**Supporting Authorities Group Meeting**

**MINUTES - 2pm: 04/06/2025**

Chair: Don Baker

**Attendees**

WSCC & ESCC

Sussex LNP

Wayforward

Lewes & Eastbourne Councils

Hastings BC

Brighton and Hove City Council

Wealden DC

Crawley BC

Chichester DC

Horsham DC

Mid Sussex DC

SDNPA

1. Apologies & Matters arising
   * Grace Olssen
   * An update is provided regarding the email request sent May 15th for LA data on green spaces and GI.
2. General update & next steps– DB



Nationally:

Along with other responsible authorities, we have contributed to the design of the delivery phase with DEFRA

Funding Announced a few days ago

£6.5m made available for the current year for the 48RAs (£135k/RA if delivered evenly).

The funding will cover costs associated with transitioning from LNRS preparation into delivery of the strategies

We have yet to determine what those transition arrangements might be and what our role will be and what the role will be for the Supporting Authorities: Defra have however promised further information.

Funding for the subsequent three years will be announced at a later date.

Measures: draft now published

* A 3rd workshop of delivery partners was held 02/05/2025 - 44% of measures were identified for mapping representing c.50 measures
* Final iterations of the habitat and species measures are being polished following that and the Technical Review Panel review
* Mapping is now underway led by SxBRC and Kate will take us through that shortly

Mapping: Regards to mapping of the measures, This iterative process is expected to take longer than originally estimated with a July completion target.

This is due to:

* Utilising existing data not collected for this purpose
* Iterative nature of the process
* High level of manual data handling
* Large number of datasets and analyses required
* Focus: is mapping c.50 measures for Mid-June with all other maps (ACIB) completed during July

Species: work is completing

* Priorities and measures have been developed over past 3-4 months and are now being finalised.
* Species will largely form their own distinct document but some species measures will be woven into the core LNRS informing habitat priorities, measures and mapping

Description: again that is completing to be published in the next week or so

Engagement: Public consultation methodology is now being designed and Di will talk more on this shortly.

* Wayforward have met with our respective comms teams 23 May (monthly) to agree the communication strategy for the public consultation in the autumn
  + Promotion will likely be similar to previous subject to audience
  + Some assets to be created to support the consultation
  + Accessibility issues will be to a LA standard
  + Campaign page on each of the 3 constituent authorities webpages
  + Consultation for both LNRSs likely to be managed through the WSCC Engagement Hub

* Researching approaches used by other RAs and Local Plan consultations

Timeline: shifting backwards as previously reported.

Certainty: is hard to pin down

May-June/July:

Mapping measures. A bigger job than expected - We aim to share emerging outputs with you during July

Expected to Take a long time for all the reasons previously outlined but largely

due to the iterative nature & size of the job

August

Following internal RA governance August seems a likely time for the SA consultation

We will have to manage the impact of the summer holiday period somehow - possible early sight or delay to start.

Mid-October

Public consultation so a 6 weeks consultation period applies

February

Following internal governance

Pre-publication consultation with the SA

For a Spring publication

Benchmarking national RA progress

* 54% (26) are still at the writing and design stage
  + of which 55% (17) aim to consult the public before the Summer and
  + 9% (3) after the summer,
  + with 35% (11) unable to say when they will consult the public.
* 46% (22) have triggered or completed the first SA consultation
* 10% (5) have triggered or completed the second SA consultation
* 6% (3) have published

Next steps (over the next month)

1. A farmer's communications group will be convened and facilitated by Wayforward next week.
2. Completing outstanding preliminary LNRS sections and publishing (species measures and description chapters) on website
3. Progressing the mapping work
4. By this time next month we'll better know what draft ACIB / Measures shapefiles we can share with you and when.

Discussion

With regards to mapping required to facilitate the SA consultation there was general agreement that an early sight of outputs would be helpful alongside the provision of GIS layers as shapefiles.

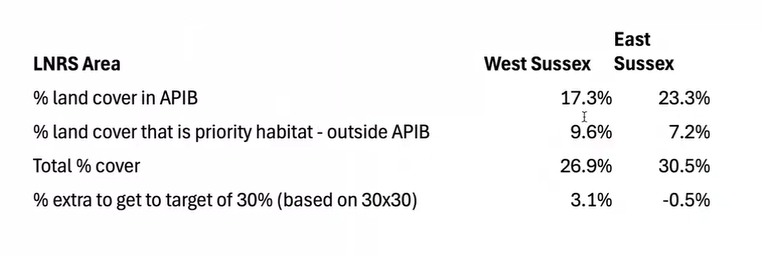
Prior to SA consultation, communication from SA to RA on emerging issues is seen as critically important.

Sussex RAs to investigate SA consultation approaches by other RAs

Further briefings for elected members is strongly advised.

1. **MAPPING UPDATE:**

* Following workshop - looking at prioritising measures for mapping - have begun mapping in earnest. Still a work-in-progress.
* Rough calculation on coverage of APIB + priority habitats means we have the potential to capture all our priority habitats outside designated sites. Fits with the narrative that we already have a lot of important habitats, and that we need to look after and improve what we have.



* Protected sites - first pass done, to be checked with workshop group 10/06/25.
  + 2 measures assessed as high priority, one of which we have tried to capture, the other slightly trickier and may have to wait until we see where there are gaps after mapping other measures.
  + PS1.2 Create new areas of habitat on land adj to protected sites, expanding total area.
  + 250m buffer around SSSIs in BOAs, excluding urban/built up areas.
* Coastal habitats – first pass done, to be checked with coastal group 10/06/25.
  + C1.1 retain existing & recreate additional naturally functioning coastlines. SMPs with managed realignment/NAI.
  + All measures to enhance existing: Have mapped existing priority habitats.
  + Expansion - used habitat potential models from SE regional monitoring programme.
* Grassland - meeting with group 12/06/25.
  + Existing. Green = LCG, orange = waxcap grassland, light pink = HW wildflower meadows.
  + Create new: purple = HW measure for new wildflower meadows, historic field boundaries with 50% or more that is either unimproved grassland or good quality semi-improved. May be clipped to NE habitat networks. yellow = high potential for LCG from modelling.
  + Waxcap grasslands - Sites with certain threshold of species. Locally, regionally or nationally important. Started with species data. Most sites = churchyards and cemeteries, but some sites less clearly defined, e.g. Ebernoe. Were going to exclude woodland/other priority habitats but slightly more complicated so looking into it.
  + NG and lowland measure not mapped because data not good enough and certainly not comprehensive.
* Heathland - purple = existing + potential. NE habitat network - habitat restoration-creation, fragmentation action zone, restorable habitat (East). Habitat potential modelling in West, high and very high. + Sandstone outcrops - existing.
* Woodland - meeting date TBC.
  + Existing: dark green = AW, yellow = WPP, bluey-green = gill woodland, Other green = priority woodland not covered by other measures. + wet woodland blue, traditional orchard = pink.
  + Create new purple = WOM with lowest sensitivity clicked to LWNCA.
* Freshwater - nearly there! Most complex.
* Farmed landscape = buffers to watercourse on agricultural land + farmland birds.
* Urban - still waiting for some measures but working on it!
  + 2 measures stood out: 1) how to enhance existing greenspaces. All thanked for data provided to date. Mapping existing greenspaces - but acknowledged that there are gaps. We may not be able to add on new data if sent as individual layers. 2) request for any data around new greenspaces/SANGs etc. Have not heard from Wealden or A&W to date. CS confirmed WDC will be available soon.
* Corridors - working on it. Main measure is creation of new corridors. Would like data from GI studies etc.
  + Other data that would be helpful would be habitat banks on LPA land. If projects on pipeline, please let us know.

Once we have these maps, may need to reconsider targeting. Still don't know what we are aiming for, but anecdotally, Somerset up to 50%, Cumbria up to 60%. Figure we are currently working to c. 45%, given level of APIB.

Discussion

Confirmation was provided that the RAs would release mapping to SAa as soon as they are finalised.

Further reference was made to the LNP woodland opportunity mapping. <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wildlife-habitats/habitats/healthy-woodlands/woodland-opportunity-mapping/>

the accompanying technical report sets out the methodology. In essence it removes constraints and then uses a weighting approach to add positive weightings where woodland would be valuable and negative ones where there is chance for negative impact.  For interest, a buffer of 150m around existing woodland and woodland in LWS is given highest weighting and these are likely to make up many of the purple patches that show up on the map.

1. **CONSULTATION - PROPOSED APPROACH (DA)**



Summary

* Targeting Oct 15th for public consultation.
* We may host both East and West on WSCC hub. Will seamlessly link from Sussex Nature Recovery website.
* Farmers/landowners comms group meeting 12/06/25 to assess how to lay the groundwork for this group.
* Reflecting on feedback.
* Considering other RA approaches + LP consultations etc.

Discussion

Next week on the 9th June the South Downs Partnership Management Plan review goes out to public consultation. For the nature recovery elements SDNPA are keen to have good read across to the LNRSs. [Together for Nature, Climate and People - South Downs National Park Authority](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/partnership-management/)

CLA are doing call-to-arms video for members, encouraging them to get involved, targeted for when LNRSs go to consultation.

Regarding promoting through SA channels: Likely to follow similar approach to promoting webinars etc, but we can build in other approaches.

For the public consultation consideration is being given to:

* the degree of free text and multiple-choice questions within the public consultation
* how to avoid multiple submissions

**AOB**

SDNPA Partnership Management Plan consultation starts 09/06/25.