**SEG Meeting 08th March 2012, Thursday 08th March 2012, Welsh Government Offices, Aberystwyth**

**Attendees:** Stephen Bladwell (Chair) Alys Edwards, Sinead Lynch, Russel Hobson, Steve Chambers, , Sam Bosanquet, Tracey Lovering, Adrian Fowles, Steve Lucas, Mark Barber, Andy Jones, Rachel Taylor, Gary Roberts, Lizzie Wilberforce, Matthew Ellis

**By phone:** Liz Halliwell, Liz Howe, Tony Gent

**Apologies:** Ray Woods, Jean Matthews, Sarah Bird, Tony Gent, Sian Whitehead, Lori Frater, Duncan Silvell, Trevor Dines, Rob Strachan

The Lichen and Bryophyte Red list (which follows IUCN criteria) will be launched on Thursday 15th March 2012 in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. For those unavailable to attend hard copies are available from Sam Bosanquet S.Bosanquet@ccw.gov.uk

Evidence gaps update

Tracey Lovering provided an update on the WBP evidence gaps work, which began in September 2009. Academics have now been invited to join the WBP Wales-level groups in order to build on this work and a workshop will be held to introduce these new members to the work of the WBP and wider legislative developments in the next few months. In addition to this, policy which needs to be reviewed through Living Wales process and the potential for evidence gaps to address this work will be assessed.

Gaps which cannot be addressed through the academic work will be fed into the Living Wales programme or, if appropriate, to Steve Chambers who is currently the WG representative on the Defra R&D programme. Suggestions can be fed up to Defra but need to address evidence gaps in both England and Wales (approx £2m in pot). Information is available in public domain- active projects and proposed future projects (Defra website).

Evidence gaps – information is required in relation to specific species or habitat evidence gaps/ lead/ and methodology. TL requested each taxon group identify the **top three priorities** in order to refine the work put forward. Some issues could be grouped e.g. dispersal issues, which could be hung on habitat type.

**ACTIONS**

* **SC to share list of project’s which have been delivered by Defras R&D programme to date, to include funding which has been received and amount of funds available – and include link to Defra work.**
* **AE to circulate link to WBP group membership (including academics)**
* **All to complete evidence gaps table by no later than Thursday 15th March 2012 and return to Tracey Lovering.**

FCW Glastir contract mangers guidance

Work has been undertaken by FCW in order to identify species for which management of conifer or broad leaved woodland may have benefits, under the Glastir woodland management scheme. Prescriptions will be developed subsequently. The existing list needs to be expanded in order to make it more relevant to number of species – Russel has completed for Lepidoptera. The aim of the work is to develop a number of generic prescriptions so actions for multiple species can be grouped.

It was suggested that prescriptions need to be developed at a targeted/ regional scale and generic actions were not necessarily appropriate. However, generic actions still need to be flagged up. Targeted monitoring is required to assess what a woodland management scheme can deliver in terms of biodiversity.

A discussion followed around the effectiveness of this approach, the need to develop prescriptions which will benefit each priority species which may occur and the need to differentiate between widespread species and those of limited distribution in order to inform prioritisation and indicate that higher level of consultation is required. The current approach being taken by FCW is unlikely to be able to cope with regional/ specific requirements, what is needed are more prescriptions, but which address multiple species. Underpinning detail for each prescription is key!

It was agreed that it would be useful to understand how these prescriptions will be implemented on site and greater clarity is required on the working method of GT contract managers – what processes do they work through – how are lists/tables etc. used. Once this is understood interpretation and/or guidance for use can be developed to accompany tables.

The work proposed has already been undertaken for a number of taxon groups. This may need to be updated but could be used as a starting point for this work. *Commitment is needed from the group in order to refine the table and develop as necessary over the next 4-6 weeks.*

**ACTIONS**

* **SB to contact Bill McDonald to clarify what this info will be used for and how will it be used, and feedback to group asap , the group will then determine if it is useful to contribute (by 16th March 2012)**
* **SBo to forward work which has already been completed for lower plants to SB**
* **SBo to discuss the use of data with BWW officers working on GT and feedback to group**
* **SB to contact Ann Humble/ David Jenkins regarding the use of data and determine how interaction between species be dealt with.**

Species/Habitat integration

Work started last year and covered upland, woodland and heathland. This work now needs to be completed and passed to ESGs for progression. A programme of work for the coming year and timescales for completion need to be agreed. Spreadsheets will be circulated electronically beforehand and completed in subsequent workshops. Progress with completion of spread sheets will be reviewed at July’s meeting and a date identified for September workshop sessions. The priority in the first instance will be completion of woodland, heathland and upland work and then bring in other habitats (which will need more work).

Species prioritisation work has already been produced, as have action spread sheets which indicate presence in LBAP area. This work needs to be pulled together and re-circulated.

**ACTIONS**

* **Produce list of initiatives already carried out and dates completed (AE/TL)**
* **AE to circulate tables and info electronically and arrange workshops in autumn to complete.**
* **ALL to complete spreadsheets once circulated and attend September workshops in order to finalise this work.**
* **AE to draft work programme and circulate for comment.**

Future of BAP Review

Tracey provided and introduction to the Future of BAP (FoB) review. The FoB review is looking at all aspects of WBP and feedback/recommendation need to be provided on the SEG and Lead Partner work. Programmes of work need to be identified that will need to be fed into the wider Living Wales programme, and which are unlikely to be completed elsewhere.

A number of key roles were identified for the SEG including; ensuring the Living Wales programme is addressing delivery of 2020 targets; species monitoring – outside of designated sites and developing a clear, transparent vision of species success at a regional and national level.

In order to deliver the roles identified above there is a need to re-examine the ToR of the group and develop an agreed work programme for the next 1-2 years. It is vital that species needs are fed into monitoring of the success of the ecosystems approach, but it is as yet unclear at what point indicator’s will be developed and how the SEG can feed in to this work. Wales has signed up to UK Biodiversity indicators and a draft discussion document has been circulated, looking at species as indicators of ecosystem health. It was agreed that it would be more useful to identify a suite of species responsible for monitoring ecosystem health rather than attaching value and taxa should be identified which should be brought in to wider discussion.

When considering the role of the group in contributing to the development of the ecosystems approach there is a whole suite of taxa which needs to be addressed outside of S42 list if the ecosystems approach is to be successful and therefore it may be necessary to widen the scope of the group?

A discussion followed and the following key points were raised, which should be fed into the FoB review;

* The SEG has a wider role in the ecosystems services debate. Role in monitoring structures as a means to determine ecosystem health.
* Voice of conservation value independent of human services should be raised: easy to forget legal targets through valuation and services approach (VNN bridge workshops).
* The ecosystem approach will be delivered through Natural Resource Management Plan, which will need to include species and the SEG has a key role in ensuring that the data used is up to date, relevant and that nothing spurious is being included – Overseeing role.
* Need to ensure there is appropriate engagement with the relevant Living Wales work streams (this will be addressed/formalised by Julia Korn’s work with Matthew Quinn and Martin Cox)
* It is vital that WBP is outside of the SEB and remains an independent partnership but continues to provide advice to WBP groups, Welsh Government and the Single Body – last links through to UK approach through NGO involvement. Make firm this recommendation.
* It is still unclear what would determine success for Wales under the ecosystems approach. The SEG can assist in providing clarity at local, regional and national level in terms of species **ACTION for SEG**
* It is still too early in Living Wales programme to make changes in ToR apart from few additional points
* The group may well need to expand its remit beyond s42 moving forward

Although there is overlap between attendances at taxon group meetings it was agreed that it would not be beneficial to restrict membership of the SEG to one representative from each taxon group due to the small pool of experts in Wales. Agreeing dates/locations for SEG meetings in advance and ensuring outputs o meetings are shared with all members should help to address capacity issues. This could also be addressed through running meetings/workshops through other forums such as webinars etc.

* **Species Lead Partners** - Attendees agreed that there is still a real need for Lead Partners in Wales and that a more formal structure was needed.
* Lead Partner work to form part of the SEG – SEG will take on role of forum for lead partner to be addressed and mentoring role/facilitation role for those who can’t come to meetings
* There is a need to provide greater clarity on what the role of Lead Partner entails and ensure that Lead Partners have the sufficient expertise to have species overview and develop vision and associated actions.
* Funding of LP work needs to be addressed (currently funded through deliverable of CCW grant agreements) How do we resource the smaller groups/individuals? Taxonomic funding at SG meetings – better used to address funding of LP work?
* Work has already been undertaken to assess how many species have active lead partners (work with WBP re gaps, percentage per taxa group where gaps exist)
* Need on going communication with LPs –corresponding members and open invitation to attend meetings.
* Species experts need to be valued, resourced and opinion fed in.
* Use expertise of SEG and lead partners present to develop support for LPs etc. add to key roles of SEG.
* SEG to organise workshop for LPs once formal process has been agreed.
* Assess capacity of Lead Partners thorough revised version of BARS.

***ACTIONS***

* **AE to present new version of BARS to next meeting in July.**
* **RH to review the roles and responsibilities of lead partners and amend as necessary**
* **AE and SB to ensure the above points are fed in to the FoB review**
* **AE/TL/SB to consider possibility of engagement with Consultancies to address gaps in Lead Partners – subject to outcomes of FoB work**
* **Investigate potential to hold workshop for LPs in order to explain role**

A discussion followed around the best way to address Lead Partner gaps and manage on-going communication. Consultancies may be keen to take on the role of some species leads and ADAS have already indicated a willingness to engage with this work. IEEM/NATUR should also be approached to see if they have an interest in supporting this process. These ideas can be explored further once future of LP process has been agreed.

The level of involvement of Lead Partners will be dependent on capacity and provisions of clearer guidance and clearer mechanisms for reporting and communication

**Area integration work (specific request from wetland ESG to review draft priority areas).**

Area integration needs to be addressed with a focus on trialling this approach on the three rivers area in Carmarthenshire.

**ACTIONS**

* **AE to add progression of area integration work to agenda for July’s meeting.**
* **ALL to look at lowland raised bog info circulated and send comments to SB on species interest in relevant area. For detailed map info layers contact Pete directly.**
* **ALL to feed any additional data sources to (such as distribution of s42 plants/inverts) to SB**
* **Other ESGs requiring SEG input to priority mapping project to be referred to existing data sources, if available, in the first instance,**

Date of Future Meetings:

05 July 2012

29 November 2012