

## Trees and Woodland Scientific Advisory Group (TAW-SAG)

### Meeting 17 Minutes: 16 November 2023

#### Attendees

- **Ruth Mitchell** (RM) – [Chair], - Biodiversity and Ecosystems Group, Ecological Sciences Department, James Hutton Institute.
- **Rob MacKenzie** (RMK) - School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences University of Birmingham; Birmingham Institute of Forest Research.
- **Ian Bateman** (IB) - Director of the Land, Environment, Economics and Policy Institute. University of Exeter.
- **Richard Buggs** (RB) - [Observer], Kew Gardens, Plant Health Group.
- **Paul Burgess** (PB) - Ecology and Management, Cranfield Soil and Agri-food Institute Cranfield University.
- **Keith Kirby** (KK) - Department of Biology, University of Oxford.
- **Julie Urquhart** (JU) - Environmental Social Science, University of Gloucestershire.
- **Stephen Cavers** (SC) - Ecology Evolution and Environmental Change - Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.
- **Patricia Thornley** (PT) - School of Engineering and Applied Science, Aston University.
- **Daisy Ellis** (DE) - Head of Strategy, Engagement and Analysis, Defra.
- **Clare Williams** (CW) – Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
- **Rebecca McIlhiney** (RMI)- Evidence and Analysis Team Leader for Trees/ Forestry, Defra.
- **Rebecca Waite** (RW) - Head of Trees, Woodlands and Forestry Design and Delivery, Defra.
- **Charlotte Williams** (ChW), Research & Development (R&D) Project Manager, Defra.
- **Rhiannon Leyden-Preece** (RLP) - Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
- **Chris McGurk** (CM) - Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
- **Clare Trivedi** (CT) - Plant Health, Forest Genetic Resources lead, Defra
- **Richard Bridge** (RBr) – Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, Trees, Woodlands and Forestry, Defra
- **Mark Broadmeadow** (MB) - Forestry Policy targets and net zero, Defra
- **Katherine Dickson** (KD) - Team Leader, Forestry Legislation & Regulation, Defra.
- **Hugh Loxton** (HL) - Head of Forestry Environment Policy.
- **Elspeth Ransom** (ER) – Plant health science lead - Defra
- **Emma Scholey** (ES) – Defra Intern.
- **Ilhaam Shabeel** (IS) - Team Lead, Big Nature Impact Fund and Vacant and Derelict Land, Defra.
- **Lucy Burt** (LB) - Senior Policy Advisor – Legislation and Regulation.

#### Apologies

- **Clive Potter** (CP) – Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College London.
- **Chris Quine** (CQ) - [Observer], Chief Scientist, Forest Research.
- **Mike Morecroft** (MM) - [Observer], Principal specialist on climate change, Natural England and Visiting Professor, University of Reading.
- **Maggie Roe** (MR) - Landscape Planning Research & Policy Engagement, University of Newcastle

- **Iain Drummatt** (ID) - Evidence and Analysis Team Leader for Trees/ Forestry, Defra.

## Item 1: Welcome and updates

1. RM welcomed everyone to the 17th meeting of the TAW-SAG and introduced new attendees.

## Item 2: Review and agree minutes from previous meeting

2. The minutes from the last meeting were agreed and the actions were reviewed:

From	Number	Action	Owner	Status
19/09/2023	1	CW to add Trees and Water COP update to future TaW-SAG agenda items	CW	Complete
19/09/2023	2	DE to discuss Big Nature Impact Fund coming to TaW-SAG with Defra team	DE	Complete
19/09/2023	3	RMK to send amended TaW-SAG paper to IB for final grammar check.	RMK	Complete
19/09/2023	4	RF to provide details of key contacts in the tNCEA programme	RF	Complete
19/09/2023	5	RMI to discuss adding genetic diversity to the tNCEA customer needs list	RMI	Complete
19/09/2023	6	PT to investigate a presentation on the Biomass Strategy in relation to the Forestry Sector	PT	Ongoing – a date to be set for a future agenda

3. The minutes from the Sub-Group Meeting on Defra farmer tracking survey held on 11<sup>th</sup> September were agreed and the actions were reviewed:

From	Number	Action	Owner	Status
11/09/2023	1	TC to confirm how farmers were identified for follow up interviews.	TC	Complete
11/09/2023	2	RBr to share the findings of the Defra/FR Agroforestry research project with TaW-SAG.	RBr	To be circulated before January 2024 meeting

## Item 3: Programme Board update

4. RM provided an update from the Programme and October's Programme Board.
5. The key points are:
  - a) Activity to maximise opportunities and the outputs of the NCF programme.
  - b) Defra is currently preparing for the next spending review.

- c) There was a discussion on the economics of woodlands paper.
- d) Discussion on the refreshed landowner strategy work and how to take a bespoke

#### **Item 4: Expert advice on Forestry Environmental Impact Assessment**

- 6. LB and MB presented an overview of the paper provided to TAW-SAG ahead of the meeting, and clarified the questions asked of TAW-SAG.

#### **Item 5: Overview of terrestrial Natural Capital & Ecosystem Assessment (tNCEA)**

- 7. RBr provided an update on the NCF evaluation and highlighted the key points from the mid-term evaluation provided ahead of this meeting.
- 8. Summary of key points raised in feedback discussion:
  - a) SuperGen working on ecosystems services and land use framework and planning regional workshops on what planting would look like.
  - b) There may be a need to talk with institutions regarding the risk around woodland management skills.
  - c) Encourage farmers to see how close to net-zero they are and how trees can fit into that, other than Carbon financing. This will be looked at in Stage 2.

#### **Action 1: RBr and PT to discuss offline the SuperGen work.**

#### **Item 6: A draft Forest Genetic Resources Report**

- 9. CT provided an overview of the report provided ahead of this meeting.
- 10. Summary of key points raised in feedback discussion:
  - a) It's a UK-wide report and will include the Devolved Administrations in the review period.
  - b) When the report is closer to completion, it can be sent to TAW-SAG for information.

#### **Item 7: Tree and Woodland Resilience Strategy**

- 11. ER provided an update on the vision for the refreshed 2024 Tree and Woodland Resilience Strategy that was provided prior to the meeting.
- 12. Summary of key points raised in feedback discussion:
  - a) NFU and LEAF have been engaged to find and connect with hard-to-reach stakeholders.
  - b) Engage with Future of UK Treescaping through JU.
  - c) Transformation of woodlands, as well as adaptation could be considered longer-term.
  - d) The strategy will look at future barriers and cross-cutting evidence needs.
  - e) The developed paper will return for discussion in January.

## **Item 8: AOB**

13. Spending Review activity is currently underway in Defra. The R&D team would like TAW-SAG's input either in January or March 2024 to support the development of this work.

Trees and Forestry, Strategy Engagement and Analysis Team November 2023

Date of the next two meetings – 30 January 2024 and 12 March 2024.