



Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway

Developing the County's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

MS4N Board and Delivery Group meeting

19th September 2023

2.00-4.00pm

Tyland Barn, Maidstone, Kent

MINUTES

1. Introductions and apologies

Attending for the MS4N Board:

- Susan Carey, KCC Environment Cabinet Member (Board Chair)
- Cllr Simon Curry, Medway Council Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Strategic Regeneration (Board Vice Chair)
- Matthew Balfour, Kent Nature Partnership and Kent Rural Partnership Chair
- Robin Betts, Tonbridge and Malling BC representing the LNRS Supporting Authorities
- Evan Bowen-Jones, Kent Wildlife Trust CE
- Adam Bryan, Medway Council Director of Place
- Claire Eckley, NFU Kent Chair
- Sally Marsh, High Weald AONB
- Richard Morris, Sevenoaks DC and Kent Chief Planners Chair representing the LNRS Supporting Authorities
- James Seymour, Deputy Director Sussex & Kent Natural England
- Matt Smyth, KCC Environment & Circular Economy Director
- Charles Tassell, CLA Kent Chair

Attending for the MS4N Delivery Group:

- Chris Gardiner, South East Rivers Trust
- Peter Garrett, Medway Council
- Paul Hadaway, Kent Wildlife Trust
- Richard Haynes, White Cliffs Countryside Project representing the Countryside Management Partnerships
- Alan Johnson, RSPB
- Will Maiden, Forestry Commission
- Claire Pamberi, KCC representing the LNRS Supporting Authorities
- Sophie Page, Environment Agency
- Karen Rigby-Faux, Natural England
- Roise Salt-Crockford, CLA

Attending for the MS4N Project team:

- Chris Drake, KCC Partnerships and Projects Officer and Project Officer for MS4N
- Liz Milne, KCC Natural Environment & Coast Manager and Project Manager for MS4N

Apologies:

- Sarah Brotherton, High Weald AONB
- Amanda Corp, NFU
- Nick Johannsen, Kent Downs AONB
- Tony Witts, Kent & Medway Biological Record Centre

Susan Carey, Chair of the Board and meeting, welcomed all noting that KCC were excited to get started on this important project. Susan also introduced Cllr Simon Curry from Medway Council as the Board's Vice Chair.

An overview of the project team, who would be in place by late September/early October, was provided.

2. MS4N Board and Delivery Group terms of reference

The MS4N Board and Delivery Group terms of reference were agreed without change.

Proposals for addition members for the Board and Delivery Group were invited.

It was noted that in the Netherlands a lot of their 30 by 30 target is delivered by realising the opportunities presented, and addressing the fragmentation caused, by transport routes. It was therefore suggested that a transport representative should be included on the Board. The LNRS Senior Advisor noted that the LNRS was required to look at transport and there was a lot going on behind the scenes to engage national bodies in the work. It was agreed that the Board should seek a transport representative – Evan Bowen-Jones noted that he had a contact that could be approached.

Action: Evan Bowen-Jones to approach transport colleague to see if they would be interested in attending the MS4N Board. Project team to invite once Evan has confirmed.

It was noted that historic routeways are good for nature and very key in the Weald. It was questioned whether heritage was sufficiently covered and whether there should be a representative on the delivery group. Dr Nicola Bannister was suggested as a potential representative. It was noted that heritage would be picked up as part of the wider stakeholder engagement.

It was questioned whether the Board would benefit from a business or innovation perspective. It was noted that the CLA and NFU both represent business and whether this was actually sufficient for the purposes of the Board. It was suggested that someone representing a nature based solution payment system business may provide both the business and innovation perspective. Or perhaps a representative from Kent Ambassadors. It was agreed that the need for a business or innovation representative would be revisited at a later date.

The need for a water representative on the Board was raised. It was agreed that an Environment Agency representative on the Board would enable this.

Action: Environment Agency to confirm a Board member.

It was agreed that there should be a continual review of the Board and Delivery Group so that it can adapt as necessary in respect of perspectives that may be needed to support the project. It was also noted that ongoing interaction between the Board and Delivery Group will ensure there is good broad representation.

3. Proposed development of the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

An overview of the approach to be taken for the Strategy's development and, in particular, the newly released guidance on identifying priority species for the LNRS was provided.

No notable concerns or objections were raised to the proposed approach. The following comments were received from the group.

- Approach for species prioritisation is based on old approaches to species conservation and old categorisation. Is this appropriate?
- How will the impacts of climate change on existing species and species migration be considered? Is it appropriate to try and recovery declining species that may not be adaptable to the changing climate? Should we instead be looking to the continent to consider how we provide for migrating species?
- Look at vulnerability to climate change impacts and pre-existing initiatives to build on.
- How up to date, comprehensive and accurate are the national data sets the LNRS will be based on? Is the data good enough?
- Do we have climate change forecasting data to better inform?
- Do we have access to European species data sets – important given Kent's position.
- Are there proxy datasets that we need to consider?
- Is there fragmentation data we can use?
- Will species work consider keystone species and proxies for keystone species?
- The causes of the problems our nature faces must be considered to identify genuine recovery measures.
- Existing initiatives need to be considered.

It was noted that a species recovery advisory group will be established to lead the project work on identifying species priorities. The above questions will be discussed with this group in due course.

It was noted that the work will collect details of existing action, projects and initiatives.

It was suggested that lessons learnt from big landscape projects, for example, Netherlands, Knepp, Weald to Waves etc should be applied.

It was noted that there will be a forthcoming call for information and data, so anything that Board and Delivery Group members have to address data, evidence and information concerns of the national data sets or examples of good/best practice should be noted via this.

4. Stakeholder audit and engagement

The stakeholder audit was reviewed and the following identified as missing:

- Kent Coppice Cooperative
- Hadlow College
- North Kent College
- Glamping and camping within tourism

It was noted that the stakeholder list will not be static and will continually be added to.

It was suggested that social scientists would provide valuable input to the stakeholder engagement group.

No concerns or comments were received on engagement strategy. Additional time to review and comment will be provided to Board, Delivery Group and Supporting Authority Group members.

5. Technical Advisory Groups

The technical advisory groups were reviewed. The following comments were noted:

- Ensure that nature based solutions and finance is picked up.
- Consider what are the drivers for business to get involve – how does this link to their own commitments?

It was noted that deliverability is key part of the LNRS development and therefore finance will be considered throughout. Likewise, how recovery actions can deliver on wider environmental goals.

It was also noted that it is anticipated that the Defra guidance on prioritisation will include something on deliverability and financing. But if not, we can consider how this addressed at a later stage.

6. Next meeting

It was agreed that the Board and Delivery group meetings should be held separately in the future, recognising the different roles that each group of members is undertaking for the project. However, it may be appropriate to host some meetings jointly if required.

It was agreed to have a hybrid approach, with the most appropriate format used depending on the matters to be discussed.

7. MS4N launch

Susan reminded all about the launch on 5th October in Lenham and asked those that haven't registered to do so if they can come. It was noted that registrations were going well, with over 100 registered. As the venue has a capacity of 150, spaces may soon become limited.

8. AOB

The project website was noted as the place to go for update information about the project - <https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/> It was agreed that the website should make clearer why we need an LNRS – the decline of nature.

It was noted that it would be useful to hear how work is progressing elsewhere in the country and any lessons learnt. It was suggested that this could be a standing item on the Board agenda.

It was suggested that templates for information for partners to share would be useful.