

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Steering Group

Minutes of Steering Group Meeting on 18th September 2023

Present:

Fran Lancaster	FM	Principal Natural Environment Officer HC
Andrew Blake	AB	Wye Valley AONB and representing Malvern Hills AONB
Rhiannon Pierce	RP	Senior Advisor Natural England
Emma Gardner	EG	Herefordshire Biological Record Centre (HBRC) HC
Helen Dale	HD	Regional Advisor Countryside Management
Kate Tobin	KT	Nature Recovery Forestry Advisor Forestry Commission
Liz Duberley	LD	Service Manager Built and Natural Environment HC
Jenny Engwell	JE	Senior Ecologist HC

Apologies:

No apologies were received.

1. Welcome

FL welcomed members to the third steering group for the Herefordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

ACTION:

JE to write up the minutes

2. Update on the actions from the last meeting

The group ran through the minutes of the last meeting. No further actions were raised.

3. LNRS Officer Post

A job advert has been written to recruit for a two year fixed term post. The officer will be managed by FL based within HC Natural Environment team. HD suggested opening up job description to include all land based backgrounds. This was agreed by all. RP said she was happy to circulate job advert to the LNRS Network once it was confirmed

ACTIONS:

FL to update job advert to include land based backgrounds rather than solely biodiversity. Once confirmed advert to be publicised.

RP to circulate advert to the LNRS forum.

4. Funding

HC have been confirmed as Responsible Authority. DEFRA funding has been received and this will cover the LNRS Officer role, mapping (potentially to be undertaken by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust), engagement and ongoing support.

5. Website and Communications

The landing page has been launched on the HC website. It is intended that all steering group documents will be available on this page for transparency. There will a generic email available on the website for the public to email the team regarding LNRS work.

6. Updated Terms of Reference

It was agreed that there were no changes required to the Terms of Reference except for adding future steering group members/any changes in membership as required. It was suggested and agreed the table of members should be an annex to the Terms of Reference in order to allow for amendments.

AB suggested it is noted in the Terms of Reference that they are a subject to periodic review and change. All agree this should be included.

Actions:

FL/JE to update table of members and add that Terms of Reference are subject to periodic review and change.

7. Public Engagement

There was discussion on the level of public engagement that should be undertaken

Points raised included that early engagement is good for the general public but not necessarily for landowners, that capacity for this kind of work is limited until the LNRS officer is in post, that at present it might be beneficial to do general awareness raising but that any kind of questionnaire might not be best use of resources, that any engagement should be meaningful and relevant to what is currently happening and not open ended.

HD mentioned the Rural Business Conference is coming up, is this something that could be attended to represent the LNRS. Date is on 14th November which HC confirmed is not likely to be achievable given current capacity.

Action: Further discussions/development of engagement should form part of a working group on engagement and consultation

8. Update on associated guidance from DEFRA

Recent guidance from DEFRA including species guidance and LNRS & historic environment has been released.

The group was made aware that guidance on irreplaceable habitats, data standard advice and landowner engagement advice is yet to come.

9. Developing timetable

There is 18 months to the adoption of LNRS.

FL is working on timetable. We are still awaiting a formal quote from the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust for the mapping. Recruitment is in the early stages. HC hopes to be in a position to develop the timetable further once some of those elements become fixed.

10. Task and Finish Groups/Sub-groups

Use the next steering group to put some ideas forward around setting out task and finish groups. It was suggested that a data group and a species work group would be valuable sub groups.

Action: HC to develop some potential options around task and finish groups for the steering group to discuss at the October meeting.

11. Next meeting

The next meeting is booked for 19th October 2023 with the intention of an in person meeting in Hereford. There was discussion on whether it should be in person or online or hybrid.

Given the more creative nature of the task for the next meeting the group determined to stick with in person but noted the need to give flexibility to make attendance as easy as possible.