RAPID RESPONSE CORE WORKING GROUP FOR GB
THIRD MEETING
MINUTES
FOSS HOUSE, YORK, 9 JUNE 2008, 11:00

1. Attendance/apologies

Present:
Huw Thomas (Defra - Chair)
Niall Moore (NNSS - Secretary)
Sallie Bailey (FC)
Jessa Battersby (JNCC)
Gordon Copp (CEFAS)
Mark Fletcher (CSL – replacing Pete Robertson)
Jo Long (SEPA)
Tracy McCollin (FRS)
Robin Payne (SNH)
Trevor Renals (EA – via telelink)
Angela Robinson (Scottish Government)
David Slawson (PHSI)
Ruth Waters (NE)
Gabe Wyn (CCW)
Nicola Watson (NNSS – minute taker)

Apologies received from:
Stephen Atkins (NW&NWSFC)
Pete Robertson (CSL)
Bill Somerfield (WAG)
1. Introduction and apologies

HT welcomed all to the meeting and all the participants introduced themselves. HT summarised progress to date with the first two meetings of the group.

2. Actions and matters arising

Paper  RR Jun08-02

The group agreed that the minutes of the April meeting were an accurate account of the meeting and agreed that a suitable representative from ALGE should be invited to join. All actions had been discharged or were carried forward.

ACTION 1 – NM to telephone COSLA to re-invite them onto the working group.

ACTION 2 – NM to invite ALGE onto the working group.

3. Decision tree

Paper RR Jun08-03

HT introduced the two versions of the decision tree and asked for comments. There followed a discussion on both versions with the following suggestions made: GC suggested CEH should be added under ‘Hydrology’ and CEFAS should be added under fin- and shellfish (where it relates to disease). AR queried the remit of Animal Health – and GW queried the remit of the proposed Marine Management Organisation. HT replied that relevant discussions were ongoing with Defra Animal Health colleagues, however, it was possible that some policy issues might not have been completely resolved for the final report. HT would contact colleagues to clarify the remit of the MMO.
The group agreed that both ‘Infrastructure’ and ‘Recreation/access’ should be removed from the primary impacts category as they were likely to be captured by other categories. TR raised the worry about discussions within the CAP health-check process that might remove the onus on land-owners to respond to invasive species on their land. There followed a discussion on species with a primarily agricultural impact (that were not covered by plant health remit). It was agreed that these be left with Defra, WAG and SG to lead on but with the three policy leads to discuss with agriculture colleagues. The group also agreed that of the two options, the flow diagram should be used. TR suggested we should not aim to be too prescriptive in our approach at this stage. RW suggested that with the HPA we could piggyback on bat rabies contacts.

**ACTION 3** – HT, AR and WS to talk to agriculture colleagues re. leading on rapid responses to invasive species whose primary impact would be on agriculture.

**ACTION 4** – HT to contact Defra colleagues to clarify the remit of the MMO.

4. **Stakeholder Forum workshop - feedback**

Paper RR Jun08-04

HT summarised the paper recording the discussion at the rapid response workshop at the GB Forum in Cardiff and asked for comments. RW noted that the workshop attendees seemed to think that the co-ordinating body would do all the work. RP suggested that we needed a priority list for contingency planning (a contingency hit/alert list). JL mentioned that in WFD circles there was an ‘orange list’ (of species that had yet to invade). There was discussion on the use of volunteers both within government and outside it as a possible resource to help in delivering a rapid response. TR suggested using the 2 days volunteering within the EA (and other government
departments and agencies). The assistance of local Invasive Species Fora was another possible source of help. However, it was noted that many occasions or actions might only be suitable for trained/qualified/authorised people. Other potential sources of skilled volunteer expertise that could be called on included BASC, gamekeepers, National Park staff and volunteers. The group agreed that it was most important to establish relationships with external bodies rather than their volunteers.

HT raised the issues of an obligation to remove invasive species or to notify their detection as suggested at the workshop. A duty to remove would have its difficulties but DS mentioned the existence of notifiable species under plant health legislation. TM mentioned a similar situation in New Zealand and AR mentioned similar provisions under the Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932.

5. Outline report structure
Papers RR Jun08-05 and RR Jun08-05A

The group agreed that both the General Protocol and Role of a Co-ordinating Agency sections needed to be moved to earlier in the Skeleton Final Report (Paper 05). SB suggested having an introductory paragraph before the list of relevant organisations. SB also queried whether we needed to cost the elements of the rapid response procedure ['Implementing a Rapid Response']. It was agreed that the length of time the process would take, and amount of work involved, would vary according to the individual circumstances of a detection and that in time, possibly with off-the-shelf risk assessments and an established policy position on the species, the process could conceivably be a very short one in some cases.

The group considered the outline process now set out in the draft report. Some concerns were raised that filling out the case summary sheet [Paper 5A] would be time consuming on staff who are already busy. It was understood that the case summary sheet was a tool to aid consistent
communication of the basic details of the case within the group, and in the event of the lead passing to another body. It was intended to be kept to a minimum. After discussion the group agreed that the Secretariat would attempt to fill in as much of the (revised) summary sheet as possible before passing it on to the initially appointed co-ordinating body. TR raised the issue of Data Protection in relation to the summary sheet.

The group also agreed that, for species that have been risk assessed, a summary of the risk assessment conclusions and relevant information from the management options section should feed into the summary sheet. There was also discussion on the need for indicative timings and also the need for a rapid risk assessment procedure (similar to that employed by plant health which can be done in one day) for novel cases where awaiting a full risk assessment would be detrimental to a rapid response.

RW pointed out that bodies may want to take rapid response action on their own and it was agreed that the main purpose of this working group was to prompt action in cases where this was unlikely to happen. This process was not intended to impede rapid response where a body is already willing and able to deliver it. It was also agreed however that capturing the information from such instances as case studies was worthwhile in order to reflect effort and evidence of implementation of the policy aims. GC suggested that where a body has sufficient capacity, resources and expertise to ‘go-it-alone’ on a rapid response there is no need to go through the group but where it is short of capacity in some way the rapid response group could be a source of help by way of resources, expertise etc.

Paper 5a was discussed and the group concluded that the following changes were needed:

Change title to Summary Sheet;
More on access issues on site/sites;
Addition of an ‘official verification’ box;
Remove ‘controlled waste’ question;
Move risk assessment question up the sheet and reorder generally to make more intuitive, reflecting the decision tree sequence of questions where possible;
Add clear breaks between sections;
Alteration of the urgency section;
Addition of the following items:
- Staff resources;
- Location of relevant equipment and consumables;
- Most appropriate time of year for control;
- Potential methodology;
- Disposal (of animal or plant material);
- Monitoring post-control.

JB suggested and the group agreed that using example scenarios would be helpful.

**ACTION 5** – All to flesh out their remits/responsibilities section in Skeleton Draft of the Final Report [RR Jun08-05].

**ACTION 6** – HT to continue drafting the Final Report paper.

**ACTION 7** – TR to alter the summary sheet to include more detail on access etc. and return to NM.

**ACTION 8** – NM to finalise the summary sheet as agreed by the group.

**ACTION 9** – NM to circulate the draft risk assessment and management options summary sheet that has been drafted for the PB.

### 6. Resource Audit

Paper RR Jun08-06

NM and AR introduced the topic. The group agreed on the need for an introductory/explanatory paragraph. There was discussion on whether the table indicated available or potential capacity – with agreement that the table indicated resources/capacity that was potentially (but not guaranteed to be)
available. The group also agreed that the spreadsheet needed to include expertise/advisory [A] as well as potential delivery [D] ability but that it should not be too detailed at this stage [identifying general capacity only]. There was also agreement to add SAMS and Sea Fisheries Committees under ‘other’.

ACTION 10 – All to complete the resource table on behalf of their agency/body and return to Secretariat by July 18.

ACTION 11 – NM/AR to draft an explanatory paragraph for the resource table.

ACTION 12 – NM to circulate a blank spreadsheet for the next meeting to facilitate its completion by all relevant bodies.

ACTION 13 – NM to circulate dates in September and November for the next two meetings.

7. AOB

• There was no AOB. RP suggested a video link for the six members in Scotland for the next meeting.