



NORTHERN UPLAND CHAIN LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP

BOARD MEETING

10.30 am – Friday 7th December 2018

The Morritt Arms, Greta Bridge, County Durham

Board Members Present: David Hill (Chairman); Richard Betton (Northern Hill Farming Panel); Paul Burgess (Nidderdale AONB Partnership); Elliott Lorimer (Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership); Amanda Miller (RSPB); Laurie Norris (NFU); Gary Smith (Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority); Christine Venus (Natural England); Graham Warren (Environment Agency); Rob Stoneman (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust); Crispin Thorn (Forestry Commission); Chris Woodley-Stewart (North Pennines AONB Partnership); Pauline Wall (Northumberland National Park Authority); David Grey (Open Seat); David Aldborough (Northumbrian Water).

Others present: Adrian Shepherd (Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority); Liz Charman (RSPB); Fiona Tweedie & Dr Carla Turner (ADAS); Ali Hesketh (NFU); Rob Mayhew (Northumberland National Park Authority);

1. Apologies

Amanda Anderson (Moorland Association); Neil Kilgour (Open Seat); Ben Lamb (Tees Rivers Trust);

2. HNV Farming Report

Carla Turner and Fiona Tweedie gave a presentation on their findings, focusing on the 12 'opportunities' to support farming in the NUCLNP post-Brexit. In discussion amongst the Board, the following points were made:

- The importance of farm business planning to manage the risks and uncertainty;
- The need for a 'culture change' to recognise that producing environmental goods would be as important as producing food;
- The need to be able to present a different financial model that captures the potential income from future payments for public goods (no information to enable this at the moment);
- Unless statutory environmental targets/outcomes are included in a new Environment Act there will be a risk that a future government could slash funding for agri-environment contracts;
- The importance of giving the LNP's farmers a louder voice through the Northern Hill Farming Panel to counter the increasingly loud voice of lowland farming in the debate;

In relation to the report, it was requested that the following changes be made:

- Need more clarity about what some of the terms and the options mean (e.g. 'diversification' includes payments for public goods; 'productivity' does not mean more production; 'break even' is only break even if the farmer does not take any wages etc);
- More detail/explanation of the sort of things might be done under each option (other than those relating to Tests and Trials). For example, different ways to diversify; the different types of 'inputs' that could be reduced etc.

Board Members were invited to provide any additional comments to Adrian Shepherd by 21 December, with a view to completing a final report by the end of January.

3. Curlew Conservation Group

Liz Charman gave a presentation on the proposed framework for a project to protect the LNP's 'hotspots' for Curlew. The presentation noted that further discussion/work was still needed to determine how to identify the 'hotspots' on which action would focus. In wider discussion amongst the Board the following points were made:

- That this project related to objective 3 of the four objectives previously agreed, and that action across the whole of the LNP (and potentially beyond) would be happening through the three other objectives;
- Should use the habitat suitability modelling developed in the Dales to identify potential 'hotspot' areas;
- The potential for wider involvement of a range of different types of 'volunteer' (BTO, gamekeepers, farmers; local bird groups etc);
- The importance of engaging with farmers and landowners if the Board confirms a desire to develop the project further;
- The need still to review the boundary of the North Pennines SPA, and consider whether to provide support to such a review as part of this project.
- The need to build knowledge of what's *causing* the decline in Curlew (which is being researched through other projects)
- The potential to link this work in with the RBAPS trial, which has a strong 'breeding wader' element

The Board approved the project framework as the basis for developing a more detailed project, and the recruitment of an LNP project officer to work with the Working Group to secure the necessary funding.

4. Measuring the LNP's short-term outcomes

The Board considered the report prepared by Gary Smith. In discussion, it was agreed that developing a more robust monitoring programme was not a sufficiently high priority given the potential cost. It was, therefore, agreed to use the best existing measures (using proxies where necessary). The Board would also keep an eye on the work being done on metrics for Defra's 25-year Environment Plan, as a possible future source of better measures.

5. LNP self-assessment tool

The Board considered the paper prepared by Gary Smith. It was agreed that the NUCLNP would not respond to the Defra request to provide information but would draw attention to the work we have done (via the website). The response would also make clear that the NUCLNP will not take part in any future annual reporting requirements unless or until Defra provides funding for LNPs.

6. Update on other LNP projects

- a. **Great Upland Forest** – the group had met to share information about local progress and issues. Overall, there was a feeling that there was no shortage of funding for woodland but there was still a need to change the culture of land management. It was still not clear that there is anything specific that the LNP could do to add value to what is already happening at local level.
- b. **Hill Farm Training Initiative** – work on the pilot in Northumberland is now well underway, through the work of Ema Caskie.

- c. **Website** – Josie Wilson has been working on refreshing the LNP website. The structure has been simplified, the content on current projects has been updated, and the LNP infographic has been added. Just need to sort out the link to the hay-meadow advice site. The Board asked that their thanks be passed on to Josie.

7. Financial update

The Board noted the financial update in the paper from Gary Smith. The decision to fund the development of the curlew project means that most of the current budget is now committed.

8. Information sharing

The [Oxford Real farming Conference](#) will take place on 3-4 January;

The Board's attention was drawn to the [Landscape Enterprise Network \(LENs\)](#) projects in East Anglia and Cumbria, which identify the business case for a broad range of sectors to invest in regional natural capital.

The latest Red Squirrel Northern England [monitoring report](#) has just been published.

Natural England is undertaking a wildfire review, which may include MoD site in Northumberland.

Globally the 'Green Bond' market is increasing by £100 billion per year.

Government is currently consulting on [proposals for biodiversity net gain](#) through the planning system (deadline 19 February 2019).

The Partnership for Biodiversity has released a free online pre-planning tool – the [Wildlife Assessment Check](#) which is designed to help smooth the process of addressing ecological impacts for householders, smaller developers and local authorities.

9. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed as a true record but noting that Crispin Thorn had attended the meeting. It was noted that the following actions are still outstanding:

- CW-S to edit/amend/add to the Board's initial suggestions for the raptor action plan and report back to the Board
- CW-S/RS/GW/DH to produce a first draft of a natural capital document for the Northern Upland Chain.
- RM to arrange for production of a communications plan for the Curlew project in January 2019.

10. Any other business

None.

11. Date of next meeting

Josie Wilson to identify suitable dates for a programme of Board meetings for 2019.

AGREED ACTIONS

	NAME	ACTION
1.	All	To provide any further comments on the ADAS farming report by ?? December.
2.	Adrian Shepherd, Richard Betton	To sign off final version of the ADAS farming report in January.
3.	Gary Smith	To arrange for recruitment of a project funding officer to develop the proposed Curlew Project
4.	Gary Smith	To respond to Defra explaining why the NUCLNP would not be undertaking the self-assessment reporting.
5.	Amanda Miller	To work with the Curlew Project group to specify the scope for a wider curlew conservation project across the LNP.
6.	Rob Mayhew	To convene a further meeting of GUFG to consider whether there are any practical proposals for action by the LNP to support more woodland creation, and report back to the Board.
7.	Rob Mayhew	To arrange for production of a communications plan for the Curlew project in January 2019.
8.	Josie Wilson	To organise and circulate dates for Board meetings in 2019.
	Actions outstanding from previous meeting	
9.	Chris Woodley-Stewart	To edit/amend/add to the Board's initial suggestions for the raptor action plan and report to the March Board meeting
10.	Rob Stoneman, Chris Woodley-Stewart, Graham Warren, David Hill	To produce a first draft of a natural capital document for the Northern Upland Chain.