

WBP Invasive Non Native Species Group Meeting

Welsh Government Building, Aberystwyth

26th June 2013: 21st Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees

Dave Thomas	DT	WG
Alys Edwards	AE	WBP
Tracey Lovering	TL	WBP/NRW
Gabe Wyn	GW	CCW
Nick Birula	NBB	EAW
Colin Charman	CC	CCW
Nigel Ajax-Lewis	NAL	WTSWW/WTW
Kathleen Carroll	KC	WG
Anthony Hicks	AH	WG
Olaf Booy (by phone)	OB	GBNNSS
Neville Rookes	NR	WLGA
Chris Tucker	CT	FCW
Steve Tomkins	ST	ADAS

Apologies

Jo Hughes	NRW
Dave Thorpe	NRW
Mike McCabe	NRW
Jim Collins	CCW
Sean Hathaway	SCC

1. Actions and minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. The majority of actions from November's meeting have now been addressed, with the remaining outstanding actions either covered by agenda items or on-going.

DT reported that Welsh Government are now represented on the GB Japanese knotweed Group.

OB reported that Defra have asked the GBNNSS to review and update the *Bombus terrestris* risk assessment. This work has commenced and is available in draft form. Angela Taylor is the Defra lead.

1. Opportunities to input to 2nd cycle of Water Framework Directive (WFD)

NBB provided an introduction to the opportunities to input to the next round of water framework directive (WFD). RBMPs follow a 6 year cycle with 1st cycle plans approved by the Minister (and Secretary of State for the two cross-border plans) in 2009. Future plans will be published in 2015 (2nd Cycle) and then 2021 (3rd Cycle). INNS actions were added to the previous plans in an ad hoc manner and there are opportunities to input to the next cycle. Although INNS are not considered a current cause of WFD failure, they are recognised as a significant risk for future planning cycles.

National Risks Assessments (RAs) are available on the EA Website, however there are significant opportunities to flag issues more locally. The INNS Group needs to input, both strategically and at a local level.

It was noted that the WFD covers estuaries and coastal waters out to 1 NM, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) covers the marine environment and up to high water but does not include estuaries and also includes a whole descriptor on INNS, so there is some overlap between the two strategies.

A task and finish group is now required to discuss in more detail and outline how the WBP INNS Group will contribute to consultations. Part of the role of the group will be to ensure relevant datasets are identified and fed in.

<p>ACTION 1. AE/NBB to establish Task and Finish Group to guide INNS Group input to WFD and influence and inform RA process</p>
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2. ADAS Report: Design of a decision making framework to prioritise action for INNS in Wales

Steve Tomkins provided an introduction to the work undertaken by ADAS, which attempts to develop a transparent and effective programme of action for INNS in Wales. The overall objective of the project was to understand the range of risk assessment methodologies and establish how risk assessment procedures could be used to help prioritise INNS management in Wales, using an understanding of risk evaluation methods and risks of particular relevance to Wales.

The study concluded that developing and managing a standalone risk assessment process for Wales is likely to be resource intensive, and as such, alternative options which require less resource should be considered, such as adaption or better integration with the existing GBNNSS Risk Assessment process.

A discussion followed around the various methodology developed by ADAS and its potential application Wales. OB noted that the GBNNSS were keen to discuss the findings of the study and ensure this is fed into the GBNNSS Risk Management work, which is currently being developed. It will be important that this work is considered in the context of the prioritisation work, which the Working Group has been undertaking and results should be compared with the results of the ADAS

work, which could include some worked up examples, following the risk management tool developed.

A number of other factors will need to be considered in taking this work forward. For example, it was emphasised that priorities are often dependant on available opportunities and can be site specific and this needs to be considered. WFD RAs also need to be considered, as this has been undertaken as a separate process (25 species have been flagged for freshwater or marine).

It is hoped that this will lead to the development of a programme of work for the Wales INNS Group, which can be costed and provided to Welsh Government in an attempt to secure resources for delivery.

ACTION 2. NRW to compare results of ADAS study with prioritisation work and develop some worked examples using the risk management tool developed

3. INNS Action Audit

Alys provided a brief overview of progress to date with the INNS Action Audit, which is currently held in paper format by the WBP Secretariat and available to stakeholders via the WBP website. At present the Action Audit is not a comprehensive picture of INNS actions across Wales although it was agreed that it is an extremely useful document. It was suggested that INNS actions may be better communicated through the UK Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS), which would make the data more accessible, allow a view of the spatial distribution of actions, either as a whole or for individual species (such as Japanese knotweed etc.) and allow aggregated summaries of the total land under management.

A discussion followed regarding the move of the Action Audit to BARS. Attendees agreed to trail addition of few INNS actions to BARS in advance of November's meeting and discuss further at that time. The BARS database will continue to be populated and an overview of current actions on the system can be provided at the meeting.

ACTION 3. ALL to trial addition of INNS actions to BARS <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/> in advance of November meeting. Contact AE to provide guidance/training if required

ACTION 4. AE to discuss INNS reporting requirements with Ulric Wilson (JNCC) and Olaf Booy (GBNNSS)

4. NRW Approach to INNS

Gabe Wyn provided an overview of the NRW approach to INNS following the consolidation of the statutory environment bodies in Wales. NRW currently have 14 members of staff who work indirectly on INNS and an overview of the groups each member of staff sit on.

A new NRW group has been established to ensure a coordinated approach to INNS across NRW and ensure the correct members of staff are attending meetings. A paper is also being drafted to NRW

Board, highlighting how NRW should be working on INNS, and would welcome input from Welsh Government to this work.

- ACTION 5.** AE to circulate NRW INNS contact details
- ACTION 6.** DT to discuss input to NRW INNS paper with GW
- ACTION 7.** GW to circulate NRW INNS paper once available
- ACTION 8.** DT to clarify process for feeding in to regular meetings between Ceri Davies and Chris Lea

5. INNS Programme of Action/Work Plan

DT led the discussion around the development of an INNS work programme for the group. The newly established Wales Biodiversity Strategy Board is likely to oversee the work of the Wales-level expert Groups and it will be important to be clear about the role /remit of the INNS group as part of this process.

It was suggested that the focus for the GB NNS Strategy should be used as a template to develop a programme of work to ensure alignment with the strategy. Attendees agreed the focus of the Work Plan should be high level actions which group members can contribute to collectively, such as the development of priorities, contribution to WFD etc.

- ACTION 9.** AE to produce draft work programme and circulate for comment and add to agenda for discussion at November's meeting.

6. Media and Communication, Training, E-Learning

OB provided an update on media and communication work at a GB level. The ELearning materials, produced by the GBNNS Biosecurity Working Group aims to improve coordination of INNS biosecurity across environment sector public bodies within GB and should be complete within the next few months. Work on the Environment Agency aquatic operational biosecurity guidance is almost complete and should be available shortly to external stakeholders.

The GBNNS are currently awaiting the outputs of the review of the GB Strategy, to see what direction media and communications work should take.

- ACTION 10.** NBB to liaise with OB regarding the roll out of EA operational biosecurity guidance

7. INNS Evidence Gaps

TL provided some background to the WBP evidence gaps project, the aim of which is to engage the research community in Wales and beyond; addressing evidence gaps in biodiversity and the ecosystem approach. Looking for new approaches and integrating with existing mechanisms, to ensure good provision of evidence and advice to Government, the environment sector and others.

The Research Project Proposals provide opportunities for the UK research community to meet priority evidence gaps raised by the environmental sector of Wales.

Evidence gaps are submitted through WBP Groups and are available on the WBP Website <http://biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/WBP-Evidence-Gaps-Project> as a work in progress. Comments, amendments, applications to address gaps, in full, or in part, are all welcomed.

The WBP INNS Group has identified a number of gaps (see WBVP website for further details) and the WBP Expert groups have been contacted to provide additional INNS related gaps, relevant to their particular species or ecosystem. This work will need to be kept under constant review and should be added to the agenda as a standing item.

ACTION 11. AE to provide revised list of INNS evidence gaps to TL

ACTION 12. TL to circulate guidance from Shaun Russell (WERH) on development of research proposals

ACTION 13. ALL to send details of any upcoming conferences , where there is potential to publicise the WBP Evidence Gaps project to Tracey Lovering
tracey.lovering@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

8. Partner Updates

Only one partner update has been received, from NRW, around the work on Alpine Newts in Morfa Dyffryn, north Wales. This will be circulated with the meeting minutes. Attendees agreed that although updates have not been forthcoming this still provided a useful way for group members to update on recent work and should be maintained.

9. EU/UK Update

OB provided an update on work being undertaken at an EU and GB level. It is still unclear whether there will be an EU Directive or Regulation around INNS, although it should be published in the next few months. A European code of conduct for boat users is also possible.

The review of GB Strategy is being led by Craig Lea (Defra) who is responsible for drafting and setting up interest groups. Feedback from stakeholders at the GBINNS Forum will also be fed in. The main focus will be identifying what we (as stakeholders) would like to see over the next 5 years of the strategy.

The British and Irish Council (BIC) met last September where INNS issues were discussed and recommendations produced around biosecurity, pathways, surveillance, communication and research. There is a need to ensure that there is no duplication of effort/research across administrations and also a need to secure additional collaboration in terms of managing pathways.

ACTION 14. DT to circulate minutes of British and Irish Council Meeting

10. AOB

Colin Charman noted that colleagues in NRW were happy to attend the next meeting of the INNS Group and provide an update on the non-native species elements of the MSFD, and the LIFE N2K Project, which is working across European sites to identify management issues impacting on condition and developing costed eradication/control/monitoring programmes

ACTION 15. AE to invite NRW staff (CC to provide contacts) to November meeting.

The issue of encouraging more local action groups, similar to the North Wales and River Dee INNS Forum, was discussed. With most attendees feeling that this would be beneficial. Resourcing of these groups remains an issue and could be explored through the INNS work programme or possibly through a workshop at the WBP conference or through one of the existing regional forums such as Bionet, GGBAG, GLAMBAG or SWAGBAG.

ACTION 16. AE to explore possibility of holding regional workshops on INNS priorities

ACTION 17. CT & MMcC to ensure Rhododendron sub-group meets in advance of the next INNS meeting in November and provide feedback at the meeting

11. Date of future meetings

27th November 2013, Ladywell House, Newton: Banw Room