



**(Shortened) Management Working Group meeting.
13th March 2023 MINUTES**

MWG members attending.

Liz Milne, Kent County Council (Chair)
 Chris Drake, KNP Coordinator/KCC minutes
 Hannah Simmons, KCC, Ecological Advice Service (Natural Environment & Team)
 Max Tant, KCC, Flood & Water Management
 David Scully, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
 Isabel Shaw, KCC Country Parks and Countyside Partnerships
 Andrea Griffiths, Medway Valley Countyside Partnership

Sarah Brotherton, High Weald AONB
 Cally Fiddimore, Kent High Weald Partnership
 Kate Rice, Southern Water
 Rory Harding, KWT
 Sophie Stiles, Ashford Borough Council
 Karen Faux, Natural England

Apologies

Lawrence Ball, KWT
 Tony Witts, KMBRC
 Stephanie Bramley, Dover District Council
 Peter Garrett, Medway Council
 Ben Lord, EA

Item	Action	By Whom	Deadline
2	All MWG members invited to comment on Liz's draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy structure and engagement documents.	All MWG (circulated on 13th March)	By Monday 20th March.

1) Summary of Biodiversity Net Gain progress, Liz Milne (see slides)

Liz noted that with the Defra local authority money for BNG, the districts had contributed to funding the BNG Officer post for the county. This KCC position has been taken up by Nicky Britton-Williams on part time (3 days p/w) secondment from KWT. She is starting the role this week.

The remainder of the Defra money will go into the establishment of a BNG offsite register. Those with land or credits to sell, will be added. The idea of a developer's interface has also been discussed, which would allow developers to publicise their BNG credit needs.

Defra have also just announced that £25K per authority for 2022/23, however, this very late, retrospective announcement of grant, is proving problematic: -

- 19% of authorities will not be able to evidence any spend.
- 71% will not be able to evidence any more than 50% of the grant.
- Only 14% will be able to provide evidence for 100% of the grant.

This is the result of a quick survey carried out by the Association of Local Government Ecologists, Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport and London Environment Directors' Network.

A joint letter from the Chairs of these groups has just been sent asking for permission for the grant to be carried over to 2023/24.

The government has recently published its response to last years public consultation on BNG.

The main points are contained in Liz's presentation attached with these minutes, but Mandatory BNG will definitely start November 2023, although small sites will be delayed until April 2024 and NSIPs 2025.

In addition it is possible to stack other benefits on top of BNG as long as there is value added and separate guidance on this from Defra is now also available.

Statutory credits will be sold by Natural England and indicative figures for these will be published within 6 months.

Planning and enforcement will be the role of LPA's, but guidance and training is still in the pipeline.

2) Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, draft structure and engagement, Liz Milne (see same slides, but the two draft documents circulated separately)

Liz outlined the approach being taken. The Kent & Medway LNRS will be developed outside the KNP official framework (with KCC as the responsible authority for LNRS) but will rely heavily on the already established partnership and relationships developed over the years, hence using the MWG as an initial sounding board and then the Board will make comment on the amended documents from Liz, the first drafts of which were looked at in this meeting.

This is still in the absence of secondary legislation & regulations, but Liz started by providing a broader commentary on LNRS developments.

The national Responsible Authority Network had it first meeting recently and Responsible Authority training is also going ahead. Natural England have LNRS senior advisors supporting each county and Karen Rigby Faux, the Kent officer, was at MWG. She is also part of the cross-border group with Sussex and Surrey.

Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre have been commissioned to do a species pilot for LNRS, looking at how species can be used as well as habitats for monitoring purposes.

There is also an exercise underway looking at how the Kent Habitat Survey data (2012) might be translated into UK Habitats Data and more readily be used for LNRS. In addition the question is can the 2012 data be updated in part with modern methods such as satellite monitoring.

Liz noted that the Kent & Medway LNRS will have its own independent website during its development.

In terms of who does the work, Liz will be project manager from KCC , with Chris leading partner/stakeholder engagement. KCC hopes to commission partners and consultants to do different aspects of the LNRS. Also looking to recruit a graduate placement to work in the LNRS team.

The next two months will all be about project planning, then later in May/June there may some work around a launch.

In terms of central government support, burdens funding is coming through, the secretary of state should make the appointment of KCC as the Responsible Authority and the national data offer will be published. There will be no public announcement until after the May elections.

Karen added that the guidance (secondary legislation & regulations) will be published soon, as roll out of LNRS is officially from April.

Kate Rice said that for Sussex they have two Responsible Authorities, so they have mainly be focusing on governance to date.

Liz said that at some point in the future the Kent & Medway LNRS might end up being “owned” by KNP.

Attention turned to the 2 LNRS documents circulated ahead of the meeting, covering the draft structure and engagement for Kent & Medway LNRS. The proposals are as follows: -

The Kent & Medway LNRS Board will provide the political and strategic oversight/scrutiny and have a similar make up to the KNP executive level Board and will have a particular role to play resolving any areas of tension.

The Kent & Medway LNRS Delivery Group will sit under this, guiding and advising the Responsible Authority (KCC) and be based on sector representation, but there will also need to be various sub groups sitting under this, for aspects such as stakeholder engagement, data etc.

David Scully asked how can we ensure all have been spoken to, so in the case of local authorities, if all can't be represented, then effective dissemination of information will be key.

It was agreed that a frequently updated website will be part of the solution, the other point recognised was that integration of KNP input into LNRS was key, rather than duplicating what KNP is doing.

Sophie Stiles said she was happy with local authorities being represented on the Delivery Group, but that at some point an expectation of time/involvement would be useful, so the right person can be assigned, and time allocated. Liz agreed with this point.

The importance of the LNRS being built into planning at the local level was recognised.

Although the MWG broadly welcomed the two documents, it was recognised that they had only a few hours to look at them before the meeting and other MWG members were not present.

ACTION: All MWG members are now invited to comment on Liz's attached draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy structure and engagement, proving comment by Monday 20th March.

Any amendments can then be made before the documents go to the KNP Board ahead of their meeting on 30 March.

3) Annual joint meeting between the KNP Board and Management Working Group: - 18 May 2023. Castle Farm, Darent Valley

Chris provided an overview of this face-to-face meeting which he is planning with hosts KWT and KD AONB, additional presenters include SERT, the Quadrangle and Oxbury Agricultural

Bank. The visit will include presentations, a field trip to meadow restoration and a facilitated session in the afternoon.

Chris said that for the latter, he and Matthew Balfour are working with Viny from KWT Consultancy, and it will look both at the legislative framework including ELM and Blended finance and Nature based solutions, opening up a discussion on how to make this work on the ground.

Chris recognised that some MWG members had accepted the invite but urged others to do so.

4) AOB

None. The above joint meeting will be the next MWG, unless any LWS updates are received from KWT which the MWG need to look at in the meantime or this might come ahead of the next standalone MWG on 12 October.