

Sussex LNRS Working Group

Meeting Minutes

Monday 20 January 2025, 11:00 to 13:00

Present	Apologies
Kate Cole (KC), ESCC	Don Baker (DB), WSCC
Julie Middleton (JM), SxNP	Andrew Lawson (AL), SxBRC
Claire Kerr (CK), SDNPA	Gareth Williams (GW), Knepp Wildland Foundation
Ed Santry (ES), BHCC	
Craig Steenhoff (CS), WDC	
Rebecca Fry (RF), HDC	
Laura Brook (LB), SWT	
Richard Cobb (RC), FC	
Sarah Brotherton (SB), HWNL	
William Maiden (WM), FC	
Jennifer Hollingum (JH), MSDC	
Peter Taylor (PT), EA	
Alex Briggs (AB), Knepp Wildland Foundation	
Holly Harrison (HH), RDC	
Coral Brigden (CB), WSCC	
Suzie Robson (SR), CJH Farm Advice/SE FWAG	
Damon Block (DB), EA	
Elizabeth Brigden (EB), CBC	
Grace Olsson (GO), NE	
Lyndsey Neale (LN), NE	
Peter Hughes (PH), CHC	
Di Alcroft (DA), WayForward	
Richard Austin (RA), CHC	
Harry Eldon (HE), RDC	
Rob Wise (RW), NFU	

Meeting recording available [here](#).

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

KC welcomed everyone to the meeting. HE, new Ecology Officer at RDC, attending to observe. RW providing interim representation for NFU until replacement for Bee Barton-Broomhead recruited. KC to Chair.

2. Minutes and matters arising

All actions either done or in progress.

No issues or matters arising.

3. General Update:

Slides attached ([paper m01](#)).

a. Project Update

- i. Devolution: potential for county elections to be delayed. Project plan and timeline reviewed.
- ii. Aim still to deliver pre-consultation draft early 2025 – with delays, most likely May. Caveats remain. Working on several elements concurrently. Will share sections as and when ready.
- iii. Measures – nearing completion (although likely to be iterative).
- iv. Engagement – winding down but update and measures webinar given to LA Network on 16/01/25, c. 40 attendees.

b. Budget

- i. Procurement: graphic design – PO sent and deposit invoiced; WayForward – contract secured to end of project; mapping – SxBRC, sub-contracting Sandra Manning-Jones – fee proposal TBC; ESCC staff recharge, WSCC holding back until project end; JM/SxNP – ongoing support.
- ii. 2-8% contingency remains.

c. Defra/NE Update

- i. Defra webinars with RAs and LNPs re delivery of LNRSs.
- ii. Proposed role could include: leading and convening partnerships; creation of project pipeline; monitoring and reporting on delivery of measures; promoting use and understanding of LNRS.
- iii. Devolution likely to be hugely relevant. Spatial development strategies – new layer of strategic planning. Broader scale than local plans, but around the same scale as LNRS. LNRS and RA role specifically mentioned in devolution white paper.

d. Species

- i. Long lists produced for both LNRS areas.
- ii. Long list reviewed, updated and annotated by County Recorders/CBR + species workshop 06/12/24.
- iii. Developed draft short list including “Sussex iconic” species, species scoring highly through public consultation and species characteristic of urban environments (currently c. 30 species per LNRS).
- iv. Applying categorisation as per species guidance.
- v. Next stage: finalise short list; develop species specific measures and sense check with County Recorders/CBR.

e. Summary next steps and timings

- i. Engagement winding down.
- ii. Jan/Feb: prioritise measures; mapping; species shortlisted and measures agreed; revision of description.
- iii. Feb/Mar: species mapping; sense check mapping with WG/SAG/individuals/organisations/key groups; begin write up and graphic design.

Discussion

AB. SDNP doing connectivity modelling. W2W thinking of something similar and talking to SDNPA. Would be valuable to have a look at species long lists to make sure it ties in.

ACTION: KC to share lists with AB/W2W.

PT. Asked when the draft will be ready for review by internal colleagues within EA. Draft unlikely to be ready before May, but intention is to get sections out as soon as possible, especially mapping.

4. Measures - discussion

Draft measures document provided with meeting papers, and attached with minutes (**paper m02**).

Long document – JM ran through structure and format to familiarise group with train of thought. Priorities and measures – majority grouped into habitat types, although additional priorities for wildlife corridors plus nature, health and wellbeing. Outcomes help inform direction of travel. Measures divided into two groups: core measures (action on the ground) and enabling measures (LNRS guidance does not consider these to be core but highly prevalent in stakeholder engagement). Other RAs have done this but not made it so explicit.

E.g. woodland. Three priorities, 14 core measures for first priority.

- Core measures structure: i) measures; ii) more information/techniques; iii) targeting statement to help understand spatially where each measures could be located; iv) link to best practice where it exists.
- Intention to ID key audience where possible. Likely to be broad category, e.g. farmers and land managers.
- Links to funding options – advised not to be too specific, e.g. not down to ELMS codes.
- Specific habitats ID'd.
- Some basic cross referencing with other measures.
- Enabling measures.
- Species – ID the species that will benefit from habitat measures.

Total of 114 core measures for all priorities.

Task for WG (**see paper m03**): would like feedback in constructive way. Need to be able to complete measures list incorporating feedback from key stakeholders. Can focus on specific measures or several depending on expertise within organisation. Any major changes? Any gaps? For each, help fill gaps for techniques, targeting and best practice.

Priority Group	Organisation to review
Protected sites	NE
Coastal	CHC, SWT
Farmed landscape and soils	CHC, W2W, HWNL, FWAG
Species-rich grassland	HWNL, FWAG
Woodland, hedgerow and scrub	HWNL, FC (+HDC if capacity)
Heathland and sandstone outcrops	HWNL
Freshwater	EA, CHC, W2W
Urban	CBC, W2W, BHCC
Wildlife corridors	W2W (+HDC if capacity)
Nature, health and wellbeing	BHCC, W2W, CBC

In addition to above, SDNPA and SWT will try and review across all priorities if possible. MSDC will review from a planning policy perspective.

ACTION: WG members to review measures in light of key tasks and feedback by 03/02/25 if possible.

5. Proposal for mapping measures

JM presented outline for mapping process.

114 core measures – not that different from other LNRSs currently out to consultation. Important to recognise that LNRS cannot be an opportunity map, i.e. cannot map everything everywhere it can be done. Mapping is a spatial blueprint for targeting action where the greatest benefit can be delivered in the next 10 years. If something is not on the map, it does not mean it is not important. Will take the most important measures through to the mapping stage. Other LNRSs – on average attempted to map 20-25% of measures.

JM ran through mapping scoping exercise undertaken by JM, DB and KC re establishing which measures could/should be mapped, applying a set of criteria (**slide 3 paper m03**). Process did not significantly reduce the number of measures to take forward for mapping.

Would like Working Group to ID which measures would make the most difference to nature recovery in next 10 years and flag those we should try and map (adding to **paper m02**).

Discussion

CK: Highlighted the recently published Protected Landscapes Target Outcome. The LNRS and PL Management Plans need to read across, so this should arguably be picked up through the mapping. [Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework - GOV.UK](#). RA: PLTOF is non-binding. CK Opportunity to bring together what is being required for PL and LNRS. Need to read across. Acknowledge that there is a lot of important stuff outside the PL. Duty for NPs has also changed- more emphasis on partners delivering within the Park.

JM explained that measures within APIB (designated sites and irreplaceable habitats) will not show on ACIB. Important to note that across Sussex, c. 30% of land within APIB – one of the highest proportions in the country, therefore important that we reflect that. KC explained that we have not been told a coverage to aim for through ACIB, but need to be able to demonstrate that what is mapped is targeted.

CK. Mapping roughly aligns with the SDNP "core nature" (i.e. the APIB) and "renature" (ACIB).

RF. From a planner's perspective within an LPA with intensive development pressure, and lots of unprotected land, makes it very difficult.

Mapping likely to look at opportunities to connect and expand.

LN. Asked where co-benefits are being considered. JM explained that this could be difficult for accessible nature and we cannot deliver all that is needed. KC – for other co-benefits, e.g. NFRM, likely to be considered during targeting phase.

ACTION: WG members to ID the 20-25% of measures within each category that are the most important to map.

6. Learning from other RAs

DA presented a review of draft LNRSs currently out to consultation from a presentation/ease of use perspective.

Slides (**paper m04**) and script attached (**paper m05**).

Takeaways:

- Colour, imagery etc important but don't overdo it.

- Direct, honest and urgent tone.
- Get balance right between easy to understand content but still technical.
- Description/state of nature sections can be very long and can detract.
- Think about placement of opportunities, pressures, priorities and measures.
- Possibly add passages from expert organisations.
- Voices of local people important.
- Root our LNRS on specific issues and opportunities in Sussex, e.g. our principles.
- Focus on guiding different audiences.

Discussion

JM asked all to consider who our key audience(s) is likely to be. Those who will use it and need more detail.

EB. Needs to be fit for purpose formally first, and if a non-technical summary is needed to be more accessible, that could be a solution?

CK. Like the idea of having a "how to use this strategy" section for the different key audiences. Need to make it relevant to people/ partners etc.

CK. Whilst the nature crisis is urgent, personally prefer a positive narrative which is movement building for action rather than dwelling on the negative. Important to take a positive approach; build a movement for action. Provide examples of the art of the possible. Could add case studies to website over time.

AB. Suggested could ask certain stakeholders to review and plot out user groups.

CK. Need to make sure we cover what we are legally required to produce plus additional information.

ACTION: circulate reminder of what is required within LNRS with minutes.

7. Next steps

Summary of actions:

- **KC to share lists with AB/W2W.**
- **WG members to review measures in light of key tasks and feedback by 03/02/25 if possible.**
- **WG members to ID the 20-25% of measures within each category that are the most important to map.**
- **Circulate reminder of what is required within LNRS with minutes.**
- **KC to send round meeting dates for March onwards.**

8. AOB

None.

9. DONM

17/02/25, 11:00-13:00.