

8TH PROGRAMME BOARD MEETING ON NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Minutes

**10:00, 21st November 2007,
CSL, Sand Hutton, York.**

1. Attendance/apologies

Present:

Hilary Thompson (Defra, Chair)

Mark Fletcher (CSL)

Richard Cowan (Defra)

Stephen Hunter (Defra)

Huw Thomas (Defra)

Paul Raven (EA)

Ian McLean (JNCC)

Ruth Waters (NE – Observer)

Niall Moore (NNSS)

Nicky Watson (NNSS)

Ian Hooper (Scottish Govt.)

Angela Robinson (Scottish Govt.)

Mike Dunn (WAG)

Apologies received from:

Mike Roberts (CSL)

Victoria Waite (DfT)

Peter Starling (HMRC)

Deryck Steer (JNCC)

HJT informed the Board that HMRC have corresponded with the Chair explaining that they will not be able to attend all meetings of the Board following organisational and staff changes. They would, however, like to be kept informed and will do their best to attend where Board agenda items fall within their remit.

2. Minutes of meeting on 10 July 2007

Paper circulated – PB Nov07-02 Minutes of July meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed (following the change to the spelling of Ian McLean's name).

3. Actions/matters arising

Papers circulated – PB Nov07-03 Actions, PBNov07-03A FC Participation

Action 1 – [Rapid response paper] - HT is now taking the lead on this – see Agenda Item 6 below.

Action 2 – [Ministerial briefings] - Discharged. MD informed the Board that the Welsh Minister had been briefed. AR informed the meeting that the Scottish Minister had approved the proposed course of action with the Framework Strategy that morning. HT informed the Board that Joan Ruddock (Defra Minister) had been briefed, but had several queries to which HT had responded [*note: there was a positive response from the Minister the day after the meeting*]. HT informed the Board that the initial three-year funding for the core parts of the Non-native Species Mechanism was finishing in the next financial year and that there may be a request to share the financial cost of the joint strategic measures within the GB mechanism.

Action 3 – [FC participation on PB] – HT presented Paper 03A and reported that the Forestry Commission was keen to participate. Its remit would bring additional expertise to the Programme Board. The Board agreed with the recommendation of the paper and instructed the Secretariat to invite the Forestry Commission to join the Board ASAP.

Action 4 [Letter to Pet Care Trust] - Discharged.

Action 5 [Joan Ruddock letter to DfT] – HT reported that this had been delayed due to pressure of other work. Added to actions from this meeting (Action 2).

Actions 6 and 7 [Development of Reporting Document] – Discharged.

Action 8 [Secretariat to send implementation plan to SSB] – Delayed until after the February 2008 Board meeting.

Actions 9 -11 [Strategy related] – See Agenda Item 4 below.

Action 12 [Website summary in Secretariat report] – Discharged - see Paper 08.

Action 13 [Secretariat key actions linked to Implementation Plan] – Delayed until Implementation Plan approved. Added to actions from this meeting (Action 16).

Action 14 [INNS Meeting Information to Secretariat] – Discharged.

Actions 15 - 17 [Risk assessment related] – Discharged.

Action 18 [Incorporation of Forum Workshops into Summary of Responses] – Discharged.

Action 19 [Suggestions for Forum attendees from PB] – None received. See Agenda Item 12 below.

Action 20 [Comments on monitoring proposal to Secretariat]. - Discharged.

Action 21 [Draft Information Needs Analysis for monitoring] – Discharged (Paper 07A) and see Agenda Item 7 below.

Action 22 [Pre Public Awareness Working Group] – Discharged. See Agenda Item 11 below.

Action 23 [Contact NE over frogs] – Discharged. See Agenda Item 6 below.

Action 24 [Comments on EU Framework] – Discharged.

Actions 25 and 26 [Bern Convention related] – Discharged.

Action 27 – [Marine working group] – Following discussion by the Board and due to the large volume of work being carried out on its behalf it was decided to defer the establishment of the Marine Task and Finish Group until 2008 when its ToRs could be agreed by the Board.

ACTION 1 – *Secretariat to draft and send an invitation to the Forestry Commission to join the Programme Board ASAP.*

ACTION 2 – *HT to produce a letter from Joan Ruddock to the relevant Transport Minister seeking increased engagement ASAP.*

4. GB Strategy update

Papers circulated – PB Nov07-04A, PB Nov07-04B and PB Nov07-04C

NM introduced Paper 04A – the Joint Government Response to the consultation on the GB Strategy. It was agreed that any comments should be fed to the Secretariat by the close of the meeting. None were received and therefore the paper has been approved by the Board.

AR introduced Paper 04B – the Strategy Implementation Plan - which has substantially changed following the comments received at the July Board meeting. The plan is still in development. There was general agreement that the document was much improved and the Chair thanked AR and the other

officials who had drafted it. IH queried whether the 'Cost' column referred only to Government costs. There followed considerable discussion on how this 'Cost' column should be displayed. It was agreed that it was important to show this on the public document but that costs should be aggregated under broader headings than currently shown. HJT concluded that the cost column needs a series of explanatory caveats explaining its context. These would include stating that not all costs are borne by central government, the date when the figures were estimated, the public/private sector split and the expenditure timescale. IM stated that the costs for Codes of Practice needed inclusion.

SH suggested that there was a need for clear version control of the document, especially after it was displayed publicly. SH also suggested that section headings should be clearly highlighted. It was also agreed that the RAG prioritisation should be displayed on the public version but that there needed to be careful consideration of the priority ratings on individual actions to ensure that the weightings are correct and that we are not emphasising low priority issues in preference to high priority issues.

HT introduced the revised strategy launch timetable (Paper 04C). This indicated that, even with a small amount of time for slippage, a launch in early April is feasible. SH queried the need for Cabinet Committee approval. MD was concerned by Task 23 – typesetting and proof reading the Welsh Version - as back to back printing is likely to be required and this might take longer than anticipated. MD and HT agreed to discuss this bilaterally. IH pointed out that there was little time for approval of the final document in Scotland, especially as it would need to go to Cabinet Committee and if any of the three Administrations wanted changes these would subsequently have to be agreed by the others. SH stated that if FC were on the Board this may further complicate ministerial clearances.

<p><i>ACTION 3</i> – <i>Officials to seek ministerial approval for the Joint Government Response.</i></p>
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ACTION 4 – *PB to feed back comments on the Implementation document to the Secretariat by 18 January 2008.*

ACTION 5 – *Officials and Secretariat to continue the development of the implementation plan as agreed by the Board and circulate the revised plan for the February PB meeting.*

ACTION 6 – *HT to ascertain whether Cabinet Committee approval (in England) is strictly necessary.*

ACTION 7 – *AR and MD to comment directly to HT on timings relative to ministerial submissions (and possible Cabinet Committee approval) in Scotland and Wales.*

ACTION 8 – *MD to forward contact details of new personnel to HT and NM.*

5. Presentation by Mark Stevenson (Defra Natural Environment Science Division)

‘Developing an indicator for non-native species’

MS summarised the lack of progress to date on the development of an indicator for non-native species and detailed the background to the need for an indicator. The critical date for the finalisation of the indicator is March 2009 and Defra is proposing to put out a call to tender for a project to develop an indicator early in 2008. MS suggested that the indicator needs to account for both abundance/number of invasive non-native species as well as their overall impact on biodiversity. Europe is currently developing an indicator based on the cumulative number of non-native species in the terrestrial and freshwater environments.

Following the presentation, there was much discussion on the type of indicator that would be most useful and meaningful. HJT raised the issue of species being native in one part of Europe but invasive in another. MS stated that the UK indicator was being developed separately from the European one. There was discussion on whether the abundance/impact of NNS on protected sites could be used as a surrogate for impacts on wider biodiversity. MS

suggested that data from protected sites were likely to be part of the indicator but not it in its entirety. PR suggested that there was a need to select species that: a) we know pose a threat to biodiversity and b) there is a chance we can reduce this threat. It was concluded that a twin track approach was needed – the indicator needed to include elements relating to the success of prevention measures as well as the level of impact of existing NNS.

ACTION 9 – *MS to send the tender specification (for developing an NNS indicator) to the Secretariat for distribution to the PB.*

6. Rapid Response and Contingency Planning

Paper circulated – PB Nov07-06

HT introduced the topic and outlined the contents of the paper. He emphasised that this was one of the most important issues to resolve in terms of delivering the GB Strategy. HT also stressed that the important issues were:

- a) who takes the lead on each issue;
- b) who has the resources; and
- c) who makes the decisions.

The paper proposes the establishment of a core group of key delivery bodies to explore the development of a protocol. MF welcomed the document and agreed with the need for short lines of communication with quick access to resources and equipment. IM suggested that the decision-taking process i.e. who makes the ultimate decisions - Ministers, the Board or CEOs of Agencies - needs to be addressed. RW pointed out that NE already takes action on a case-by-case basis. AR agreed that agreeing roles and responsibilities for areas where there are gaps in the current framework is the crucial part of this work. RC suggested that the core group needs to be set up ASAP to begin addressing all these points. The Board agreed with the suggestion to establish the core group (to include representatives from all three

administrations) following feedback from the Board on composition and approval of draft ToRs.

ACTION 10 – *HT to send to the PB (via the Secretariat) the suggested ToRs for the core rapid response group by 7 December.*

ACTION 11 – *PB to feed back comments on the composition of the core rapid response group and ToRs to HT by 14 December.*

ACTION 12 – *Secretariat to convene the core rapid response group by 31 January 2008.*

7. Monitoring and Surveillance

Papers circulated – PB Nov07-07A and PB Nov07-07B

NM introduced the two papers. MD queried the Horizon Scanning Function and the flow of data through the flow diagram. NM agreed to amend the wording in this section. The Board agreed that the Information Needs Analysis document encapsulated its needs on monitoring and surveillance and instructed HT to revisit deliverability and costings with BRC and take this forward.

There was a discussion on spending related to non-native species within government. The lack of an accurate estimate of resources devoted to non-native species from the 'Audit of Responsibilities' report was noted. The Board discussed how best this could be addressed and agreed that the Secretariat should attempt to ascertain more accurate figures on resources from several of the key agencies and departments.

ACTION 13 – *HT to speak to BRC to ascertain if they can deliver the monitoring requirements of the PB (as detailed in Paper 07A) and to get revised costings and then progress this.*

ACTION 14 – *Secretariat to alter the flow diagram to reflect comments received.*

ACTION 15 – *Secretariat (with assistance from IM) to attempt to clarify the resources devoted to non-native species issues by key departments and agencies.*

8. Secretariat Report

Paper circulated – PB Nov07-08 Secretariat Report

NM outlined the work of the Secretariat since the July PB meeting. HT suggested that it was important to keep the Website up to date and topical. The Board agreed that the Secretariat needed to integrate its forward plan with the Strategy Implementation Plan as soon as possible.

ACTION 16 – *Secretariat to integrate its future work plan with the key actions/deliverables of the strategy implementation plan ASAP.*

ACTION 17 – *HT to produce a summary of progress on the EU Framework for the Secretariat website by 31 December.*

9. Risk assessment

NM updated the Board on progress with the Risk Analysis Panel. There are currently 36 risk assessments (16 plants and 20 animals) in the pipeline. This is an increase from 19 in July. However, progress through the mechanism is slower than expected and no species have yet been fully completed and 'signed off' by the NNRAP. It was agreed that the PB needs an initial synthesis of progress (including the conclusions of the risk rating for the individual assessments) for the next Board meeting.

AR outlined progress with finalising the generic risk assessment methodology: the three administrations have jointly funded this project which was won by a consortium led by Imperial College. The project commenced on 1 November 2007 and is due to deliver the revised methodology by 1 August 2008. The Board welcomed this progress.

ACTION 18 – *Secretariat to produce an up to date synthesis of progress of risk assessments (to include summarised risk rating for all completed assessments) for the next PB meeting.*

10. Stakeholder Sounding Board

NM verbally updated the Board on progress with establishing the Stakeholder Sounding Board: 22 organisations were invited to sit on the Sounding Board, there were 11 initial replies and the Secretariat sent out a reminder to all the non-respondents in October. In total there have been 17 replies, 16 positive and one (NERC) negative. The Board expressed surprise and concern at the negative response from NERC and suggested that this be pursued. The Board also agreed that the five non-respondents should not be pursued further as participation was entirely voluntary.

ACTION 19 – *The Secretariat (in collaboration with IM) to draft a briefing for Miles Parker outlining the potential benefits of participation and detailing the background to NERC's negative response to the invitation to be part of the SSB.*

11. Media and Communications Working Group

Paper circulated – PB Nov07-11

NM outlined progress with the setting up of a pre-Media and Communications Working Group and invited comments on the suggested way forward, the proposed composition of the working group, ToRs, key stakeholders and key target audiences.

HJT suggested that the messages on invasive species needed to be closely allied to the messages being delivered on wider biodiversity issues. IH agreed that this was critical. There was considerable discussion on the proposed makeup of the full working group and it was agreed that there should be a mixture of government and non-government organisations (both conservation NGO and Industry representatives). IH stated that the ToRs should really be split into two groups:

- a) the first three which outlined the initial phase of development [and that are for the pre-working group to progress]; and
- b) the final five that were the pragmatic elements that turned the first three into reality [to be discharged by the full working group].

IM suggested that the ToRs should be modified to reflect the fact that the working group is tasked with developing a draft strategy to recommend to the Programme Board. The Board agreed with the suggested way forward following modification of the ToRs, composition etc. as suggested above.

ACTION 20 – *All to email secretariat with comments on the composition of the working group by 7 December .*

ACTION 21 – *Secretariat to alter the ToRs and working group composition in the light of the PB comments and to convene the working group by 29 February 2008.*

ACTION 22 – *All to send suggestions on Annexes 3 and 4 to the Secretariat by 31 December.*

ACTION 23 – *All to feed topical issues to the Secretariat to be displayed on the website.*

12. 2008 Stakeholder Forum

The Board agreed that Cardiff should be the venue for the 2008 Forum and that it should be held in late May. HJT suggested that we need to be clear about what we want to achieve from the Forum. It was agreed that there needs to be an update of achievements to date in GB and potentially a wider focus with updates on the EU Framework process and the fallout from the CBD COP. The possibility of developing pathway action plans as one possible workshop theme was also mooted. HJT suggested that there was a need to increase the number of invitees from industry.

ACTION 24 – *MD to send the secretariat details of suitable venues in Cardiff for the May 2008 Forum by 14 December.*

ACTION 25 – *Secretariat to investigate the suitability of the suggested venues and their availability by 31 December.*

ACTION 26 – *Officials and Secretariat to go through the Implementation Plan to recommend relevant topics for the Forum workshop sessions by 31 December.*

ACTION 27 – *Secretariat and officials to produce draft Forum Programme for the next PB Meeting.*

ACTION 28 – *PB to suggest invitees from industry/land-owners (to the Secretariat) for the next Forum – by the next PB meeting.*

13. European IAS Framework

Paper circulated – PB Nov07-13

HT updated the Board on progress with the EU Framework on IAS. It was encouraging that substantive parts of the UK submission had been incorporated into the text. There is still discussion on whether it is better to enhance existing regimes (such as plant health) or to develop entirely new ones. HJT noted that the next Nature Directors' meeting was being held soon and this may provide an opportunity to influence progress. RC suggested that, if the EU chose the legislative route a Directive was a more flexible instrument than a Regulation and the UK should try to push for this.

14. Reports on Progress with *Ludwigia* and Bullfrogs

NM updated the Board on the results of the control trial for *Ludwigia*. Six sites with *Ludwigia* had been identified in England (mainly southern England but with one in Lancashire). High levels of control had been achieved with the experimental herbicide treatments at the main site in Hampshire but the plant had not been eliminated. NM suggested that there was a need for more concerted action against the plant (using the information from the control trial) in the known sites next year to ensure its eradication. The Board expressed concern that the plant had not been eradicated at any sites in 2007 and encouraged action for 2008 to try to ensure eradication.

RW updated the Board on the current position with bullfrogs in Essex. Currently Natural England is costing up a programme for work next year, although there are ongoing problems with some landowners denying access.

15. Emerging Issues

Paper circulated – PB Nov07-15

RC informed the Board that the EU had altered its position on imports of live fish from third countries. This decision had necessitated a review of the Import of Live Fish Act (ILFA) with suggested changes probably going out to consultation early in 2008. The preferred option is that keeping or release of fish (in England and Wales) will be prohibited unless they are on a 'white' list.

IM outlined the contents of Paper 15 on the large-scale imports of bryophytes and posed two questions: what organisation should take this issue forward and should the risk analysis process be used? The use of the risk analysis process was agreed by the Board.

SH informed the Board that a Bee Health Strategy was currently being drafted. This would set the direction of bee health policy for the foreseeable future. The draft Strategy is expected to be considered by ministers early in 2008.

SH also informed the Board that there is currently a review of the policy on *Phytophthora ramorum/kernoviae* in England and Wales. There are currently two main options: withdraw from action [unpopular] or eradication [very costly].

PR tabled a document that outlined the position on invasive non-native species and the Water Framework Directive. INNS are a significant pressure mitigating against the achievement of good ecological status under the directive in all River Basin Districts in Britain. The Defra Minister has been briefed by the EA on its significance.

ACTION 29 – SH to send the draft Bee Health Strategy and papers related to the review of *P. ramorum/kernoviae* to the Secretariat to distribute to the PB.

ACTION 30 – PR to send electronic copy of WFD document to the Secretariat for distribution to the PB.

16. AOB

SH informed the Board that from April 2009 CSL, PHSI, PHD and Plant Variety and Seeds Division were being merged in a new agency. The agency would be run as a shadow agency with a single CEO from April 2008.

HT outlined the details on the production of a Global Invasive Species Compendium by CABI. The compendium would be web-based and regularly updated and CABI are looking for financial contributions from the UK and Europe. The Board decided that this opportunity could be passed to others to consider.

HT also informed the Board of the setting up of a local invasive species forum in Bristol, established jointly by Bristol City Council and the EA; and a further local forum initiative led by Natural England in Salisbury later this month. Encouragingly, these and other fora are emphasising links with the emerging GB Framework Strategy.

17. Date and location of next meeting.

The Board decided that the next meeting would be held at 10.00 on Thursday 7 February, 2008 in Cardiff.