

Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum - 16th Advisory Group Meeting,
Tuesday 17th March 2020
1300- 15:00

Attendees: Gill Dowse (SWT); Wilma Harper (NBN Trust); Scot Mathieson (SEPA); Ellen Wilson (RSPB), Iain Sime (SNH); Jo Judge (NBN); Rachel Tierney (SWT / SBIF); Debs Muscat (ALERC); Claire Lacey (CIEEM)

Apologies received: Nick Fraser (NMS); Andy Ford (CNPA); Guy Harewood (Stirling Council); Glenn Roberts (NESBReC); David Roy (BRC); Jo Porter (Heriot Watt); Jonathan Willet (BRISC), Craig Macadam (Buglife),

Agenda

1) Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting

COMPLETED AND DISCHARGED

AP AG15-3 RT to speak to DR about attending BRC meeting at Edinburgh Museum.

AP AG15-4 EW & RT to send draft on 18th November for the Advisory Group comment

AP AG15-5 EW & RT to send final document to EM on 2nd December to be forwarded to Scottish Government

AP AG15-6 RT to liaise with TM and EW to include economic appraisal into Investment Proposal

AP AG15-1 RT to update CL details on SBIF website.

AP AG15-2 CL to speak with Annie Robinson and Mathew Panel about the most suitable CIEEM reps for the SBIF Advisory Group in the future.

CARRIED FORWARD

AP AG10-4 CL to advise the name of a possible contact at Marine Scotland – follow up action for RT to meet with Linda Rosborough, SWT Chair

- ONGOING - RT has not yet met with Linda Rosborough, SWT Chair and will follow up to arrange this meeting through SWT.

AP AG11-3 RT to approach contacts about joining the Advisory Group

- ONGOING - As per AG10-4.

AP AG09-4 All to advise EW of their SBIF-related activities (for inclusion in quarterly Highlight Reports)

- ONGOING

AP AG13-1 RT to draft and circulate a comms plan

- ONGOING – to be written with a redrafted business case (to be developed in conjunction with NBN Trust)

AP AG15-7 RT to send briefing document to NESBReC

2) Stock take: where have we got to

- Post-project review: have we achieved our objectives/lessons learned

Have we met our objectives?

Objective 1: To build the energy and confidence of key stakeholders in the potential for an improved infrastructure that delivers the original vision of SBIF (above).

The Advisory Group has been encouraged by the way the whole range of stakeholders have come together to create a shared vision and the ongoing clarity that the business as usual is not good enough. Need to be conscious that energy and confidence may start waning if progress is not

achieved. Marine has potentially been un-engaged, and this is unfortunately the same across whole biodiversity sector.

Follow up action: may need to check in with stakeholders to make sure we haven't got any blind spots.

Objective 2: To establish a register of all operational recording schemes and their operators so that data flows in Scotland are well-understood.

It was agreed that creating a register is extremely hard, the SBIF Review has started a the list of data flows and operators for Scotland but this is not complete. It is true to say that "Data flows in Scotland is well understood". We understand they are very complicated but we have perhaps got as far on this exercise as we need to – perhaps we don't need to map them all out. There is a marine element which has been overlooked.

Objective 3: To establish what funding and other income sources sustain the current infrastructure and what sources may continue to be available, or become available, in future

The SBIF Review has developed a list of sources of funding we could approach but at the moment we are focusing on Scottish Government funding until we know this is no longer a feasible option. The investment case has highlighted the potential future income but we do not have much detail yet as to where these sources will come.

Follow up action: Investigate where there is a market for services – NBN Trust and ALERC are continuing to explore the commercial services.

Objective 4: To hold stakeholder interviews to gain their current perspectives and to consult stakeholders on the infrastructure that they and their sector would need to meet their requirements.

This has been completed and was in depth. Marine sector however was not interviewed. We have received lots of incidental positive feedback on interview process but do not have any hard feedback

Objective 5: To run stakeholder workshops to identify the options for how these needs could best be fulfilled centrally, nationally and locally, and to evaluate these options in order to identify the preferred one(s).

This has been completed and was in depth. SNH recently met with HBRG who were unclear about the preferred option for SBIF and how this fits with HBRG – echoed by DM via the LERCs. High intensity of workshops and comms, and then a gap in comms and feedback around the investment plan has meant that LERCs may not be sure how this fits with them. This is an issue of the process (lack of a clear plan and feasibility studies) and available resources, not inactivity.

Objective 6: To identify where improved use of technology can help reduce duplication of effort and increase the efficiency of the biological recording infrastructure (so that data are made available for use and re-use).

The Review has not progressed far enough to be able to evaluate this yet. The ever changing climate with tech and speed means it is hard to keep pace with advancements. We need to wait until we have a clearer idea of funding and time frames to make sure any evaluation of technology is relevant.

Objective 7: To identify what transition arrangements would be necessary to implement the preferred option(s).

This comes down to the detail once we can start the feasibility studies. Once we do feasibility arrangements then we can ask for more detailed costings

What went well?

- Bringing people together
- Giving people safe, and encouraging space to air their views
- Giving people creative ways to envision future
- Managing expectations
- Political awareness in the advocacy stage
- Raising awareness of the shared vision
- Workshops – identifying what the issues were, where we could make improvement and bringing people together
- All working towards same aim now
- Best run project be involved in – efficient, thorough, well managed, inclusive,
- Process of producing options well run and managed to help hone in on tasks
- Lovely group of colleagues to work with – strong team
- Bringing together huge amount of information into one single vision
- Raising awareness of SBIF outside of Scotland
- Profile it has given recording effort and community in Scotland
- Profile across Community
- In-kind resources
- Resources donated
- Open doors everywhere
- Commitment to support

What went less well?

- Ambitious timeframe – timeframe slipped with everyone having day jobs as well. This may have resulted in us losing momentum and getting mixed messages
- Limited resource
- Potential missed funding opportunities
- Lost impetuous once review published – largely down to lack of resources. Perhaps needed to have planned for the post review publication better – lost communication while we were writing business case due to lack of resources
- Took a while to work out what should be presented to Scottish Government
- Confusion created about relationship between SBIF and NBN Trust (NBN Scotland) – this got ironed out but slowed things down
- What is happening in the next phase – how to scale the options and move forward into the next phase
- Didn't get as much of the non-recorder community on board that we should have done (i.e consultants, universities etc)
- Absence of Marine representation
- Timeframe (start to end) has given folk opportunity to argue that if it is so urgent why did it take so long
- Lack of experience in leading a Review and undertaking may have led to lack of forward planning
- Towards publishing Review the focus was about getting the Review written – time could have been spent framing who it was aimed at

Key lessons

- We haven't yet fixed it
- Exposure to Business Analysis tools very powerful
- Could have missed a trick in non-applying for funding to do the Review – this would have given more resource to undertake the review

3) Plans for 2020/21

What our objectives?

1. community engagement
 2. pursuing funding
 3. engaging with SBS Project 4
- Still have lots of momentum capital
 - Still have shared vision but we haven't achieved this yet.
 - Develop a set of quick win projects in partnership with NBN Trust
 - Explore grant funding for transition planning
 - Make contact with the original LINK conveners (Craig *etc*) to make sure they are content it is being progressed in the spirit of the original petition
 - SBIF vision has to be in the heart of the 10 Year Plan – should start engaging with this project “Paul Sizeman/SBS project 4” – the project that is building the project plan
 - How to keep community engaged and bring new ideas in? Social Media? Online Forum?
 - Need advocacy and visibility raised
 - Need communications plan – from LERC perspective, need a common message – and clear map to support other people to buy into the path and share good practice. Focus local perspective in to implement supporting actions
 - Integrating SBIF Review in Project 4 – making SBIF a task for the whole project.
 - Investment plan - very ambitious for coming year to both undertake feasibility work + recruit individuals into the infrastructure. Second part unlikely to happen this FY.
 - SNH exploring funding for feasibility funding under auspices of SBS Project 4

What are our options and resources?

SWT have some resource and will continue to support but on limited time

RSPB – have some resources but Ellen Wilson time is very busy for next 6-9months, willing to make team available to bring energy and mobilise the community

NBN Trust – still supported and happy to be involved but very limited resources. Cannot offer more resources

Liz Collins – leading on Review of English species and habitat information and data needs in England

What are our risks and issues?

Risks

- Scottish Gov may not fund the Programme Proposal or may only partially fund it. We need to manage expectations and consider alternative funding

What is our activity plan?

Ensure SBIF outcomes and recommendations make their way into Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. Ian and Scot to set up a meeting with SG to work out the best way to work with them over the coming year and then liaise with Ellen, Gill and Rachel.

AP AG16-1 IS to arrange meeting with SBS contacts by end March

Communications – need to contact the SBIF Community via the SBIF mailing list to communicate that there is still a group of people trying to make it happen. LERCs are continuing to seek assurances from SNH re. funding.

AP AG16-2 SM to support EW and RT to contact SBIF Community

Seeking funding opportunities - NBN Trust are looking at funding opportunities over the summer – horizons scanning

AP AG16-3 JJ to report back on funding opportunities

What is our communications plan?

- Keep it simple
- Need to keep in people's minds but don't have much to communicate
- Use highlight report
- Debs continues to be contact for ALERC and England

What governance do we need?

- Maintain Ellen's expertise, enthusiasm and commitment - Ellen has done a fantastic job – huge thank you.
- Delegate more!
- Take stock in 6 months and see where we are at
- Still have a valid stakeholder group to keep around us
- When new Governance comes into being SBIF should come to an end?

4) SBIF physical and electronic information

- SBIF mailing list left TWIC, went to NBN Trust
- Need to be clear why we hold the list, what we are doing with it,
- SBIF Chair as natural host for SBIF documents?

5) Any other business

6) Date of next meeting

Regroup – in 4- 8th May