

Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum  
**5th Advisory Group meeting, 18/01/2018, 11:00-14:30**  
**RSPB Scotland, Barnacle Room, Edinburgh Park, EH12 9DH**

**Minutes**

**Present**

Ellen Wilson (EW) (RSPB) [Chair]; Gill Dowse (SWT) [by teleconference]; Andy Ford (CNP); Guy Harewood (Stirling Council); Ed Mackey (SNH); Sandra Marks (Scot Govt); Glenn Roberts (NESBReC); Christine Johnston (CJ) (NBN Secretariat) [Minutes]

**Apologies received**

Nick Fraser (NMS); Sebastian Howell (Marine Scotland); Jo Judge (NBN Secretariat); Claire Lacey (CIEEM); Craig Macadam (Buglife); Scot Mathieson (SEPA); Joanne Porter (Heriot-Watt University); David Roy (BRC); Jonathan Willet (BRISC)

**In attendance**

Liz Edwards (RSPB) (member of the SBIF Review Working group)

**1. Introductions**

Ed Mackey (SNH) and Glenn Roberts (NESBReC) were welcomed as new members of the Advisory Group. They replace Iain Macgowan (SNH) and Graeme Wilson (TWIC) respectively.

**2. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting (20/10/2017)**

There were no corrections, matters arising or actions to be carried forward from the minutes.

The minutes [*SBIF Advisory Group minutes DRAFT 20 Oct 2017*] were approved for publication on the SBIF web pages of the NBN website.

**3. Update on the Review of the Biological Recording Infrastructure**

EW presented a Review progress update, reported on recent meetings, and facilitated a discussion around potential recommendations, next steps and current timeline and key milestones.

A wide-ranging discussion followed, covering business case options, funding options, timelines, resources, and options for advocacy. Key points and actions resulting from that discussion are given below.

***Key points for the Business Case and Recommendations***

We should seek to include:

- an expression of the problem and the current situation – amount of investment, lack of resilience, fragmented geographic / taxonomic coverage / governance, lack of open data
- incorporate 'Hooks' to spark potential funders' interest, and create stories around:
  - our relationship to SEWeb, NMPi and to the NBN Atlas Scotland
  - the potential for innovative technological product and business development through public / private partnerships (e. g. Digital Scotland and CivTech) and to diversify funding
  - post-2020 delivery to support biodiversity planning
  - engagement with people, and the benefits of nature for health
  - recognition of additional risks: that developing an all-UK model will slow down delivery for Scotland; a phased approach is favoured by LERCs; that a taxation

model could lack the clarity of a subscription model in relation to income from commercial sector

- reference the Recommendations from the Biodiversity Science Group (published April 2010) resulting from the original BRISC petition (PE1229/K)
- a statement about the value of a fast turn-around of the recommendations

The business case and recommendations paper should be circulated at different stages for review by the Advisory Group and some additional people with business skills (names were suggested at the meeting) before finalisation.

### **Other key points**

The following points were agreed:

- Advocacy for the Review and its recommendations will be important, and we require an Ambassador to advocate across different groups and organisations at a high level. It was agreed to approach Susan Davies (SWT) for this role.
- We require a summary pitch for use as a priming tool for discussions with our contacts such as our Ambassador, Scottish Government, SNH's Science Advisory Committee (SAC), and other organisations and sectors represented on the Advisory Group. Key questions may need to be included for different groups (such as SAC)
- We need to understand what resources and support will be required (and where they might come from) post-March 2018. Delivery may require a project team / project officer.
- We need to maintain momentum while securing funding. Our communications and advocacy plan to include stakeholder analysis and relevant messages, and to identify relevant social media, blogs, websites and events to engage with.
- The timeline is to be amended to take account of the turnaround time for a decision from the Scottish Government; this will be a period of months at least.

### **Actions**

**AP AG05-1** *EW to circulate evolving drafts of the business plan and recommendations for review*

**AP AG05-2** *EM to provide more background to CivTech and types of projects that could be / are being developed*

**AP AG05-3** *Sandra Marks to provide guidance on who to approach in Scot Govt and how*

**AP AG05-4** *EW and GD to seek a meeting with Susan Davies (SWT)*

**AP AG05-5** *EW to draft a short summary pitch(s) of the Review and its recommendations and circulate for input*

**AP AG05-6** *EW to scope out requirements for project support and funding beyond March 2018*

**AP AG05-7** *CJ and EW to write a communications and advocacy plan for 2018 onwards*

**AP AG05-8** *CJ to continue to notify Advisory Group when papers and reports are released*

## **4. Links between this group and the NBN Atlas Scotland steering group**

Following a suggestion from the NBN Atlas Scotland steering group (13/12/17) it was agreed we should explore the idea of aligning our two groups together to form a single NBN Advisory Group in Scotland. This group would be able to provide unified strategic support and guidance to steer both SBIF and the NBN Atlas Scotland and facilitate user input to the Atlas.

**AP AG05-9** *CJ to explore and develop plans for the re-alignment of this group and the NBN Atlas Scotland steering group [in collaboration with JJ and EW]*

## 5. Spring event

Initial suggestions to combine a proposed Spring event (an SBIF update / NBN Atlas stakeholder meeting) with the HabMoS stakeholder meeting planned for the 28<sup>th</sup> March have changed and the two events will run separately. Although the audiences for each will have some commonality the purpose is different.

The purpose of our event will be to launch the recommendations of the SBIF Review (making the link with the NBN Atlas), provide an update on progress, and gather stakeholder requirements for the NBN Atlas Scotland. Suggested timing is the end of April / beginning of May, possibly in Edinburgh. Different venues are to be explored (eg RBGE; St Enoch's in Glasgow)

All are welcome to attend both events – details about the HabMoS stakeholder meeting will be circulated.

It was agreed we plan for a Parliamentary reception at Holyrood in 2019.

**AP AG05-10** EW to share details of the HabMoS stakeholder meeting planned for 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**AP AG05-11** CJ to co-ordinate the planning of our Spring event

**AP AG05-12** CJ to start planning for a Holyrood reception in 2019

## 6. AoB

None

## 7. Dates of next Advisory Group meeting

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – start time 1030am (venue: RSPB SHQ, Edinburgh Park, EH12 9DH)

*There will be an option for people to attend in person or by phone. Please send a deputy if you are unable to attend. Future meeting dates will be discussed at this meeting.*