**Sussex LNRS Working Group**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday 19 May 2025, 11:00 to 13:00**

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| **Present** | **Apologies** |
| ESCC, SxNP, WSCC, SDNPA, BHCC, WDC, HDC, SWT, HWNL, FC, MSDC, EA, RDC, SE FWAG, CBC, Knepp Wildland Foundation, NE, WayForward, NFU, CLA | None |

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

ESCC welcomed members to the meeting. No apologies were given.

1. **Minutes and matters arising**

All actions from 17/03/25 complete.

No issues or matters arising.

1. **General Update**:

A relatively brief update was provided as a more comprehensive update had been given at the workshop on 02/05/25.

The main update was that the previously projected timelines have slipped, primarily due to the complexity of the mapping. Had previously aimed to take pre-consultation draft to SAs at the end of May/beginning of June, with public consultation over the summer. SA consultation now likely August. Means public consultation October. As no longer during summer holidays, proposing 6-week consultation. Would push final publication March/April 2026. Acknowledged difficult timing for SAs, and RAs committed to getting informal version of documents out as early as possible and prior to formal 28 day consultation period. Caveats remain around certainty.

Regarding the 28-day SA consultation period, noted that Hampshire had a system whereby SAs could click a link to confirm approval for consultation rather than collating comments at this stage. RAs to talk to Hampshire re process for SAs to confirm approval for public consultation.

Asked whether there could be additional time for internal colleagues to review maps. Confirmed that RAs want the process to be as transparent as possible so will provide as much time for review as possible given time constraints and statutory minimum 28 day SA pre-consultation period. Confirmed that mapping outputs would be reviewed by workshop groupings prior to finalisation, and it was agreed that final maps would be shared with the Working Group prior to the SA consultation.

Engagement: Meeting with golfing community last week. Approx 1000ha of Sussex under golf management. Overall, very positive engagement and measures were received well and RSPB national representative asked for copy of wording to share with other RAs. Reported that Golf England are working on a baseline dataset.

Noted that it was positive that both W2W and Sussex Bay could use the LNRS as a launching pad which helped to get the message across. There is clearly lots of interest and the appetite to carry out nature restoration, but tools are needed, similar to farmers and landowners. As a community, we need to be thinking about how we can help.

Benchmarking on LNRS progress across the country. Around half of the RAs nationally are at the same stage as us.

1. **Feedback from Mapping Workshop and proposed mapping methodology**

Reported that 65 people attended the working and all contributed positively. Worked on the theory that if measure considered to deliver high impact, should try and map. High priority measures were then reconsidered as to whether they could actually be mapped and how. In most cases, methodologies developed to date were supported. A few additional measures were proposed with potential mapping methodologies, and some were excluded from mapping as not considered mappable and/or not a high priority.

For some measures, there remains uncertainty as to whether they should/could be mapped. Whilst there is a broad understanding of how it could be done, will depend on whether we have the time and resources to deal with the likely large amount of manual data handling. Some attendees talked about additional datasets. Data will be sought over the next couple of weeks.

Noted that the inter-relationship between the APIB and the ACIB is important. Rough estimate of the coverage of the APIB and the coverage of priority habitats outside the APIB, shows that these would meet c. 30% for both LNRS areas, which gives us an idea of the degree of targeting we need to aim for for habitat creation measures.



Sense that it will be important how the LNRS is landed with farmers and landowners. Noted that land advisors and landowners are unlikely to have time to read through everything but would welcome a high-level summary/overview. W2W have offered to help RAs with that piece. Also important to ensure land advisors across organisations are giving consistent advice. CLA, NFU, FWAG, SWT, SDNPA, BHCC and NE all offered to feed into communications piece. On behalf of RAs, WayForward to set up initial conversation around preparing farmers and landowners for LNRS.

Reported that final Seven Sisters sNNR map is currently being developed, and Wealden Heaths NNR (already mapped and captured) is due to be declared in late June. NE to feed back to the RAs as soon as possible.

It was agreed that initial mapped outputs would be reviewed by the Workshop groups, and then following amendments, maps would be shared with the Working Group for sense checking/agreement.

1. **Species prioritisation and measures**

ESCC summarised current progress on species work. Overview of process and draft shortlists shared at May workshop (**paper m03**). At that time, long lists were c. 900 species for both LNRS areas, reduced down to 147 species for East and 151 for West. Of these 114 grouped into 18 assemblages for East and 108 grouped into 19 assemblages to West, leaving 33 individual species for East and 43 for West.

Have had feedback from some County Recorders (CRs) (bats, birds, spiders and lepidoptera), plus NE, SAs and WG members, and from the Technical Review Panel (TRP).

No major changes, no species missing. Some corrections/amendments to habitat preferences and justification text in underlying spreadsheets. Some suggested amendments to assemblages and a couple of additional priority species (essentially elevating from “supported by LNRS” category). TRP made some suggestions to make the document clearer and recommended that black poplar be removed as a priority species, as project effectively completed and has been very successful. NE hae suggested amendments to wording of some measures, and suggested moving species out of assemblages if they have additional, bespoke requirements.

In addition, some habitat measures have been substituted for species measures to avoid duplication, e.g. farmland birds.

NB Need to remember that whilst species are an important element of the LNRS, and potentially of greatest interest for the public, this part of the process in non-statutory, and as such, there are unlikely to be significant amendments to the draft lists and measures, particularly given positive CR feedback, as RAs need to concentrate on the statutory elements.

Aim is to complete species work by end of May. Tasks to complete:

* Go through comments/feedback and amend lists and documents;
* Assign those species considered to be “supported by the LNRS” (326 for East and 338 for West) to final habitat measures;
* Consider those species that can/should be mapped and how they can help target mapping of habitat measures.
1. **Next steps/actions**

Summary of actions:

* RAs committed to getting informal version of documents out as early as possible and prior to formal 28 day consultation period.
* RAs agreed to talk to Hampshire re adopting similar process for SAs to confirm content for public consultation.
* RAs agreed that final maps would be shared with the Working Group prior to the SA consultation.
* Additional data raised at Workshop to be sought over the next couple of weeks.
* WayForward to set up initial conversation around preparing farmers and landowners for LNRS.
* NE to feedback to the RAs as soon as possible re shapefiles for sNNRs.
* ESCC to amend and finalise species lists and share with WG.
* All members to add projects to mapping tool if they have not done so already for these to be incorporated into targeting of measures.
1. **AOB**

Knepp Wildland Foundation reported that he had shared the draft Habitat Connectivity Mapping document with RAs for discussion later today.

All members asked to add projects to mapping tool if they have not done so already, as that is the easiest way for these to be incorporated into targeting of measures.

1. **DONM**

16/06/25, 11:00-13:00.