

DRAFT

PROGRAMME BOARD ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES

THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING MINUTES

BY ZOOM

7 SEPTEMBER 2020, 11:00 – 14:00

1. Attendance / apologies

Present:

Richard Pullen (Defra, Chair)
Niall Moore (Non-native Species Secretariat, Secretary)
Alan Macleod (Defra - Plant Health)
Christine Maggs (Joint Nature Conservation Committee)
Emilie Hall (Defra, Marine)
Jo Long (Scottish Environment Protection Agency)
Kath Webster (Animal and Plant Health Agency)
Leasa Fielding (Welsh Government)
Mark Diamond (Environment Agency)
Neil Riddle (Forestry Commission)
Olaf Booy (Non-native Species Secretariat)
Sarah Webster (Defra)
Stan Whitaker (Scottish Natural Heritage)
Adrian Jowett (Natural England)
Ben Dipper (Scottish Government)
Theresa Kudelska (Natural Resources Wales)

Apologies:

Colin Edwards (Scottish Forestry)
Ken Bradley (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, NI)
Mannon Lewis (Natural Resources Wales) – replaced by Theresa Kudelska
Martin Williams (Welsh Government) – replaced by Leasa Fielding
Matthew Bird (Scottish Government)
Nicholas Greenwood (Marine Management Organisation)
Nicola Spence (Defra, Plant Health) – replaced by Alan Macleod
Peter Pollard (SEPA) – replaced by Jo Long

2. Minutes of 34th meeting on 19 June 2019

The minutes of the previous meeting were signed off with no modifications.

3. Actions / matter arising

All of the actions were complete or in progress apart from Action 14 (setting up the next meeting of the England Working) which was carried over.

ACTION 1 (previous Action 14): NNSS to arrange a meeting of the England Working Group in conjunction with Sarah

4. Board composition and Northern Ireland protocol

Paper circulated PB Sept 20-04

Sarah introduced this item, explaining the proposal to form two separate bodies. The UK Programme Board (including Northern Ireland) will continue its normal non-statutory function, retaining all of its current roles and responsibilities. A separate 'committee' will be set up by an amendment to the retained EU Regulation in order to discharge statutory functions under that legislation.

The Board agreed that it would be useful to have a table setting out the similarities and differences between the two bodies.

ACTION 2: Sarah to provide a table setting out the similarities and differences in terms and functioning of the UK Programme Board and the Committee.

5. Inspectorate scoping

Paper circulated PB Sept 20-05

Niall introduced this paper, setting out the work the NNSS has been doing to scope a potential non-native species inspectorate. This has included reviewing the need for and resources required by an inspectorate, its geographic scope and powers required.

The Board discussed:

- Geographic scope. Based on the NNSS analysis most of the required inspections would be in England; however, some would also be required in Scotland and Wales. The report produced by NNSS will be on a GB basis but will make clear options for the geographic scope of an inspectorate. Colleagues in Scotland and Wales were keen to see the detailed breakdown from the geographical needs analysis, which will be shared.
- Practicalities and powers. It would be useful to have more information on these in the report. For example, would warrants be required and how would these be obtained, how would costs be recovered, what kind of cleaning / disinfection procedures would be needed and who would do them? On

powers, it was noted that current powers are relatively wide ranging for species on the list of 'special concern', but limited for others; although, emergency powers could potentially be used if necessary. It may be necessary at some point to consider legislative opportunities to introduce more appropriate powers.

- Funding. The Board noted that the proposal for an inspectorate relies on the main SR20 bid, without which there will not be resources for an inspectorate. Given the resources required, in Scotland it may be that the inspectorate function is added to existing inspectorates. In Wales the situation is complicated because APHA provides animal and plant health inspection for both England and Wales.
- Coordination. The Board noted that this area is very fractured and it will be important to ensure there is good coordination of the INNS elements of inspections.
- Scenarios. It would be useful to explore scenarios and perhaps add them to the report – based on previous experience (e.g. the toxic foaming grasshoppers) to tease out how INNS inspections would work in practice.
- Bi-laterals. There may be a need for specific bi-lateral discussions with the devolved governments.

ACTION 3: NNS to share the detail of the inspectorate geographical needs analysis.

6. SR20 Resourcing bids

Paper circulated Sept 20-06

Olaf introduced this item noting the rapidly changing picture. A bid has been submitted to the Food, Farming and Biosecurity side of Defra for additional resources to cover a small inspectorate and uplift in costs for contingency and rapid response, comms and long-term control. This covers APHA, bids for the EA, Defra and NE have been submitted separately. **Christine** queried whether INNS were being included in the natural capital bid and **Sarah** agreed to look into this. **Richard** requested that the Board be kept updated with progress over the next few months (rather than waiting until the next meeting).

ACTION 4: NNS to ensure that the Board is kept updated on significant developments with the resourcing bids.

ACTION 5: Sarah to check with Jemilah on the issue of inclusion of INNS in the natural capital SR bid.

7. Boating PAP

Paper circulated Sept 20-07

The Programme Board signed off the PAP with two minor changes ((i) having only organisations listed in annex 6 and (ii) changing SNH to Nature Scot), welcoming it and commending the working group for their excellent work. They agreed that the group should meet twice a year and to include organisational logos where desirable in the document.

8. Research

The research working group had its third meeting in July and continues to draft the strategic evidence plan. This has been supported, in part, by a Defra intern who has interviewed academics to identify research areas they are working on, gaps and evidence needs. **Sarah** informed the Board about the bid for £10 million over three years to the strategic priorities fund. It is one of 22 and only 5/6 can be taken forward.

9. Lunch

10. GB INNS Strategy

Papers circulated Sept 20-10A & 10B

Commissioning a review

Sarah introduced this paper asking the Board's opinion on the proposed plan for undertaking a review of the GB strategy. The Board was invited to comment on the idea of commissioning an external contractor to do a significant proportion of the work and on the specification itself.

The Board noted that:

- The EAC has recently completed a significant independent inquiry and so the review should build on this. It was noted that while the EAC was UK-wide, it may not have fully taken into account progress in Scotland and Wales. Gaps in what the EAC covered could be the focus of the current review.
- Any contractor would be expected to liaise with all relevant organisations, including those on the Board and elsewhere. SNH will provide a list of organisations in Scotland.
- It would be useful to consider some over-arching questions to ask any contractor, for example 'are we spreading ourselves too thinly?' and 'have we

got our priorities right'. These would have to be phrased so that they are not leading questions.

- There may be difficulties putting this to single tender action and time is short (must be completed this financial year). It will be necessary to progress soon.
- The review will help inform our drafting of the new (updated) strategy and may include recommendations.
- The contractor may wish to run a series of workshops, as was the case in the previous review (2014/15).

ACTION 6: ALL to provide comments on the strategy review paper to **Sarah Webster** by 17 September.

Review of actions

Niall introduced this paper, highlighting achievements and areas where we have not made satisfactory progress towards delivering the GB Strategy. For example, we have done particularly well on communications (with a dedicated member of staff working on this). This is the NNSS and Defra's first take on reviewing actions, but it is important that Board members feed in to the review of the actions, providing more information (if it has been missed) and / or challenging the RAG status allocated so far.

The Board noted it would be useful to add a 'so what' column in the table at Annex 1 explaining what the effect of not delivering specific actions has been. They also noted that in some cases actions are labelled red, where they should probably be NA (such as action 9.3 where we did not deliver the action because of the UK's departure from the EU).

ACTION 7: ALL to comment on Annex 1 of paper 10B (reviewing delivery of key actions) by end September. **NNSS** to circulate a word version of this annex.

Country working group feedback

Wales (last meeting held in March).

A focus of the meeting was to review the Wales action plan. There has also been work on developing guidance documents for the management of Japanese knotweed. A pan-Wales project to engage stakeholders in non-native species work has been underway and is moving to the next phase – a bid (£0.5m) has been submitted for this.

Scotland (last met in Feb 2020).

Priorities in Scotland include running a Scotland specific horizon scanning exercise and pathway analysis. Work is also underway to consider how non-native species management can be supported using agri-environment funding, as it is in England

and Wales (it may be useful to compare notes). Covid has limited work on stoats in Orkney and mink in Western Isles.

11. IAS Regulation

Paper circulated Sept 20-11

Sarah spoke to this paper and explained that, as the EU IAS Regulation becomes part of retained EU law, a post-implementation review needs to be completed by 1st June 2021. The current plan is to use the UK's report to the Commission from 2019 as the basis for this and update it, as presented in the accompanying paper. This would then be sent to ministers from all four administrations for approval. Sarah asked whether everyone was happy with this approach.

NRW noted that they have already been undertaking a review of their implementation in Wales and will be able to feed this into the work.

Scottish Government noted that there are some separate reporting processes in Scotland so they need to take this away and clarify how best to approach it. They also noted that SNH produced a report in parallel to the previous UK report, which could help feed in from a Scottish point of view.

12. Rapid Responses

Environment agency:

- Topmough Gudgeon. Between 2017-2019, 6-7 new sites were discovered (uncertain about River Severn). There are now 33 sites total, 28 of which have been eradicated. There are a further three sites in Wales. Aim is to contain on River Test, while feasibility of eradication is explored.
- White river crayfish. A previous eradication attempt failed. Considering using a different approach.
- Water primrose. 43 confirmed sites, 15 believed eradicated, all but 1 under management. Only 95m² remaining (may have increased over lock down).
- Various-leaved watermilfoil. Pond will be filled in imminently.
- Floating pennywort strategy has been developed with volunteers.

Nature Scot (SNH)

- Purple pitcher-plant. The single population on Rannoch Moor has been sprayed.
- Ring-necked parakeet. The count appears to be up to 32 this year.

SEPA

- Australian swamp-stonecrop and parrot's feather. Some local control will be carried out when Covid restrictions ease.

- Signal crayfish. There have been a lot more records of these recently. Concern about water transfer for potentially spreading them. Will be working very closely with Scottish Water to contain.

Natural Resources Wales

- Raccoon dog. An individual raccoon dog was recovered from the wild and destroyed.
- Topmouth gudgeon. A person was employed to start the feasibility assessment work; however, more evidence about distribution was required. Work to improve this is underway.

12. Secretariat report

Paper circulated Sept 20-13

Niall spoke to this paper. He highlighted some key points:

- there have been a number of recent credible Asian hornet sightings;
- NNSS has commissioned an independent review on how best to tackle Muntjac in Northern Ireland
- a number of Water companies have agreed to continue to fund *Check, Clean, Dry* work in England
- Scottish Government has kindly contributed to the NNSS website, which is being updated for accessibility.

13. AOB

Sarah highlighted work being undertaken under the auspices of BIC, including work on Asian hornet, *Didemnum vexillum* and *Check, Clean, Dry*.

14. Date of next meeting

The NNSS will scope for dates in Feb / March 2021.