine Ecosystems	Add to the Dec SENP agenda how each region (where applicable) is incorporating the marine environment into their NRN/LNRS plans.	Chris Drake and Kate Rice	ASAP
Heath and Nature	Chris to send out event invite to KNP <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/launch-of-green-infrastructure-mapping-tool-for-local-plan-making-tickets-200988220177">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/launch-of-green-infrastructure-mapping-tool-for-local-plan-making-tickets-200988220177</a>	Chris Drake	ASAP
Chair Succession	The advert for KNP Chair is going out shortly, please can everyone share.	Liz; all	When advert is live

**1) Minutes of last meeting** – May – (but joint Board/MWG in September) Paper 1 – agreed accurate record. Actions complete or moved on.

**2) Local Wildlife Site (LWS) Criteria for Selection and Delineation – revisions v. 1.6 (Papers 2 & 3)**

Dr Lawrence Ball, Conservation GIS and Data Officer at KWT provided an overview of changes to this document. There are 2 main parts to revision.

Changes to the lower plants and fungi section. Paper 2 Pg 29, there has been a change to section lp2, specifically scoring required for site to be considered a LWS from 150 to 100, which experts considered sufficient to identify a site. The new system allows 1 nationally rare species to be enough to designate the site. Similarly, in LP4 for church/graveyards, 1 criterion has been added saying that at least 65 species of lichen, including a rarity that is only present in five or fewer places in Kent, for LWS designation (previously 80 species were required for designation). No major concerns about these changes were raised by the MWG.

David Scully asked if on LP3 related to gill streams, if lower order plants in that habitat in High Weald will be covered, and which plants will be considered unusual/rare?

**ACTION** Question on Gill Stream plants to be asked back at Trust. Claire can provide more on plants information if needed.

The second change was highlighted in Paper 3 Pg 43, making clear that final decision of designation sits with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) (decision has always sat with LPA but it was not clear who had responsibility, it was not KNP as it is not an official body). There's been some rewording in the introduction, but the main differences are in the end of the section outlining final decision. It now also outlines who the partnership involves, LPA, KNP, KWT. 157 states that KNP will oversee the system and make recommendations and advise LPAs, but 161 states that LPAs make the decision, and board members only come in if decision is contested. Removal of words such as "responsible" to do with KNP or MWG. All were happy with these changes.

Liz mentioned the practicalities of only having 2 formal meetings of MWG a year (previously 4 times a year) to review LWS designations. It was decided to review every quarter by email, and for any that required discussion to be left until the meetings (and those decisions deferred until then).

Changes to do with LWS: Currently KWT are reviewing LWS. Kent Wildlife Trust held a workshop to develop a shared understanding of LWS system for all staff. They brainstormed challenges and opportunities and ways to link with other Wildlife sites and link up the networks better. Lawrence is now looking into practicalities by ordering data, text mining citations, master spreadsheet, and logistical internal reordering. Any future big changes will be brought to the group.

What will happen Swanscombe LWS when SSSI is designated due to the overlap? LWS is lesser protection, so it is likely to take on the SSSI status.

KCC will be instructed to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), under the intention of delivering the LNRS under the umbrella of the Kent Nature Partnership. Work so far has included LWS mapping. Priority will include protective measures for habitats and species, plus measures for how nature recovery is delivered. LNRS presents an opportunity to better "protect" / place greater value on LWS, by improving connections, networks etc.

**3) Kent Biodiversity Strategy – prioritisation of actions on "marine ecosystems" (Paper 4)**

There is a Marine ecosystem chapter within the Kent Biodiversity strategy, but it has not moved forward due to the lack of KNP lead in marine matters. Whilst we have Marine Management Organisation (MMO) & IFCA, work on Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ'S) seems to have dropped off a bit since initial designations (from 2013). Neither KWT nor KCC has a marine officer now to coordinate (no KWT funding yet, but they intend to have one). The Marine chapter has good intentions but no one to take ownership of them. It is expected that LNRS will pick up the framework of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy (essentially the spacial framework that that the BOAs used to cover) and could supersede or replace the biodiversity strategy. This could be leave a gap for marine as the LNRS is primarily focused on terrestrial and freshwater environments. KNP need to think ahead and start finding out where the interested parties are and how to engage those that should have an interest.

Maya gave an update from Natural England (NE) Marine coast and freshwater team Kent and Sussex, with inf from Lucy Brooks (Marine Lead in Kent):

Before covering marine, Maya picked up on "LWS Botany Marsh" site at Swanscombe; NE are working with site owners, can't see why it would lose its LWS designation, SSSI should add to it not detract. It also has a scheduled ancient monument so that won't change.

- A lot of MCZ's don't have condition assessments due to lack of resources. New lead advisors have come into post, and these will focus on assessments. Currently using the underwater data from Kent & Essex IFCA, but this is quite site specific. Just had a successful bid for a site to get information for management.
- Fisheries Act: will enable MMO to have greater control of sites, NE and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) can now advise on sites over 12 nautical miles (was 6). Want to look at strategic solutions for the Medway next, there is lots already happening but want to look at the combination of effects of these.
- NRN: NE working predominantly in Sussex but 2 priority projects, Help the Kelp on Sussex coast (blue carbon capture) and Chichester harbour (Nutrient Neutrality & pollution). The LNRS pilot project in Cornwall looked at the marine environment and tried defining criteria for protect, prioritizing areas of marine NRN, as well as potential frameworks for a marine NRN stakeholder engagement. They are looking into how to measure success.
- Environment Bill: BNG includes NCIPs (infrastructure in the marine environment, such as wind farms).
- Highly Protected Marine Areas HPMAs: predominantly work happening at national level, but it is exciting to see the blue belt finally coming together.

Kate mentioned that Sussex applied for Championing Coastal Coordination funding (DEFRA/EA) and had been successful. It is a short time frame to spend the money in (by April) but Sussex is looking at how you can start to develop a strategy around delivering nature recovery networks in the marine and coastal environment. At the SENP meeting in Dec, it would be useful to have a discussion on how to incorporate marine across SE in LNRS, Nature Based Solutions (NBS) and linking up resources across the borders.

**ACTION** – Add to the Dec SENP agenda how each region (where applicable) is incorporating the marine environment into their NRN/LNRS plans.

Rufus talked about wanting to think about an integrated marine/coastal spatial planning framework as a fall out from the multiple pressures of sustainable development. Food security, carbon reduction, tourism, sewage, leisure & recreation, flooding, marine renewable energy, BNG and

conservation all need to be considered. Everyone is doing their own thing and has conflicting needs, but we need a long-term integrated plan involving everyone.

This used to be referred to as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and the advantages of having an officer in place was mentioned, but because it is multiple partners the officer funding needs to come from all the partners, not just conservation. Scotland already have good spatial plans like this where they have more detailed zoning and setting out of what and how they allocate these spaces for different uses. Wales have a new marine spatial plan but getting mixed messages to promote all the partners and are struggling with zoning. There are concerns that this mixed messaging may happen in England when we come to do a spatial plan.

Paul asked do we need "Plan Sea"? supporting an integrated plan but we need to make sure that it is all joined from the start from a climate and biodiversity joined up perspective, and nature climate solutions piece is fundamentally where we start from and build out. We need a shared resource to achieve this. Intertidal habitat is where we will get the biggest climate and biodiversity gains. Also, what have we done successfully on land that we should replicate at sea? Farming community on land uses clusters Paul said = fishing communities at sea, so we should look at getting fishing communities on board and interacting with KWT. Chris mentioned that MCZ started with this stakeholder approach, but it dissipated since designation of the MCZs.

Lawrence asked if marine LWS can be designated? Sussex have something similar, so is their potential scope in Kent for something similar? There are coastal LNR, but does this include the sea?

Paul felt KNP needs to focus on blue carbon. Henri at Sussex WLT is also looking at this. NBS marine for carbon sequencing – good potential but lack of science and knowledge to back up plans. We do need to educate members and public that when it comes to reducing carbon, there is more than trees.

Hazel came at this from a planning perspective. The South Marine Plan (published 2018) covers Folkestone & Hythe area and has been drawn together by the MMO for sustainable decision making. The South East Plan (covering the rest of Kent) has only just come into effect.

For the Folkestone & Hythe's local plan, they had to consult the MMO as the jurisdiction goes down to the lower watermark, which overlaps with the MMOs high watermark. The policies though are high level, sometimes it's difficult to get to grip with and other colleagues don't look at the plans because of this. One of these policies is the Integrate coastal zone policy which refers to anything that affects the harbour. It is important to note that what happens in the sea impacts the land in terms of pollution and other areas. The marine plan is so big that it is difficult to see how to use it with busy channel, and lots of designated sites. Also, MOD actions fall outside of marine plans, and this needs to be included in future.

National working group guidance – Rufus is part of an IEMA working group on Marine which is a national group is looking at some guidance on biodiversity net gain in the marine environment. They are saying there's very little guidance on it, so that's something they're working groups are looking at.

Input and actions captured – summary

- Discussion at a regional level, add to SENP agenda. How marine is being dealt with by the individual nature partnerships and how they might be building marine into the local strategies and potentially how we might build that into the South East Nature Recovery Network mapping work that we're working on collaboratively together

- Context setting - Wait to see outcomes of Championing Coastal Coordination projects for lessons and learnings, plus Cornwall pilot.
- Focus on carbon capture value of these areas to get councils to give resource and funding towards anything – Paul can update on what KWT doing.
- Possible KNP/SENP Marine workshop next year with all partners to look at past to help plan for the future. Timing to be considered around launch of LNRS if they do not include marine.

#### **4) Kent Biodiversity Strategy – prioritisation of actions on “health & nature” (Paper 5)**

*Overview of “Connecting People with the natural environment” section of KBS, relation to LNRS and where does “connection” and “health” sit strategically*

This subject will be dealt with by the KNP Board in December, but this is an opportunity for KNP to comment. Along with marine, health is not picked up in our core work at present, so we need to address how to integrate this. There is some great work happening through the Kent & Medway Green Social Prescribing Partnership now. The chapter in the Kent Biodiversity Strategy put forward both the connection with nature and the health benefits it provides. What will this agenda do for biodiversity as well as people? Strategically ensuring that future generations have access to nature. The paper provides some background on each objective in the biodiversity strategy and then put down what we felt there are the gaps.

Maya is giving a full talk on this subject on 10<sup>th</sup> Dec but gave a brief update. NE are looking at the health agenda in connection with the wider environment through two methods. One is the test and trial sites, of which there are 7 trial sites across the 5 NHS regions working on GSP between clinicians and volunteer groups. Looking at gaps and relations between economy and ethnicity.

The second method involved Maya’s previous role, looking right across the NHS regions for opportunities gaps and making sure that it is accessible and there are no barriers. This involves working with the Green Infrastructure Team to make sure that the right infrastructure is in the right places. People and Nature surveys since the pandemic have been run to see how people are connecting to nature, and it has highlighted that people are desperate for good quality green spaces.

NE are to launch a Beta mapping tool for England on green infrastructure. There is to be a soft launch before full launch ahead of summer, details of the launch on 7<sup>th</sup> Dec can be found here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/launch-of-green-infrastructure-mapping-tool-for-local-plan-making-tickets-200988220177>

**ACTION** Chris to send out event invite to KNP.

With the Kent & Medway Green Social Prescribing Partnership work that Isabel Shaw is leading on, there were some pilots around the country. Whilst she was unable to secure one for Kent, mapping has been taking place of GSP projects happening around the county. This fits in with the 2019 long term NHS plan for England that is committed to building the infrastructure for social prescribing in primary care.

THE GSP partnership is aware of the projects, but needs to figure out the extent of these and which aspects of that work to support. There is a connection between access to nature and the genuine health benefits, with lots of research out there, but it is figuring out what the barriers in the planning system that will determine how things are taken forward. A top-down from central government and bottom-up approach appear to be what is needed. Paper 5 is broad ranging, and the KNP needs to decide which aspects it wants to get behind – this will be decided at the Board.

Hazel said that the paper assumes people in urban areas lack green space, but in her experience, it is the also rural communities that have less access green space. She also bought up that they have a draft GI strategy, where health has come out strongly. People want a green space they can include in their everyday life. It's important to consider taking pressure off sensitive sites by providing other green sites when developing a site. The Strategy has highlighted areas suffering from or about to come under pressure from housing or transport corridors.

Claire asked about having a health advisor on the group. We have Maya and Isabel Shaw, but do we need someone who is consistently on this though rather than part time. At the very least KNP needs a fixed pint of contact, this could be Isabel.

Rufus mentioned that he had been working on a program for health next year with the Institute of Environmental Management Assessments (IEMA) and they are hoping to publish next year. This document is going to PINS for planning officers with respect to health for when they receive a scoping request and require some guidance. It has a big focus on health in tandem with BNG. Rufus will share links as they come round.

David mentioned that in the Tunbridge Wells Management plan, they have a landscape and ecological management plan for green space and net gain areas with development. Within that it is encouraged to go on education and volunteer days in terms of landscapes and habitats. Maybe this could be something to develop through the health agenda.

## **5) Update on KNP Chair succession**

**ACTION** when the advert goes out shortly, please can everyone share.

Caroline is leaving in January after 10 years and will be a difficult act to follow. We are looking for someone who will bring a broad perspective and enthusiasm for the role. If there is a gap, the interim chair role will be filled by Susan Carey.

For 2022, the Sequence of Board, MWG and joint meetings is proposed to be 2 MWG next year ahead of board meetings, plus a Board and MWG joint meeting. We may have special meetings if needs and workshops possibly. It may be worth rereading the refreshed terms of reference for the MWG to ensure we bring the right perspectives next year.

## **6) KNP updates**

- LNRS – in the task and finish group meeting, the initial mapping is being worked on further by KWT. Work in this group is being paused now until the government requirements come out, but we are in a good position to hit the ground running when they do come out. We are unsure when the instructions will come out, but we are working towards 1<sup>st</sup> April (but there are lots of gaps that DEFRA need to fill before then, the DEFRA survey had a lot of comments that they need to work through in the next 4 months to hit that date).
- BNG – the KNP viability study has been commissioned for 20% net gain. It is being overseen by a steering group, with inputs from across the county. The initial findings should be in by January 2022, and the assumptions will be taken to Kent developers' group in Jan too. The report should follow Feb/Mar. One change to note is that the work will go from working with 4 authorities with the hardest goals to achieve, to just having different scenarios for each authority to use and play with. With this if 20% overall not achievable, it will be determined where can it be achieved in certain aspects. Swale have put in a 20% target, so have Maidstone testing the waters.

- State of Nature in Kent – the report from KWT will be out at Christmas. A reporting mechanism for the Biodiversity Strategy and to inform LNRS. It will be presented well on the new KNP web site in the new year.
- Environment Act 2021 – summary sent out by email.
- SENP net gain meeting held, marine discussion from today will be useful in next meeting.
- Caroline’s feedback on COP26 – Caroline blogs have been sent out via email.
- KNP website redesign – launch by January.

## **7) AOB**

Chris to circulate dates for 2022 KNP meetings in December.