

Sussex LNRS Working Group

Meeting Notes

Monday 18 November 2024, 11:00 to 13:00

Present
ESCC, WSCC, SxNP, SDNPA, BHCC, HDC, WDC, SWT, FC, HWNL, MSDC, EA, Knepp Wildland Foundation, RDC, CJH Farm Advice/SE FWAG, SxBRC, CBC, NE

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Partners were welcomed everyone to the meeting. ESCC to Chair.

2. Minutes and matters arising

Minutes labelled incorrectly, but otherwise OK. Have been amended.

Actions:

- Talked to Hampshire re Panel – pre-consultation withdrawn because mapping not focussed enough.
- Feedback on priorities and outcomes - thanks to all, have been incorporated.
- Measures – in progress, to discuss on agenda.

All actions either done or in progress.

No issues or matters arising.

3. General Update:

- a. Mapping – working with Consultant and SxBRC. Working on collating what has already been done rather than creating from scratch. Likely to be iterative process. Timeline to be determined.
- b. Engagement – member briefing planned for 03/12/24. Invites sent out, c. 100 acceptances to date + 40 tentative. Members asked if there were any particular members they think would benefit, to let them know.
- c. Species – have heard back from majority of county recorders, who have been incredibly helpful. Now have shorter list. SxBRC collating and analysing responses. Considering removing some species because a) date/number of records; b) collation of some into habitats; c) identifying any needing specific priorities/measures; d) finding a date for CR/CBR to sense check and agree and proposed measures. Likely to be mid-December.
- d. West of England is first LNRS to be published. Link shared with meeting papers.
- e. Kent have gone out to pre-consultation.
- f. Timeline for mapping of measures, ACIB etc to be determined.
- g. WSCC meeting unclustered farmers from Rother Valley 19/11/24.
- h. Defra webinar on delivery of LNRSs + meeting of LNPs nationally. Defra producing guidance on licensing issues following meetings with ALERC. SDNPA attending a national LNRS stakeholder meeting with Defra on 10/12/24 on behalf of NPE.

4. Measures

Draft measures circulated on 07/11/24.

Includes priorities and outcome statements for each. Measures drawn from a number of sources: delivery partners workshop; other RAs; published plans and strategies; NE workshop. Have tried to add in funding options where known, which habitats and/or species they apply to, and whether potentially mappable or 'enabling' measures. Similar to the priorities, these have become higher level rather than including lots of little measures. We will also be signposting to best practice.

Rather than going through each one in detail, discussion would focus in on key questions. Will take each priority in turn, so any additional comments welcomed. **Requested any additional comments by 22/11/24.**

Discussion by priority

Protected Sites:

- Still need clarification over whether we can map measures within protected sites.
- PS1.2. What W2W is aiming to deliver. How can W2W make sure they are contributing to this measure? W2W commissioning some habitat connectivity modelling. Would like to know where best to focus.
- SDNPA commissioning a connectivity piece so perhaps worth discussion.
- PS1.3. What does this mean for allocated sites next to designated sites? e.g. Rye Harbour. May be captured within PSS which are in development at the moment. Pilot protected sites strategy around Kingley Vale. Focus is woodland particularly deer impacts. NE to check whether there is any more detail. Already legal mechanism to ensure no harm from external factors.
- PS1.1 re management of LWS. Slight bugbear that LWS sometimes allocated for development, couched in terms of gaining improvements of rest of site. Measures aren't always the most appropriate. Could we capture something around management measures being in line with measures recommended by LWSI.

Coastal Habitats:

- Likely that some of these measures can be merged.
- Nutrient enrichment and WQ. Could be issues of diffuse pollution or upstream issues- not really captured in these measures. More likely to talk about that in rivers/wetland section as that would be where the action would be, but would be captured in outcomes. May be able to cross reference.
- EA referred to CFGM rather than wetland mosaics.
- Are there links to any measures identified in the Coastal Management Schemes- recent discussion and meetings on Eastbourne to Pevensey Levels Management Scheme? Timescales don't match at the moment. However, trying to reference to Coastal Plans/SMPs.

Farmed landscape:

- Many measures will be captured under other priorities so quite specific, but will be cross-referenced. Lots are enabling measures.
- For agro forestry, suggest linking to the Landscape Character Type rather than blanket "no" for South Downs. It's a no for the open chalk downland!
- Will particular species be cross referenced in here be taken off the list? Not necessarily, and some species may be mentioned in the habitat priorities may not be on species short list.
- Create and improve areas for arable plants etc. Could that be broadened to include feed for species?

- Some ref to arable plants - could we add in "sustain"? Need to ebb and flow. Inherent tension. Does the "sustain" piece come back to resilience but also dynamic nature of landscape permeability?
- Quite often options fit in with points in the rotation.
- Ongoing question resting with farm advisors around how to grapple with these more ephemeral habitats that require disturbance and may move across farmed landscape. Always an inherent risk that chunk of arable plant resource may disappear.

Soil:

- Mostly around soil health.
- Has mixed farming bit come from mixed farming sustainability?
- Where it says measure already exists in farmed landscape - which one? Need to double check that it is covered. May fit better in farmed landscape section.
- Important to acknowledge that what farmers are doing does benefit wildlife. Need to encourage best practice. Hopefully captured within principles and in enabling measures under farmed landscape. Ultimately farmed landscape is the biggest part of the area we are dealing with. Poss also needs to be brought into connectivity piece.
- Came through very strongly from clusters that farmers get a lot of bad press. We need to do what we can to support them through this. Case studies is important.
- WECA included specific guidance for farmers.

Species-rich grassland:

- Comments from Ashdown Forest asking for specific comment on acid grassland. Currently included in heathland. Need to be clear and cross reference.
- Think it is more accessible to have acid grass in with other grass measures around G1.5 - not everyone will know it is usually associated w heathland.
- Agree re acid grassland in grassland section. Kent did that.
- May need to split different grassland types in mapping.

Woodland:

W1

- Detailed comments from FC.
- Use species rich rather than native. Allows mitigation for climate change and aligns with other plans/funding streams.
- Deer management is landscape wide. For mappable bits, HW have some mapping + Kingley Vale strategy.
- Feedback from Hampshire is that you can't map too much as not focused enough.

W2

- Priority is to expand existing sites W2.1. W2.2 is wider.

W3

- Urban woodland.

Hedgerow:

- Hdg 1.1 can we add in the term function to structure etc.

- Hedgerows: Guide by historic mapping and landscape character.

Scrub:

- Scr 1.1 be careful of using the term coppicing as may need felling licence if certain height reached.
- W2W scrubland superheroes project. Would be good to run our thinking around Scrubland Superheroes project manager. Storytelling needed.

Heathland and sandstone outcrops:

- Make sure we have a measure around protective habitats for heathland.
- HW have mapped sandstone outcrops. Majority is within or bordering woodland, but there are some outcrops within fields.

Freshwater:

- If we haven't already then it would be well worth asking the Rivers Trusts (OART, WSRT, SERT) to review the freshwater section. Will be getting everyone in a room to do this. Will be leaning heavily on what has already been done.
- R1.14 EA mapping of redundant structures.
- Support LNRS "promoting and enabling" the catchment approach. SDNPA just commissioning some "water scoping" by catchment across the SDNP (similar to what has already been done for Rother).
- Tidal reaches - need to refer to INNS moving up as well as down rivers.
- Streams- anything over and above rivers rather than repeating.
- Could you add gill streams in? Should be recognised in their own right. May be a case of cross referencing.
- Chalk streams - lots are winterbournes and ephemeral. Is that captured anywhere? Covered in description. Does it make a difference to measures? Climate change may be an issue in that these are more all year round than winterbourne.
- Aquifers- likely to be overlap because of influence of groundwater on chalk and greensand streams. Diffuse pollution issues.
- Bogs and mires. One site in Kent but already a SSSI therefore taken out. Check designations of those areas.

Urban:

- RSPB big garden bird count. Have they been asked for data?

Corridors, NbS etc:

- Included to reference e.g. W2W etc. Placeholder.

5. Next steps

Summary of actions:

- WSCC to share list of elected members with partners.
- RAs to use the LA Network to do provide officer briefing on LNRS.
- All to provide any additional comments on measures by 22/11/24.
- HWNL to ask if HW sandstone outcrop maps can be shared with RAs.

6. AOB

None

7. DONM

16th December 2024, 11:00-13:00.