



# Making Space for Nature in Kent and Medway

Developing the County's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

## MS4N Delivery Group meeting 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 10.00am-12.00pm, MS Teams MINUTES – PART 2

(CONTINUED FROM PART 1)

### 6. MS4N project work

#### 6.1 Project work programme

Questions relating to the work programme previously circulated were invited from the group.

Milestone 1 was queried as to how the areas of particular importance to biodiversity, and other areas of significance were to be defined? It was noted that areas of particular importance is tightly defined by the LNRS regulations – protected sites, local nature reserves, local wildlife sites and irreplaceable habitats. It is recognised that a high number of Kent's landscape would not be identified under this first map, so an informal, additional map of areas of local significance will be created. Noted that the project does not want people to get hung up on the map that is required by regulations, which might not be seen as fully representative – it is hoped that this additional map will avoid this and can be used to inform the strategy area description and second stage of mapping. It was noted that arguably these areas are better being featured on the "could become of importance" map (opportunities map) as this is where action will be targeted.

#### 6.2 Developing LNRS priorities

MS4N provided an overview of what the LNRS priorities should be seeking to achieve and Defra's suggested approach for developing these. A number of questions regarding the approach for MS4N were put to the group – the following was discussed and agreed:

- It was agreed that the delivery group would like to input to the survey and see a of the draft LNRS priorities survey before publication,
- It was agreed that following delivery group agreement of the criteria/scope and process to refine the LNRS priorities should undergo an informal consultation in February.

- It was agreed that a cross-sector workshop, that enables collaboration across sectors and establishes common ground was the best approach for the first set of workshops looking to create the priorities longlist.
- It was advised that the workshops should take place at different locations around the county to draw on local knowledge – local opportunities and constraints. The agenda should be timed so people can attend for one or more sessions of the day. Ideally locations will have wifi so attendees can work between sessions if needs be.
- It was agreed that the delivery group would review the priorities refinement outcomes and associated report before being shared wider.
- It was noted that the project needs to be mindful of how much time landowners are expected to contribute at busy times of year.

**DECISIONS:** 1) Delivery group to review draft LNRS priorities survey before publication; 2) 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; 3) cross-sector workshops, rather than sector specific workshops, to be held to create the priorities longlist; 4) delivery group to review the priorities refinement outcomes and associated report before being shared wider.

**ACTION:** MS4N to circulate draft survey on priorities to delivery group from comment.

**ACTION:** MS4N to send out detailed plan for workshop for further feedback.

### 6.3 Developing Strategy Area Description

MS4N presented the approach to developing the strategy area description, which sets the context under which the priorities will be developed. It was noted that the LNRS guidance was being followed.

The LNRS senior advisor commented that DEFRA will be giving guidance on relevant spatial plans and strategies that need to be considered, and then the delivery group can choose anything additional that they think will be beneficial.

There was a further comment that coastal grazing is an important habitat in Kent that is often overlooked so a focus on this would be welcomed. MS4N invited members of the delivery to contribute content as appropriate.

### 6.4 Project mapping application

The delivery group had previously provided comments via email on the questions to be asked by the online tool. Time was taken at the meeting to clarify and agree some points raised. The following was noted:

- It was agreed that 10 years was a long enough period for mapping of nature recovery action. It was considered that this was a realistic timeframe, and also links with the period since the last habitat survey was conducted. It was noted that there may be significant projects that went back further than 10 years – in such cases, these could be added at the discretion of the body/entity responsible for that action but generally these would not be sought.
- There needs to be more refined answers options for the status of the nature recovery action (for example action may be complete but there may be ongoing management or nature of action – e.g. stewardship schemes – may mean work is never complete because it is ongoing).
- Use hectareage and metres to cover linear features.
- It was noted that some user testing would be needed, to make sure wording is suitable and understandable for target audiences.

MS4N commented that beyond data collation for the LNRS development, the app will be used as a reporting tool once the LNRS is published.

## 6.5 Communications and engagement

Written update provided after meeting: The team have found requests for articles, presentations etc coming thick and fast and have been responding to this, but a consistent approach to communications, engagement and participation is needed.

An Engagement and Communications Plan, based on the established project milestones, will develop the engagement approaches previously set out by the strategy reviewed and agreed by the Board and delivery group in September. This will also outline the communications work that will be needed to underpin all project engagement.

The plan will set out a sequence of activity across the project, but also highlight the need for resources ranging from messaging toolkits, use of the website, social media and newsletter to external publications and events.

A stakeholder engagement technical advisory group (TAG) will be set up, which will advise on these areas. They will provide advice throughout the project and review of effectiveness at key points. They will also focus on promoting the project through their own channels.

## 6.6 LNRS priority species

Written update provided after meeting: The Kent and Biological Record Centre will be leading on the LNRS priority species element of the LNRS development. This will follow the guidance provided by Natural England and will involve the following steps:

1. Identify species present in Kent meeting NE LNRS species criteria.
2. Identify species of local significance.
3. Create species long list.
4. Evaluate current local, and anticipate future, pressures affecting or likely to affect species on the long list.
5. Using NE guidance, identify which of species long list LNRS can best support.
6. Group species into habitat-based assemblages.
7. Using considerations outlined in NE guidance, review species to create LNRS species priorities list.
8. Develop potential measures for each species priority.

The LNRS species priority work will be delivered by a technical advisory group comprising of the county's species experts. The group will first meet in December to review the species meeting criteria and identify other species of local significance (steps 1 & 2) and then in January to review the resulting species longlist, the species LNRS can best support and pressures (steps 3,4 & 5). There will be wider stakeholder engagement following this to refine the species into a priority list and identify potential measures.

## 6.7 Landowner engagement

Written update provided after meeting: There are two elements being established to support landowner engagement :

1. Land Advice Network (LAN) – aim is to create an extensive network across Kent – as many Land Advisors as possible:
  - a. Meet fortnightly or monthly, briefing on each stage in the project.
  - b. Communication channel through advice, newsletters, events etc.
2. Technical Advice Group - small group, subset of LAN, to review tools, communications etc
  - a. Meet fortnightly, alternate weeks to LAN.
  - b. Need volunteers – Delivery group members involved directly in landowner/farmer engagement are asked to suggest a volunteer.

An online briefing was held on 13<sup>th</sup> November about the LAN. Invitation was sent to 114 people and 76 attended (66 of these non project) and all supportive of establishment of network. Link to presentation on-line and copy of slides can be found at <https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/resources/making-space-for-nature-video-webinars-and-presentations/>

Engagement activity:

- Introductory meetings held with NFU, CLA and NNFN.
- Planned with Agronomist, Oxbury Bank.

- Attended National Fruit Show, introductions to NFU County team, Oxbury Bank, Warners Solicitors, British Independent Fruit Growers
- Attended Upper Beult cluster
- Attended new clusters at Halling to Trottiscliffe.
- Will be attending Rother and Romney & Medway Catchment Partnerships, Swale and Hoo Peninsular clusters and Fresh Produce Task Force.

## **7. Next meeting and AOB**

~~9<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 10am-12.30pm (extended by 30 mins).~~

Since the meeting, the next delivery group meeting has been rescheduled to 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 10am to 12.30pm.