

# ADEPT Natural Capital and Heritage Working Group

## Meeting

13<sup>th</sup> October 2022, 2-4pm

## MINUTES

### 1. Attending and apologies

#### Attending:

Elizabeth Milne, Kent (Chair)  
Allison Jean, Environment Agency  
Don Baker, West Sussex  
Leanne Joyce, Defra.gov.uk  
Timothy Johns, North Yorkshire  
Hugh ClearHill, North Yorkshire  
David Sutherland, Buckinghamshire  
Heather Stokes, Nottinghamshire  
Sylvie Allan, Environment Agency  
Adam Lathbury, Derbyshire  
Natasha Markham, North Yorkshire  
Paul Simpson, Defra  
Tim Andrews, Defra  
Lynn Trigwell, Wiltshire  
Joe Jenkinson, Barnsley  
Lauren Bradley, Defra  
Adam Stewart, Defra  
Hannah Girvan, Cumbria.gov.uk  
Mark Minkley, Bath and North East Somerset

#### Apologies:

Mike Oxford, Plymouth  
Peter Chamberlain, Devon  
Quinton Carroll, Cambridgeshire  
Liz Small, North Yorkshire  
Peter Moore, Reading

### 2. Hedgerow Regulations - Lauren Bradley, Agricultural Regulatory Reform Co-ordination, Defra

See presentation circulated.

#### Comments from the group:

- How much awareness of hedgerows regs are there?
- Concerns over lack of capacity and skills to deliver the requirements of the regulation, in particular the enforcement elements.
- Will there be burdens funding for new responsibilities?
- Inconsistent approach to regulations and enforcement. Resourcing is massive issue.

- Not just LPA that could assume regulatory and enforcement role.
- Lack of resources should not be a reason to not have protection – should instead be opportunity to strengthen protection by securing better capacity through burdens funding.
- Value and importance of hedgerows noted.
- Some will have skills in house but likely most will have issue with capacity, even if they do have the skills.
- Example of using developer money to improve and increase hedgerows.
- Offer made to circulate survey/questions to ADEPT and ALGE members.

**Action: Liz to send Lauren copy of ALGE/ADEPT report for Defra on BNG skills and capacity report.**  
**Action: Defra to send Liz survey for circulation to ADEPT and ALGE.**

### **3. Environment Act Biodiversity Duty - Paul Simpson, Senior Policy Advisor, National Biodiversity Division, Defra**

See presentation circulated.

Comments from the group:

- Templates would be helpful for reporting. Will enable consistency across LPAs.
- What is a minimum standard for reporting? Would be helpful to understand this.
- Who does this reporting apply to – which public authorities? As defined by NERC Act, including statutory undertakers e.g. utility companies.
- Template useful to those without ecological expertise – should be designed with this in mind.
- What level is reporting expected from local government? At county (LNRS) level or individual LPAs? To avoid multiple reports and repetition. Noted that this is undecided.
- Resourcing of burdens funding on this. Is it sufficient to cover BNG, LNRS and reporting requirements?
- LNRS will provide steer on actions that should be taken.
- Group suggested that it should not just focus on LNRS – also what else can authority do through its wide ranging services to enable/assist nature recovery. This should be used as a driver/mechanism to enable change in local government action for nature recovery.
- What does enhanced duty mean if you are a public landowner?
- Noted that the group were happy to assist with reviewing, refining and testing templates and guidance. Agreed that Paul will share the draft templates and guidance to get feedback.

### **4. Environment Act**

LNRS update from Defra:

- Still pressing ahead as were before – but new ministers need to be brought up to speed with the developing work.
- Regulations over coming months and getting RAs formally appointed as soon as they can after that. Laid before parliament and then forty days from then, RAs can be appointed. NE advisors have been appointed – RAs should have had contact from them. No regret actions noted for LNRS.
- Burdens funding for LNRS has considered the funding required by the pilots and been designed accordingly; resourcing still in place as far as they are concerned.
- Hope that LNRS will be sufficiently advanced by Nov 23 to influence BNG but appreciate they will not be fully in place.
- It was noted to Defra that the timing of burdens funding is important – would allow things to take place in advance in terms of resourcing up and address potential delay that will occur in getting work started because of needing to build capacity to do work.

BNG update from Defra:

- Similar to story for BNG in terms of timing of regulations, burden funding etc.

Update from PAS project

- Meg Kidd has joined PAS project on a 6-month graduate placement through the LGA's graduate development scheme to help with the project. Meg will be compiling case studies on local authorities delivering biodiversity net gain and nature recovery, so they're keen to hear of any examples that might make a good case study.
- Have now held two practitioner networks, with second one hosting a Q&A session with Defra and NE.
- Have an autumn event series coming up, kicking off with an overview event next Thurs 20th and then an event for members on 1st November. More details here: [Biodiversity Net Gain and Nature Recovery Autumn 2022 events | Local Government Association](#). The BNG essentials and policy/strategy sessions are sold out, but they will be recording them and sharing on the PAS website. Plus they may run them again in due course given how popular they've been. It's worth signing up to the waiting list, as people drop out nearer the time.

## 5. AOB and items for next meeting

EA noted that they will be publishing a signposting tool for natural capital shortly – link to be shared once it goes live.

Environment Act conference [The Environment Act 2021 one year on – the role of local authorities \(ukela.org\)](#)

Next meeting 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022; agenda items (to be confirmed):

- Krista Patrick – PAS NRN project (confirmed)
- NE's All England Strategic Mapping Tool and how this links with LNRS
- Nature Recovery Network from NE/Defra

**Action: Adam to request someone from Defra and/or NE team for nature**

Provisional agenda items for 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023

- Update from EA on their natural capital work – Sylvie Allan and Allison Jean (or January)
- Green finance and funding mechanisms session – with presentation from Defra

**Action: Adam to request someone from Defra for green finance presentation.**

Provisional agenda items for 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023

- GI Standards from NE – to then inform where and how we engage within this priority
- "Areas of multiple environmental sensitivity" – Adam Lathbury (for new year)