



**Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the  
Biodiversity Delivery Group  
held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 at 2pm  
in the Boardroom, Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture,  
The Slieau Whallian, St Johns**

**Present:**

Dr Jan Gledhill - Independent Chair	(JG)
Ms Aline Thomas – Senior Biodiversity Officer, DEFA	(AT)
Dr Richard Selman – Ecosystem Policy Manager, DEFA	(RS)
Mr Andrew Lees – Director of Agriculture and Lands, DEFA	(AL)
Mrs Karen Westcott (via Teams) – Board Secretary & Governance Manager, Manx Utilities	(KW)
Mr Leigh Morris – Chief Operating Officer, Manx Wildlife Trust	(LM)
Mr Neil Morris – Chief Operating Officer, Manx Birdlife	(NM)
Mr Steve Blackford – Head of Properties, MNH	(SB)

**In attendance:**

Miss Sophie Costain – Ecosystem Policy Officer – minutes	(SC)
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Apologies

Mrs Karen McHarg, Director of Environment, DEFA

**21.01 – Welcome**

JG welcomed everyone to the first Biodiversity Delivery Group meeting.

**21.02 – Introductory presentation – background on the Biodiversity Strategy -AT**

AT gave a background to the Biodiversity Strategy, from its initiation from the Convention on Biological Diversity, to the creation of the Biodiversity Strategy incorporating the 20 Aichi targets, to the mid-term audit reporting on progress. The delivery of the strategy is only possible through co-operation and partnership between Government and other organisations.

There have been some very good results so far which are reported within the mid-term audit and some ongoing or forthcoming actions that will contribute to the delivery of the strategy, which include:

- Establishment of the Biodiversity Delivery Group
- Biodiversity Indicators
- Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPS) & Action for Wildlife
- Birds of Conservation Concern
- Invasive Non-Native Species Strategy
- Leaders Pledge for Nature signed up to in December 2020. The UK is yet to come back to the IoM with specific requests, so yet to see how this will work.
- Forest Stewardship Council accreditation, Ramsey Forest, People's Forest, Woodland Scheme, peat survey, Agri-environment Scheme

**21.03 – Role of the members**

The role of the Biodiversity Delivery Group is stated in the terms of reference and was summarised as:

- Promoting the delivery of the biodiversity strategy through **collaboration** with Government and key stakeholders;
- Providing advice for the delivery of the actions;
- Identifying and prioritising outstanding/ongoing strategy actions and making representations for their delivery;
- Promoting the biodiversity strategy in the community – identifying other organisations and groups who could be approached;
- Working with existing groups such as the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Leaders Group and the Manx Nature Conservation Forum.

The output of the group will be:

- An annual Delivery Plan showing what the priorities are, the actions to be taken over the year and stages of completion. Draft minutes from each BDG meeting which will be agreed with members and published online and available for the public to see. Minutes will be action based.

A couple of important events are taking place within 2021 which may have impacts upon the direction of the Strategy and the Group:

- The UN Biodiversity Conference is to take place in May 2021. Depending on the outcome of this conference, the Strategy may require alterations.
- The 2021 Election. Further decisions about the strategy will depend on the new DEFA Minister's views. Additionally, items requiring a political decision or decisions about funding, will need to be considered by the new Minister.

#### **21.04 – Priorities up to December 2021**

##### **Consideration of the draft Delivery Plan that includes the work being undertaken by DEFA**

The relationship between the BDG and the MNCF was discussed. A key role of the MNCF will be through engagement with the Biodiversity Action Plans. There was discussion about the disconnect between the Aichi targets, the Biodiversity Strategy targets and what delivery of these actually delivers on the ground in terms of species and habitat increases. It was acknowledged that there is a lot of work going on but no measurement or evidence of this resulting in positive outcomes for wildlife. Indicators are therefore a priority for one member of the Group. Additionally, there are some targets which are a lot more important than others which should be prioritised and where effort should be concentrated. Performance is a key word that needs to be given more emphasis. The incorporation of SMART targets or key indicators might assist the Strategy.

There is a potential difference between biodiversity and political priorities. Politically, there is an interest in bringing amber and red actions into the green. However, if members of the BDG deem actions categorised as green to be a priority, this can be brought back to the Department for a decision.

1. DEFA to adapt their annual plan to a BDG plan template in Microsoft Word, adding space for entering why actions are required, and then recirculated.
2. DEFA to circulate a summary list of the Biodiversity Strategy actions.
3. DEFA to circulate Biodiversity Indicators report.
4. Members to pick out and rank the most important and least important priorities from the actions in the Biodiversity Strategy and send these to the Ecosystem Policy Team by 9<sup>th</sup> April.
5. DEFA to create a summary of priority and least important actions and circulate prior to the next BDG meeting.

**Verbal reports from other members on what is being done and ideas for further work to deliver the Biodiversity Strategy actions:**

All members present gave a brief overview of actions being taken by their organisation to deliver the Strategy. However, members were asked to provide a more formal update for the next meeting.

Though KW understood the importance of delivering the actions within the Biodiversity Strategy her initial thoughts were that unlike others within the group, delivery by the MUA will be through their business as usual and risk management work, rather than direct targeted action. However, the strategy will be discussed with the MUA Chief Executive, to see if they are already contributing or can contribute more directly in the future.

The first draft of an annual delivery plan will be discussed in the next BDG meeting. Once this has been finalised and the group's priorities for the next year decided on, this delivery plan will be taken to the DEFA Department meeting for agreement. The plan will then be reviewed each financial year.

The ability to alter the strategy is built in as Action 3 'Regularly review and revise both Strategy and Delivery Plan to take forward the work up to and beyond 2025.' However, this is a Tynwald approved document and therefore RS will have to speak to the Minister about how this will be done in practise.

6. RS to find out how the Biodiversity Strategy can be revised.
7. Members to fill out and submit action summary by Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April, using the BDG plan template circulated by DEFA.

The MNFU and Flockmasters have been invited as members to the BDG meetings. However, they both declined the invitation as they consider that their democratic structure doesn't fit with the Group. A suggestion was made that a tender provider for the agri-environment scheme might benefit the group's discussions.

8. Once the Agri-environment scheme tender has been awarded, DEFA is requested to consider inviting a representative to the BDG.

The meeting ended 15:50

Next meeting is to be held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Signed:  [Chair]

Date: 19/5/21

