

ADEPT Natural Capital and Heritage Working Group

Meeting

23rd May 2022, 10.00am-12.00pm

AGENDA

1. Introductions, apologies and actions from last meeting

Attending:

Sylvie Allan

Matthew Brown (guest)

Quinton Carroll

Peter Chamberlain

Hugh Clear Hill

David Dale

Tim De-Keyzer

Bruce Howard (guest)

Allison Jean

Chris Jones

Adam Lathbury

Elizabeth Milne

Rebecca Moberly

Peter Moore

Jeremy Pickles

Liz Small

Adam Stewart

David Sutherland

Ben Wallace

Apologies:

Neil Coish

Dave Lyon

Simon Bowers

Hannah Girvan

Joe Jenkinson

Paul Barton

Actions from last meeting (outstanding actions to be followed up by Liz M):

Action	Progress
Liz to invite all to present at future meetings.	Ongoing
Liz to circulate details of Defra workshop on climate in protected landscapes on Tuesday 29th March. Anyone able to attend to let Liz Small know.	Done
Adam to advise contact for NRN presentation and green finance team.	?
Adam to advise on NE contact(s) for group.	?
Adam to take message back to Defra that more clarification on funding for BNG/ LNRS	Done

would be appreciated as recent grants have given some concerns over whether burdens funding will be sufficient.	
David D to discuss with Environment Board potential to link up with public health agenda.	Done – outcome?
David D to look at potential members of the group from West Midlands and North East	?
David D and Quinton to approach Caroline George about acting as London rep for group.	?
David D to discuss SharePoint for groups to ADEPT.	Done – outcome?
All to send comments on ADEPT response to BNG consultation to David Dale by end of week.	Done
Hugh to share links of Environment Bank presentation.	Done
David S to send concerns to Adam for Adam to share with BNG team.	Done

2. Natural capital assessment and place making – presentation from Bruce Howard, Director, Ecosystems Knowledge Network

Are natural capital assessment tools legally defensible? How robust are they?

Are assessments understood by citizens – how do we interpret natural capital in a way the public can understand?

Designing assessment to address specific problems.

Use natural capital to present a more positive agenda – the opportunities from restoring nature
Natural capital agenda can be there to meet specific needs and used to present information relating to this.

Once we understand natural capital of an area, move on to conversation about what revenue this may generate – green finance from carbon, flood management, nutrients. Move on from economic value of resource and instead discuss the investment opportunity.

Ref to tool assessor on <http://ecosystemsknowledge.net> and NE handbook.

Discussion:

- Many national parks have embraced natural capital and green finance agenda.
- Difficulty of AONB features fitting into natural capital assessment, which may explain hesitation of picking this agenda up.
- Agenda needs to resonant with citizens.
- Natural capital will not be integral to LNRS but it can form part of the approach where this data is held locally. Bucks pilot used the NC data they already had.
- OxCam Arc natural capital assessment work noted.
- Bucks natural capital work was really useful in LNRS process.
- How does natural capital approach inform BNG and other work at the local level.
- Could natural capital approach help assessment of available land, given the limited land supply, enabling what land is allocated to what?
- EA tools and looking at how they can apply natural capital to their own schemes.

3. Heritage priorities for group – Quinton Carroll

1. Policy and legislation:

- levelling up Bill
- Connection between natural, buried and built historic environment

- Get most out of ELMS, BNG and LNRS.
 - Heritage protection reform.
2. Best practice:
 - Climate change
 - 21st Century archaeology
 - Cultural capital
 - Partnerships across environment sector
 3. Support and training:
 - Training sessions
 - Recruitment problems
 - Supporting officers in post
 - Local authority reform
 4. Local government advocacy:
 - Champion role
 - Engage with LGA
 - Increase presence with ADEPT
 - Be voice and have seat

Key thing is joining up work and ensuring historic environment is considered – avoiding competing agendas and conflict.

Noted that ALGAO Countryside Committee has and is working with the Forestry Commission to deliver training to members and other practitioners on the value, importance and contribution of the historic environment for woodland creation and management.

Landscape character is the tool to support these joining up of agendas. Use a tool called “areas of multiple environmental sensitivity” which picks up all features.

Role of levelling up reform – will be opportunity for cross working.

Working to function, which enables cross agenda working – looking at environment as a whole.

4. Advice on how to support LAs with environment land challenges – discussion with Matthew Brown, Forest Creation Partners (20 mins)

Data driven products to help land management decisions – will be broader than woodland/trees; to be environmental solutions. For instance a tool that helps identify opportunities for woodland creation opportunities. Looking also at systems to support BNG.

What are top challenges and needs for local authorities?

- How does this link in with LNRS – this is the lens through which we should be looking at this. Is there a conflict or duplication – and is some of this work needed as LAs will be doing it already through LNRS and arguably hold better data.
- Development of new land use data portal by cabinet office; and Food, Farming and Countryside Commission’s land use frameworks pilots – links to these projects?
- Issue with the data – at local level we hold very detailed data and one of issues is we have not found a system that allows it to be included in a national level system. How well with FCP systems work without this level of detail? Limitations of top-down data sets.

- Challenge – is the amount of work going on around this area and trying to keep up with new developments. Confusion and risk of duplication across many of these initiatives. Data gaps and data analysis issues.
- Suffolk have done some woodland opportunity mapping.
- There are also some really interesting things being done with Artificial Intelligence (AI) mapping habitats and historic environment features like ridge and furrow and historic orchards. Covering national level with less resources in a short time frame.
- Role of LBRC, HER, LNP and Wildlife Trusts.

Action: Matthew to circulate further information and to return to the group with prototypes as they are developed.

5. Environmental targets consultation: comments on terrestrial and marine biodiversity targets and woodland cover targets – David Dale

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-environment-policy/consultation-on-environmental-targets/>

- David has provided input for woodland targets.
- Plymouth for marine targets.
- Natural environment targets comments outstanding (all)

Action: Comments to David Dale by 17th June, for delivery of ADEPT response by 27th June deadline.

6. Environmental Act updates (25 mins)

Update from Rebecca Moberly re PAS BNG project

- Feedback and reports from BNG consultation events now available on PAS project web pages.
- Main areas of concern/areas for attention:
 - Resources, capacity and expertise
 - Delivering strategic local ambitions
 - Managing transition period
 - Flexibility for local approaches
 - Monitoring and enforcement
 - Making decisions and securing BNG
- Focusing on developing web-based resources.
- Seminar on conservation covenants on 7th and 9th June.
- Defining role of local authority in BNG – journey and involvement.

• Noted from Matthew Brown: several organisations we're working with have similar concerns i.e. that land will be disposed of that could be very valuable for e.g. BNG, net zero. One thing we're trying to code up is a land mapping/records system that could be used across an organisation (inc. by the teams planning disposals) that would allow land to be designated for future natural capital use (like an alert not to automatically dispose of it). Might that be useful?

- Bucks – SPD for BNG in July.

Update from Adam Stewart on LNRS and other Env Act items not covered elsewhere on agenda)

- Responsible authorities provisionally appointed.
- Seed funding provided – cannot confirm level of full funding. Pilots had a full-time position funded.

- LNRS still expected to commence this year but secondary legislation/stat guidance not likely to be before summer recess; there will be further statutory guidance on links between LNRS and local planning.
- LNRS planning engagement events before summer.
- Timing unknown regarding government's response to BNG consultation.

7. AOB and agenda items for next meeting 18th July

AOB - Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund noted – details at <https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/woodlandfund>

Next meeting:

- Broad BNG agenda item (including KCC's 20% BNG viability assessment)
- LNRS progress by group members
- Agenda setting for remainder of year and prioritisation of presentations

Future presentations:

- Update from EA on their natural capital work – Sylvie Allan and Allison Jean
- NE's All England Strategic Mapping Tool and how this links with LNRS.
- Green finance and funding mechanisms session – with presentation from Defra
- GI Standards from NE – to then inform where and how we engage within this priority.
- Nature Recovery Network from NE/Defra.
- "Areas of multiple environmental sensitivity" – Adam Lathbury