



Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway

Developing the County's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

MS4N Delivery Group meeting 14th November 2023, 10.00am-12.00pm, MS Teams MINUTES – PART 1

(PART 1 OF 2 DOCUMENTS)

1. Summary of actions and items agreed

1.1 Items agreed

Delivery group:

- CPRE to be invited to the delivery group.
- Any future admissions to the delivery group would have to fill a niche that was not currently served in the group and would bring a different perspective.
- Heritage representative not required for delivery group.
- Current delivery group composition appropriate.
- KCC and the ALBs should chair delivery group meetings.

LNRS vision and definition of nature recovery:

- A vision based on enabling good decisions on land use to be drafted for comment; facilitator to be engaged to support if group struggle to reach consensus.
- Project will not strictly define nature recovery but have some discussive text around what nature recovery might look like.

Development of LNRS priorities:

- Delivery group to review draft LNRS priorities survey before publication.
- Following delivery group agreement of the criteria/scope and process to refine the LNRS priorities, there should be an informal consultation with stakeholders in February.
- Cross-sector workshops, rather than sector specific workshops, to be held to create the priorities longlist.
- Delivery group to review the priorities refinement outcomes and associated report before being shared wider.

Mapping of nature recovery action:

- 10 year period for mapping of nature recovery action.

1.2 Actions

Action	Who	Status
invite Vicky Ellis from CPRE to join the delivery group.	MS4N	Complete
Ensure there is access to relevant heritage datasets to inform mapping and avoid potential conflicts.	MS4N	KCC heritage on Data, evidence and mapping TAG
Draft a working vision.	MS4N	In progress
Circulate draft survey on priorities to delivery group from comment.	MS4N	Complete
Send out detailed plan for priorities workshops for further feedback from delivery group	MS4N	In progress

2. Attending and apologies

2.1 In attendance

Kathi Bauer (South East Rivers Trust)
 Rachel Boot (Kent County Council)
 Gwenda Bradley (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, representing Supporting Authorities)
 Sarah Brotherton (High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
 Chris Drake (Kent County Council)
 Chris Gardner (South East Rivers Trust)
 Peter Garrett (Medway Council)
 Paul Hadaway (Kent Wildlife Trust)
 Richard Haynes (White Cliffs and Romney Marsh Countryside Partnerships)
 Alan Johnson (RSPB)
 Louse Lawton (Kent County Council)
 William Maiden (Forestry Commission)
 Liz Milne (Kent County Council) – meeting chair
 Alexa Murray Mujtaba (Kent County Council)
 Sophie Page (Environment Agency)
 Katie Pattison (Kent County Council)
 Karen Rigby Faux (Natural England)
 Rosie Salt-Crockford (CLA)
 Ellen Schwartz (Public Health, Kent County Council)

2.2 Apologies

Claire Pamberi (Kent County Council and Supporting Authorities representative) was unable to attend - Gwenda Bradley attended as substitute.

2.3 Making Space for Nature team introductions

The Making Space for Nature team (MS4N) project team introduced themselves and gave an overview of their roles. The Kent County Council Making Space for Nature project team:

- Liz Milne - Project manager
- Chris Drake - Project Officer
- Rachel Boot - Project Support Officer
- Kathi Bauer - Rivers and Fresh Water Officer (part time secondment from South East Rivers Trust)
- Louse Lawton - Coastal and Marine Officer
- Alexa Murray Mujtaba - Landowner Officer
- Katie Pattison - Local Government Officer

The project is supported by Defra's arms length bodies:

- Karen Rigby Faux, Natural England - Local Nature Recovery Strategy Senior Advisor
- William Maiden, Forestry Commission - Nature Recovery Advisor, South East and London
- Sophie Page, Environment Agency - Single Point of Contact for Local Nature Recovery Strategies

3. Minutes of the joint MS4N Board and Delivery Group meeting

There were no actions or matters arising from the previous meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Review of Delivery Group

4.1 Additional delivery group members

MS4N introduced the request from CPRE to join the delivery group or Board, noting the email had been circulated. The Delivery Group discussed the request:

- It was commented that as CPRE work alongside RSPB, Buglife, and other NGO's, attendance at the delivery group level would be more appropriate.
- Since CPRE's work encompasses right to roam, access to countryside (including for disadvantaged groups), they would represent a community/sector that is not currently in the delivery group.
- Concerns were raised that by admitting CPRE, we may be setting a precedent for anyone else who may want to join the delivery group, which could result in making the size of the group problematic.

DECISION: It was agreed that CPRE would be invited to the delivery group and that any future admissions to the delivery group would have to fill a niche that was not currently served in the group and would bring a different perspective.

ACTION: MS4N to invite Vicky Ellis from CPRE to join the delivery group.

The delivery group were also asked whether a member representing heritage was required for the delivery group (following on from the suggestion raised at the previous joint board and delivery group meeting). Whilst some members of the group felt it wasn't necessary and could set a precedent every sector to be represented in the group, Will Maiden commented that concern had been expressed within the Forestry Commission that there was no voice for heritage and that historic features could present one of the biggest constraints when we are thinking about land use for nature recovery and land use changes. The group acknowledged this concern and agreed that heritage was a key stakeholder, and that the project would need datasets from heritage to ensure it can plan for any constraints. It was noted that the SHINE dataset, held by county archives, would offer key insights.

It was noted that there was a heritage representative on the data, evidence and mapping technical advisory group. Consequently, it was agreed that it was not necessary to have a heritage representative on the delivery group.

DECISION: Heritage representative not required for delivery group.

ACTION: MS4N to ensure there is access to relevant heritage datasets to inform mapping and avoid potential conflicts.

The group were asked whether there were any other sectors or individuals that would be valuable additions to the delivery group. The need for representatives from transport and highways, water companies, developers, access and green infrastructure were discussed. It was agreed that, at this stage, the composition of the group was appropriate for the task but as worked progressed it may be necessary to go beyond the planned engagement with these sectors and invite them to attend the delivery group – to be reviewed at each meeting. It was also noted that it had previously been agreed that National Highways would be invited to the Board.

DECISION: Current delivery group composition appropriate.

4.2 Chairing of delivery group

The chairing of the Delivery Group was discussed. It was agreed that KCC and the ALBs should chair meetings, to ensure delivery group members could fully take part in discussions.

DECISION: KCC and the ALBs should chair delivery group meetings.

5. Kent & Medway LNRS vision, ambition and outcomes

5.1 Making Space for Nature vision

The group were asked whether the LNRS needs an overarching vision or ambition; and whether, without one, we can identify our priorities. Alternatively, will our priorities help us define our vision? The following comments were received from the group:

- A clear vision of what we want to achieve is needed.
- The LNRS guidance doesn't reflect the level of ambition in Kent, so a vision must reflect this.
- The approach taken within local plans is to start with a vision, and then list objectives which are tailored to the local needs.
- No other LNRS are creating a vision – is making space for nature a vision in itself? Does it need more time spent on it?
- Noted that Sussex LNRS hired an external facilitator to produce a tagline, which was achieved within an hour and saved a great deal of work.
- The LNRS senior advisor noted to the group that we must be careful that we don't inadvertently start creating the strategy through a vision, which may scare off landowners etc – the inclusion of targets in a vision is not advisable.
- Any vision needs to be simple and easy to understand.

Following the discussion, it was suggested that the vision could be framed around how the LNRS will recover nature by enabling good decisions on the use land. It was agreed that MS4N would work on a vision along these lines and share with the delivery group for comment. However, if the group struggle to reach consensus, the project will consider the use of an external facilitator.

DECISION: A vision based on enabling good decisions on land use to be drafted for comment; facilitator to be engaged to support if group struggle to reach consensus.

ACTION: MS4N to draft a working vision.

5.2 Defining nature recovery

How do we define nature recovery within the LNRS, was a challenge put to the project during the MS4N launch. It was noted that it means different things depending on the context, but the group were asked whether it was considered that there was a need to define it. The project noted that a survey to stakeholders was to be circulated to gain

some understanding of general views. It was also noted that the Defra Arms Length Bodies did not wish to define it. The following comments were received from the group:

- The State of Nature report was damning but had a notable lack of action suggested to address it - we need to recognise the work of partnerships within Kent.
- We also need to consider Kent's situation, where climate impacts will hit first within this country.
- We need to consider natural process driven management, bioabundance metrics, connectivity and nature based solutions.
- Many important landscapes can't be what they are now, in the future. We need to weave this awareness into the LNRS – adaptation and change. It was noted that the RSPB use a species recovery curve, which may be useful.
- From a river restoration perspective, it is not just habitats, but also water quality and quantity, which is linked to natural processes.
- There will be different approaches needed for terrestrial and fresh water.
- Halting the decline – this needs to happen before we begin recovery.
- We do need definition of nature recovery, but unless we have targets in terms of species and hectareage, landowners don't necessarily have a notion of what is required, or the scope.
- We need to consider what is nature recovery, how will it be delivered, what are the targets, and how does it link to other nature recovery strategies?
- We need to create space where natural processes govern what happens, and that is a mindset change for most of us. Species recovery as we understand it in a traditional sense doesn't take account of species moving north etc. Keystone species have fundamental role in water quality etc.

A question was asked as to what weight the strategy has on addressing environmental impacts on freshwater; is it a statutory means to bring evidence to activities that produce decline?

- The Environment Agency noted that there are a number of key strategies and key priorities for the LNRS to take into account. Part of the benefit of the LNRS is that it can encompass priorities from across different organisations and lend weight to them.
- MS4N commented that when we are looking at refining priorities the LNRS, we are required to consider whether the proposed priority is in the scope of the LNRS. If it does sit outside the scope, then we have identified that it's something critical within the county that we want to address – Kent Nature Partnership, for example, might be an alternative means to address it. At the review stage, the LNRS will also flag up anything that is preventing the achievement of its priorities, which sits outside of its area of influence.

The group agreed that nature recovery will not be strictly defined but that it would be helpful to have something that discusses what nature recovery might look like, alongside

the scale of the challenge ahead so we can make people really understand why it's so important for them to be involved in the work going forward.

DECISION: Project will not strictly define nature recovery but have some discussive text around what nature recovery might look like.