



Isle of Man
Government
Reiltys Ellan Vannin

**Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the
Biodiversity Delivery Group
held on Monday 17th May 2021 at 2pm**

**in the Boardroom, Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture,
Thie Slieau Whallian, St Johns**

Present:

Jan Gledhill – Independent Chair	(JG)
Alan Jackson – Manx Game Preservation Society	(AJ)
Neil Morris – Manx Birdlife	(NM)
David Bellamy – Manx Wildlife Trust	(DB)
Andy Lees – Director of Agriculture and Lands, DEFA	(AL)
Karen Westcott (via Teams) – Board Secretary & Governance Manager, Manx Utilities	(KW)
Aline Thomas – Senior Biodiversity Officer, DEFA	(AT)

In attendance:

Sophie Costain (minutes) – Ecosystem Policy Officer, DEFA	(SC)
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21.05 Apologies

Richard Selman – DEFA, Leigh Morris – Manx Wildlife Trust, Steve Blackford – Manx National Heritage, Climate Change Team (as an observer)

Alan Jackson was welcomed as a new member of the Group. He gave a short introduction to the work of the Manx Game Preservation Society.

21. 06 Consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd February 2021, including Action Points and Matters Arising

ACTION - SC to update the minutes with Leigh Morris's correct details and recirculate to JG for signing prior to being uploaded onto the website.

Progress on Action Points (APs) from 22/2/21 meeting:

- DEFA to circulate Biodiversity Indicator Report (AP3) – This action has been completed. However, the report contains a number of quick links only accessible via the DEFA system so AT is trying to get this updated. It could be there are sections in the report that could be pulled out and used.
- Members to pick out and rank the most important and least important priorities from the biodiversity Strategy (AP4) - The DEFA top priorities have now been agreed. JG thanked the other organisations who sent their priorities back in. A summary of responses has been circulated. There was a lot of useful information within the responses that will be looked at when the delivery plan is being finalised.

KW reported that she had spoken to their Chief Executive, and reached out to other officers and as expected the response back was that although they can see what we are trying to achieve and understand its importance, the MU can only offer limited support through their

daily business as usual activities. KW is also keen to make sure that the MUs operations are undertaken in line with what we are trying to achieve. KW is also still waiting for responses, so hasn't yet contributed but still intends to.

- AP6 - RS to find out how the Biodiversity Strategy can be revised – AT reported that the Biodiversity Strategy can go to Tynwald or be put forward as a Department Policy document.
- AP8 - Once the Agri-environment Scheme tender has been awarded, DEFA is requested to consider inviting a representative to the BDG – AL reported that doesn't think a rep for the Agri-environment Scheme partner should be invited because they are only responsible for delivering on DEFA's contract which AL can report on, and the BDG meetings are not part of that.

The other actions were either complete (APs 1, 2 and 5) or would be considered further at this meeting (AP 7).

21.07 Consideration of responses to the request for priorities

DEFA, the MWT and Manx Birdlife submitted their list of key priorities. JG looked at the priority Biodiversity Strategy actions and identified areas of consensus between the groups, 10 Biodiversity Strategy actions were identified by at least 2 groups as key priority and 4 of these were identified by all 3 groups as key priorities, so the focus of this meeting will be on these 4 actions, which were as follows:

- Actions 17 and 20 which are focused on site protection and management at a site and landscape level.
- Action 25 – the creation of the Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), for which a group meeting was held last Monday, with the next meeting scheduled for August.
- Action 33 – implementation of an invasive species strategy

On reflection it was agreed that education needs to be a priority and therefore Actions 14 & 15, which focus on public and curricula education, were also added to the key priorities list.

1. Parties to consider adding priorities to the Biodiversity Strategy Actions table if they have not already done so.

21.08 Consideration of tasks put forward for inclusion in the Delivery Plan

In the time available, it did not prove possible for members to submit tasks planned for next year on the DEFA template (AP7 from 22/2/21). Some tasks were included as part of a consideration of priorities by MBL and MWT. This action will be carried over and is discussed as part of the next item on the agenda.

21.09 Comparison of priorities with tasks in the Delivery Plan for 2021-2022

Biodiversity strategy Actions 14 & 15 – Education

The group discussed the difficulties in trying to get biodiversity integrated into the Manx curricula and where best it would be integrated. It was highlighted that ideally it would be integrated at all stages to give initial understanding, embed the learning and create a deeper understanding. The inputs and outputs for primary and secondary education would be different but both are required. JG has experience of working within Manx education and stated that it's about interpretation of the existing curriculum and making it relevant, which is really up to the individual teachers. However, if you targeted something particular in the curriculum, it could be used year after year. She suggested that perhaps one or two lessons could be developed for delivery at Key Stage 3 (11 to 14 year olds).

There are various events throughout the summer where environmental education could be highlighted, and there is space for people to have stands at the Agricultural shows.

For biodiversity education to be successful we need to get better at conveying a vision of what good biodiversity and a healthy island looks like (perhaps by using case studies of areas that are already in good condition); creating a greater focus on native species and Manx Biodiversity, and by integrating it more in all Island residents' daily lives. We also need to get better at identifying solutions and the gaps in knowledge and identifying and establishing links with other industries.

2. AT to add a new task to the Delivery Plan under action 15 to state: *Consult DESC to ensure national curricula takes into account local biodiversity and associated concerns. Offer to provide materials for one or two lessons at Key Stage 3.*
3. AT to add a task to recognise the educational role of the DEFA stands at the Royal Show.

There is a missing educational link with landowners, many of whom are interested in taking proactive action on their land but aren't sure how or what to do. The MWT and DEFA provide advice where they can, but there is no dedicated resource and no grants available.

Biodiversity Strategy Action 17 – Statutory designations and other effective conservation management schemes.

Members raised the concern that the Isle of Man is very far behind in designating ASSIs. This administration has only designated 1 ASSI and the process needs to be sped up. A point was made that DEFA also need to designate public land rather than concentrating on private. A number of sites were briefly mentioned as priorities for designation on the public estate including The Sugarloaf and the Calf of Man.

Members commented that designating land is pointless without follow up to ensure that land is in good management, that there is appropriate signage, that monitoring is being undertaken and the designation is successfully achieving protection of its features. The wording of action 17 is '*appropriately conserved and managed*', so we also need to concentrate on the management and protection of land already designated and without the dedicated recourse and political backing this won't be possible. Greater positive engagement and level of incentive is also required so landowners just don't see it as further red tape.

A question was asked about whether it was possible to temporarily designate the most important phase 2 sites to provide them with protection against destruction. However, DEFA do not have the viaries to do this within Manx law. This change in policy would require consultation and Officer time, and it would need political approval.

4. AT to add the production of signage for Greeba Mountain and the Central Hills ASSI as a task in Action 14 regarding education.

The group members did not see this Biodiversity strategy action as being achievable by 2025 and were concerned by the lack of progress. If this was going to be at least progressed then further political support and resources were required and this needs highlighting.

Biodiversity Strategy Action 20 – Landscape-scale initiatives and ecosystem resilience to climate change

DEFA are funding the Upland Stewardship Scheme and part-funding the Ramsey Forest Project and are also developing a pilot blue carbon project.

The MWT have the Action for wildlife programme, including Ramsey Forest, which shows that some schemes have been actioned and are having results. There is also the Uplands Stewardship scheme.

Landscape scale initiatives are considered the way forward but they have to be habitat and species driven. It was suggested that there was an exercise to be undertaken here for the right people to get together to discuss what the habitats are at a landscape scale that need to be restored.

5. AT to add in Action for Wildlife as an ongoing task being led by MWT in Action 20.
6. AT to add Ramsey Forest as an ongoing task being led by MWT in Action 20.

Biodiversity Strategy Action 25 – Biodiversity Action Plans

The first 2021 meeting was held on Monday 10th May and most of the group leaders came. There is an action for leaders to bring back what they see as the top priority habitats and species for the next meeting. No BAPs have been completed and put forward for approval yet. A point was raised that the BAPs writing stalled was because the leaders couldn't see how they would be used, especially as there was no dedicated budget for implementation and because writing was on a voluntary basis. It is still not clear how they will feed into the BS and there is no funding scheme available.

MWT have moved ahead with Action for Wildlife (AfW) so they didn't have to wait for the BAPs to be written to take action. However AfW isn't just about priority species and habitats, it is also about projects that can be done straightaway and with good public engagement.

It was suggested that new ambitious action needs to be added to the target table for the creation of an all-island list of priority habitats and species with a ranked order.

The Agri-environment Scheme is due to start soon and there is potential for the BAPs to help steer the direction of this in the future.

Biodiversity Strategy Action 33 - Invasive Species Strategy

Members agreed that the sooner invasive non-native species are tackled, the better.

The Marine Biosecurity Plan is online and DEFA have a draft terrestrial strategy. This has not been consulted on with the MUA or other Departments yet but the intention is to do so. Japanese Knotweed is being managed through the Department of Infrastructure flood risk team now.

The Wildlife Act, including its Schedules, is in the legislative programme for a revision in the next administration and schedule 8 could be updated. However, this won't be done by March.

7. AT to add in DEFA to continue to advise applicants about Schedule 8 species and Cherry laurel in planning applications as an ongoing task in Action 33.
8. Members to provide a list of species which they considered invasive but which are not yet included on Schedule 8.

21.10 Review of dates for the meetings this financial year

The remaining BDG meetings for the year are scheduled for 12th July and 18th October. However, JG suggested that the group meet next on the October date, and then meet again closer to the end of the year, after the UN Biodiversity Conference has taken place.

It was suggested that a dashboard of how the strategy is progressing would be useful to highlight BDG priorities to the next Minister and actions which are unlikely to be delivered without political support.

9. Biodiversity metrics to be put on the agenda for the next meeting. (What are we measuring, what does it mean, and how do we measure them to create the connection between the actions and outcomes).

It was agreed that agreement of the delivery plan can be done via email. The 12th July meeting date is to be set as the deadline for issuing the delivery plan.

10. AT to send out updated DEFA Delivery Plan with the additional tasks from this meeting added in.
11. AT to send out blank Delivery Plans with the agreed priorities indicated.
12. Members to add in tasks that they are undertaking/plan to undertake this year and return to AT as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 16:30.

The next meeting of the BDG will be on Monday 18th October.

Signed:  [Chair]

Date: 8/11/21

