



Isle of Man
Government
Reillys Ellan Vannin

Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Biodiversity Delivery Group

held on Monday 18th October at 2pm

in the Boardroom, Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture,

The Slieve Whallian, St Johns
Department of Environment
Food & Agriculture

30 NOV 2021

Rheynn Chymmyt, Bee as Eirynys

Present:

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| Jan Gledhill – Independent Chair | (JG) |
| Aline Thomas – Senior Biodiversity Officer, DEFA | (AT) |
| Richard Selman – Ecosystem Policy Manager, DEFA | (RS) |
| John Payne – Senior Architect, DoI | (JP) |
| Sofia Rodriguez Fernandez, Environmental Assistant, Highways Division, DoI | (SF) |
| Alan Jackson – Manx Game Preservation Society | (AJ) |
| Neil Morris – Managing Director, Manx Birdlife | (NM) |
| David Bellamy – Agri-environment Officer, Manx Wildlife Trust | (DB) |
| Leigh Morris – CEO, Manx Wildlife Trust | (LM) |
| Andy Lees – Director of Agriculture and Lands, DEFA | (AL) |
| Karen Westcott (via Teams) – Board Secretary & Governance Manager, Manx Utilities | (KW) |
| Erica Spencer – Environmental Planner and Ecologist, Manx National Heritage | (ES) |

In attendance:

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

Steve Blackford, Head of Properties, MNH

21.12 Welcome of John Payne from the Department of Infrastructure

Also joining the meeting was Sofia Rodriguez Fernandez who is an Environmental Assistant at the Highways Division of Department of Infrastructure.

21.13 Consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on 17th May 2021 (paper A)

The minutes were accepted apart from a few minor amendments which will be incorporated prior to sign-off.

21.14 Actions from the previous meeting and matters arising

All actions from the previous meeting were considered complete apart from actions 8 & 9:

Action 8 - Members to provide a list of species which they considered invasive but which are not yet included on Schedule 8.

Schedule 8 is the list of animals (part I) and plants (part II) for which it is an offence to release or plant, to allow them to escape or otherwise cause them to grow in the wild. DEFA have received no responses yet about additional species for this list but encouraged the group to send them in. MWT stated that they have come up with some additions but they have not yet sent these in. This schedule is not about the restriction on importation of species, it is a list of species already established in the wild, but which pose a conservation threat and should not be released or spread further. The intention was to update Schedule 8 with species like cherry laurel, which is here but not yet listed, or things that are here that might become a problem. It was noted that Schedule 8 is the most recently updated schedule in the Wildlife Act.

A discussion was had about the use of the term 'native' and whether we have an index of organisms labelled as native, however, native is challenging because it assumes that there is a full knowledge of the organism's history. The Wildlife Act 1990 purposefully does not use the term native because of the challenges surrounding this.

It was asked if there could be further consideration into creating a native organisms list. DEFA could not fit this in at the moment and it is not high priority, however, the MWT have already done some work on this.

There are a few different Isle of Man native tree lists circulating at present and various opinions on what is and what isn't a native tree species. With a little bit of negotiation it is believed that a native tree list could be produced but it would also be useful to have a beneficial non-native tree or well-established list. The use of such a list would be as a tool to assist people where required and interested, and wouldn't be preventative. AJ said that a list of preferred species or of long-established species would be a better terminology.

1. MWT to put forward a paper for discussion and consideration at the next Wildlife Committee meeting about the creation of a Manx native tree list. The next Wildlife Committee is scheduled for 1st November and papers would need to be ready by 25th October or held off until the next meeting.

Action 9 - Biodiversity metrics to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

2. This action is to be rolled over to the next BDG meeting which is scheduled for 15th November.

Matters arising:

RS noted the following in regards to the minutes from the May meeting which he was unable to attend:

Minute 21.09, Biodiversity strategy Actions 14 & 15 – Education: under the Agri-Environment Scheme there is provision for farmers to receive payments for hosting educational visits on their farms.

Minute 21.09 Biodiversity Strategy Action 17- Statutory designations and other effective conservation management schemes: BDG members felt like the IoM didn't meet the objectives of Strategy Action 17. However, Minister Boot had hoped that the uplands Agri-environment Scheme would contribute towards other effective conservation measures, which would be quite substantial and go a good way to achieving this target.

Minute 21.09, under Action 20, Landscape-scale initiatives and ecosystem resilience to climate change: the sentence which states "DEFA don't think they can achieve anything at this scale by March" didn't reflect that DEFA are funding the Upland Stewardship Scheme and part-funding the Ramsey Forest Project and are also developing a pilot blue carbon project.

Minute 21.09 - Biodiversity Strategy Action 25 – Biodiversity Action Plans: there is a wish to see species and habitats ranked in terms of priority and he thinks this would be challenging and unnecessary but perhaps they could perhaps be tiered or grouped.

Biodiversity Strategy Action 33 - Invasive Species Strategy: DEFA would like to revise the Wild Animals Act (Restriction on Importation, etc) Act 1980. This Act prohibits the importation of certain species to the Isle of Man without a licence and the reasons for licensing are very restricted. It can be an effective way of controlling non-native invasive species as it prevents them getting here in the first place.

21.15 Delivery Plan 2021-22: Consideration of the draft Delivery Plan before it is posted on the DEFA website and forwarded to the Department for noting (paper B)

Members to provide confirmation or otherwise that wording of their tasks is correct:

The intended audience for the delivery plan was queried. This will go to the DEFA Minister for sign-off and then it will be publicly available on the website, as soon as possible. The intention is for this to be a living document that is updated at least annually and covers the period from April to March but could be also updated throughout the year, as and when required as more actions are added or completed.

Clarification was requested on Action 21a, and if Ecosystems Policy Team comments on planning applications included objections, which they do, though more commonly they provide advice, but if they object, they will state why and what might resolve the issue.

It was asked whether it was worth getting Manx Nature Conservation Forum members input into the document, as they will be undertaking a lot of work to contribute to the delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy which is not yet listed. DEFA held workshops with the Forum to incorporate others' work in the mid-term audit; this would be very useful in aligning work between organisations and such actions can sit alongside the BDG plan, online.

3. DEFA to circulate the delivery plan to the MNCF for the next meeting and see if they would like to input actions to a separate but mirrored document.

The Manx Game Preservation Society is a large community and getting a group action which can be inserted into the plan is not easy as it needs to be put forward for consideration prior to incorporation.

The DoI has collected actions from around the department, via the integration of new DoI biodiversity influencers who are located within the different divisions. They have been asked to start recording what they have planned, decided or acted on which contributes to the strategy, as well as thinking what they could do if there was funding available. They have created a four page flyer to raise awareness and promote biodiversity conservation throughout the DoI. The table of actions for the delivery plan isn't yet complete as not all areas have reported back and there are still options they are exploring. It would be useful for other members of the DoI to see the Delivery Plan before it goes live and as a landowner there are conversations that could be had about what is done with some of that land. It demonstrates that the Department is listening and engaging. They hope that this is the first stage to opening up more and better conversations between the different areas of the DoI and other parties within this group.

4. AT to insert the DoI actions into the Delivery Plan and circulate this to JP for approval.

There is some tension around planning applications and it was noted that we need to be mindful that the needs of people and biodiversity need to be balanced under the umbrella of sustainable development, which is promoted under Biosphere Isle of Man. There was discussion around whether the protection of biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable development clash or are mutually supportive. JP feels that we need to be working with a common aim, and for a broad compliance with the general objectives of each Department. It was noted that if the new Government creates a single government entity, the procedures might change, requiring more preliminary internal discussions to resolve issues prior to public debate, and the Ecosystems Team encourages early engagement on significant developments. The DoI has also been looking more at the integration of people and the environment and whether people can live and work more sensitively in and with the environment without the need to fence it off.

There was discussion on whether the why column within the delivery plan is required, as this is usually covered by the 'what', but in general the why gives context to the 'what' and for some actions the 'why' gives them value. It was agreed that the why doesn't necessarily have to be filled in, but should be if it's useful and where it brings additional value.

It would be useful to show if tasks were specific for the year and finite, or expected to be ongoing for a number of years. Tasks that have been completed, could be separated.

The Biodiversity Strategy has a strong tie with Biosphere, with the education tasks, and under the UNESCO Biosphere IoM's own strategy with its 5 Es (Environment, Education, Enjoyment, Economy and Engagement) and it would be good to feed more actions out through the Biosphere as well as having a link on the Biosphere page and website, to the Biodiversity Strategy and Delivery Plan.

5. AT to speak to the Biosphere officers about making links between the Biosphere website and the Biodiversity Strategy webpage.

A concern was raised over the wording of the Delivery Plan to clarify compliance with Government Financial Regulations.

6. AT to consider the wording of some actions to ensure it is obvious that financial regulations and due process have been followed.

Members to confirm the progress of implementation of their tasks if not already, on the plan:

Three of the Agriculture and Lands Directorate actions will be changing from amber to green following AL's recent email.

7. AT to update the Delivery Plan with RAG and blue ratings - Red not started, amber in progress, green is on track and blue is complete.

21.16 United Nation Biodiversity Conference of Parties (COP 15) 11th to 15th October 2021

Some of the key outcomes were as follows:

- Commitment to a post-2020 biodiversity framework to put biodiversity on the path to recovery - details to be discussed in April-May 2022, following negotiations between parties leading up to this date. The EPT hope to do a press release on the declaration and link it with work on the island;
- Increased funding to support biodiversity protection in developing countries;
- Commitment to a global biodiversity agenda.

8. AT to circulate the link to the UN Biodiversity Conference press release and draft post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The general message for the IoM from COP is that generally we have the main points covered by our Biodiversity Strategy. However, there is likely to be an emphasis on hot terms like nature-based solutions and creation of greater links with climate change and human wellbeing. The Island will perhaps need to alter the strategy but it might not require large alterations, though we await further details.

The Isle of Man is signed up to the CBD which had a Strategic Plan with (Aichi) targets covering the period 2010-2020. However, as the IoM signed up late (2012), a 2015 -2025 strategy was created. We are bound to take into account their recommendations, however, there is always the need consider our local resource to deliver.

21.17 Date of next meeting: Monday 15th November

The next agenda is to include an item on biometrics and targets for nature, to help us measure the health of our ecosystems and biodiversity and the impact of our efforts. Manx BirdLife will provide an example. There are some things we do which we just know will be good for biodiversity and don't need specific measurement, but other things need measuring and this group can help decide this.

It was clarified that this discussion is about setting clear on the ground targets for species and habitats as a measurement of the success of our actions, rather than Planning metrics including biodiversity net gain in development, though it was suggested that Planning metrics should be on the agenda for future discussions.

The meeting ended at 15:30.

The next meeting of the BDG will be on Monday 15th November.

Signed: J. Ledwith [Chair]

Date: 29/11/2021

