



Developing the County's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

MINUTES Stakeholder Engagement Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Stakeholder Engagement and Communication meeting **09.01.24, 14:00-15:00, Teams Meeting**

Summary of actions and items agreed.

- 1.1 Items agreed – monthly 1 hour TAG meetings with standing agenda: -
- Review of monthly analytics, alongside...
 - Forward look at communications timeline/planner
 - Monthly review of Stakeholder analysis (to be formulated by MS4N team)
 - Overview of messaging tool kit and comms plan competition

1.2 Actions

Action	Who	Status
Teams channel for the TAG to be established	RB/CD	In progress
Article for KWT members magazine to be amended to include specific promotion of activities	CD	12 Feb deadline
Social media plan to be shared with the group	RB	In progress
Develop light touch messaging toolkit with basic messages and graphics that TAG can use	CD/RB	Not started

Attending and apologies

Attending:

- Mollie Amor – Kent Wildlife Trust
- Rachel Boot – Making Space for Nature Project Team
- Chris Drake – Making Space for Nature Project Team – TAG Chair
- Kathryn Hearnden – Kent Downs National Landscape
- Will Maiden – Forestry Commission
- Sophie Page – Environment Agency
- Karen Rigby-Faux – Natural England
- Anne Wynde – Engagement and Consultation Lead, KCC

Apologies:

Charlotte Lewis – Kent Wildlife Trust

1. Welcome and Purpose of the Group

Chris explained the purpose of TAG to the members. The aim is to support the comms and engagement work of the MS4N project team, and to make suggestions for further expanding the reach of this work.

2. Introductions

Group members introduced themselves and their roles to the group.

Anne – contact from the wider comms team at KCC might be able to join, but Anne can provide links and information in the meantime, alongside her engagement and consultation input.

EA NE FC – all single points of contact on LNRS for KCC, as responsible authority.

3. Monthly Outline of Communications and Upcoming Work Review of this and Assistance in Promoting Upcoming Work

Rachel talked through recent comms work – social media (Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn) has a small but growing following – started up on the 20th November. Reach analytics shows a much wider reach than our immediate audience. First month of socials spent on raising awareness of project, now moving into promotion of online briefings and upcoming workshops. Encouraging partners to consistently share content is challenging.

Newsletter goes out to full database – 988 contacts in total receive it, and so far, it's had approx. 50% open rate, so seems to be an effective means of communicating with the existing MS4N network.

Moving forward, as comms planner shows, aiming to align communications with project milestones, which is complicated due to overlapping milestones, but insofar as possible that is the aim. Promoting workshops and survey next – 2 offerings with same data gathering purpose (Priorities for nature recovery) using combined approach – news article on website, newsletter to database, social media posts – encouraging partners to share, news items to go in partner publications – these are tailored to be sector-specific. Will also be featuring on KWT podcast regularly and have a presence on their associated blog. Need to know of any other podcasts that might be useful outlets, do let.

Question

Concern expressed that podcast might seem like we are partnering with just one organization, and to be mindful of this. RB replied that interviews will be happening in setting that involves other partners in the interview process.

Discussion and advice

The TAG offered to extend reach through sharing of content, and Rachel and Chris to advise on messaging. At KCC, Let's Talk Kent newsletter (approx. 8k people, 68.5% opening rate) and homepage, resident's newsletter from central comms KCC team. KCC social media team can help. Facebook paid ads are also very effective means of advertising specific events and extending reach – may be useful for consultation stage in particular.

KWT members magazine (30,000 members) – articles in this also go on website and social media.

Members agree analytics are useful to identify what people are looking at on website, where they are coming from, and what social media posts are working and what type of content (graphics/video etc.) – compare the stats against the comms planner to make insights about what is working.

Question

National landscape audience– consumers, businesses, residents; what is the MS4N one? Chris said that a stakeholder analysis has been completed and while it was not for circulation, it can be shared with the TAG. He said that while landowners are key, there are a broad range of audiences for MS4N.

With sight of this, TAG agreed they would be able to help target audiences.

Discussion and advice

Rachel highlighted the challenge of having messages for all sectors versus messages for specific sectors – this was recognized as a common challenge that the TAG would try and assist with. She also highlighted the risk of bombarding people.

For wider KCC publications mentioned- it was recommended that its best to save comms for the big calls to action.

KWT said that analytics can be used to measure the journey people go on, for example from opening a newsletter to dropping out, so we can see if we are losing people before they get to call for action etc.

ACTION – MS4N to set up Teams Channel for TAG to allow for conversations and circulating of stakeholder analysis and other documents that may need regular updating.

Chris to tweak article for KWT magazine to include promotion current calls to action (Publication date 25th March). Magazine content also goes on blog and social media.

4. Overview of Draft Engagement and Communications Plan and Communications Timeline. Agree Actions Relating to this and Next Steps

Chris said that bearing in mind the fast-paced nature of this project, he wanted to make sure MS4N has the communication tools needed at our disposal, rather than a plan for the sake of it, but that the current draft plan provided summary of the approach to communications.

He went on to take the TAG through the recommended steps boxes (*italics*) included in draft comms plan to get views: -

Stakeholder analysis document to be under regular review of the project manager and team and updated as project progresses.

TAG agreed that it would be useful to have access to the stakeholder analysis and would like to see it evolve so that it takes each stakeholder group and outlines exactly the tools being used and efforts being made to engage with those stakeholders, and any accessibility requirements for each stakeholder group.

The TAG agreed this would be useful, then they can advise on other means of reaching certain sectors.

Natural England recommended that audiences needed segmenting and the stakeholder analysis needs developing,

Set out a clear rational for assessing which events should be attended by the MS4N team.

In terms of events, Rachel explained the importance of events for stakeholder groups that are harder to engage. KCC suggested there also needs to be consideration of protected characteristics groups – groups like the People’s Panel may allow engagement with some of these groups. Plus, adult social care’s stakeholder engagement team. The TAG also suggested using established events in the calendar to leapfrog comms output from e.g., British Green Week, other national environmental days. TAG members were encouraged to share any other events that they think would be good opportunities with the project team.

In addition, inclusion of a range of partner campaigns should be a useful way of piggybacking MS4N social media content.

Use MS4N team focus sessions to scope out golden threads and areas in and out of scope of MS4N and LNRS. This is to feed into messaging to ensure the wider story of what will make for successful nature recovery can be told, to assist with engagement.

Develop a messaging toolkit, capturing narratives around the above areas that can easily be accessed, used, and adapted by members of the MS4N team.

Chris asked group if they considered a messaging toolkit would be useful. Messaging is being adjusted as the project goes along, but consistency is needed, to avoid causing confusion to stakeholders and to avoid duplicating effort between members of the team. He felt it useful to have messages pinned down in one place.

TAG members responded that it would be useful to make sharing the message easier, however short timescale of project may be a limiting factor in terms of a bespoke toolkit.

Natural England mentioned the stakeholder log that records efforts made for each sector, this flags up barriers etc and a messaging toolkit might be a useful accompaniment, responding to this and streamline communications. Wondered if the TAG might take messaging toolkit on rather than the MS4N team. Caution on tailoring MS4N messages, saying that national Defra teams have done this and it’s more a case of utilising and adapting this in our messaging.

Chris felt that there are still some Kent specific messages that need developing.

TAG felt that they couldn't commit to inputting into such a package of work between the TAG meetings but welcomed the idea if a toolkit – even a light touch one of basic messages and graphics that TAG could then use in their own communications.

TAG agreed that this would help them, and other partners share content,

Suggestion - AI can be used to refine messaging.

ACTION

MS4N develop a light touch messaging toolkit with basic messages and graphics that TAG can use.

Group would like some sense of work that is expected of them between meetings so they can manage expectations around how much time they can commit.

Members asked how much lead time they need for sharing content – KWT need 1-2 weeks for social media, press needs more like a month. Project team to share graphics etc. to make it easier to share. A social media plan with specific dates to be shared.

Natural England felt the TAG was a really useful group, but we need to be aware of who else to involve on comms – not necessarily to be members of the group.

There was a short discussion around the public consultation on the Kent and Medway LNRS next year and the need to agree processes at KCC and any preparation for this.

Actions: Share social media plan with specific dates to be shared to the group.

Chris concluded on agreed standing items for future meetings – see 1.1

5. Consideration of TAG and Group Terms of Reference and Membership

To be discussed in the next meeting.

6. Next Meeting and AOB

Flagged that for next meeting that forestry sector agents are proving challenging to engage, and some work is needed around how we bring them into the process. They also may be a demographic that don't typically use social media, so will have to think of different avenues of communication.

Next meeting to be scheduled for the first half of Feb – Chris to confirm date and notify the group, all agreed that these will be 1-hour monthly meetings.