

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Trees and Woodland Scientific Advisory Group (TAW-SAG)

Meeting 18 Minutes: 30 January 2024 10:30am to 1pm

Attendees

- **Rob MacKenzie** (RMK) - [Chair], School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences University of Birmingham; Birmingham Institute of Forest Research.
- **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.
- **Mike Morecroft** (MM) - [Observer], Principal specialist on climate change, Natural England and Visiting Professor, University of Reading.
- **Ruth Mitchell** (RM) - Biodiversity and Ecosystems Group, Ecological Sciences Department, James Hutton Institute.
- **Stephen Cavers** (SC) - Ecology Evolution and Environmental Change - Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.
- **Chris Quine** (CQ) - [Observer], Chief Scientist, Forest Research.
- **Maggie Roe** (MR) - Landscape Planning Research & Policy Engagement, University of Newcastle
- **Daisy Ellis** (DE) - Head of Strategy, Engagement and Analysis, Defra.
- **Rebecca McIlhiney** (RMI)- Evidence and Analysis Team Leader for Trees/ Forestry, Defra.
- **Dan Doherty** (DD) - Head of Trees, Woodlands and Forestry Policy, Defra.
- **Cara Brander** (CB) - Energy Forestry & Innovation Policy Lead, Defra
- **Iain Dummett** (ID) - Evidence and Analysis Team Leader for Trees/ Forestry, Defra.
- **Rhiannon Leyden-Preece** (RLP) - Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
- **Chris McGurk** (CM) - Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
- **Martin Lucak** (ML) – Professor of Ecosystem Science, University of Reading
- **John Healey** (JH) – Professor of Forest Science, Bangor University
- **Joanna Sparks** (JS) – Aston University, – Supergen Bioenergy hub
- **Clare Trivedi** (CT) – Evidence Lead Tree Health, Defra.
- **Lisa Smith** (LS) - Tree Health Policy & Plant Health Evidence & Analysis
- **Elsbeth Ransom** (ER) – Plant health science lead – Defra
- **Naimah Bashir** (NB) – Plant health science – Defra
- **Richard Bridge** (RBr) – Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, Trees, woodland and forestry, Defra

Apologies

- **Ian Bateman** (IB) - Director of the Land, Environment, Economics and Policy Institute. University of Exeter.
- **Clare Williams** (CW) – Evidence and Analysis Team for Trees/Forestry, Defra.
- **Patricia Thornley** (PT) - School of Engineering and Applied Science, Aston University.

- **Clive Potter (CP)** – Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College London.

Item 1: Welcome and introductions

1. RMK welcomed everyone to the 18th meeting of the TAW-SAG.
2. RMK introduced the two new TaW-SAG members JH and ML.
3. RMK extended his thanks to Ruth for stepping in doing such an excellent job in leading TaW-SAG in the later part of 2024.

Item 2: NCF mid-point evaluation

4. RBr provided an update on the NCF evaluation and asked TaW-SAG to provide verbal feedback on the mid-point evaluation with particular focus on the Stage 2 deep dives.

Action 1: Defra to contact the Woodland Creation and Ecological Networks (WrEN) project to see if it is useful for the M&E programme.

Item 3: Review minutes from previous meeting

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

From	Number	Action	Owner	Status
16/11/2023	1	RBr and PT to discuss offline the SuperGen work.	CW	Completed
11/09/2023 – Sub-group	2	RBr to share the findings of the Defra/FR Agroforestry research project with TaW-SAG.	RBr	To be circulated by end of February

Item 4: New Ministerial appointments and Programme Board update

6. DE and RMK provided an update on the new Ministerial appointments and January's Programme Board.
7. The key points are:
 - a) Minister Pow is our new Minister.
 - b) An update on the roles agricultural land grades and other data have in directing woodland establishment.

Action 2: TaW-SAG are asked for suggestions for site visits which may be useful for Ministerial engagement.

Item 5: Forestry Environmental Impact Assessment

8. RMK presented the latest version of the TaW-SAG advice note on Forestry Environmental Impact Assessment. TaW-SAG discussed the paper and were happy to sign off the paper after the final changes.

Action 3: Defra to circulate final version of the paper.

Item 6: TaW-SAG Emerging Forestry Species paper

9. TaW-SAGs emerging forestry species paper was discussed and updated following some comments from Natural England Science Advisory Committee (NESAC).

Action 4: Defra to circulate an updated paper

Item 7: Biomass Strategy and Energy Forestry

10. JS, RLP and CB presented on the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero 2023 Biomass Strategy and related Defra work. TaW-SAG provided verbal input.
11. TaW-SAG will consider an advice paper at the March meeting.

Action 5: TaW-SAG will review the documents Defra have provided and send comments by email by 29th Feb.

Item 8: Tree and Woodland Resilience Strategy

12. ER presented current progress with the Tree and Woodland Resilience Strategy for discussion.

Action 6: TaW-SAG are to provide comments on the paper to ER by email.

Item 9: AOB

13. RMK suggested that an in-person meeting is due.

Action 7: TaW-SAG to let RMK/ Defra know any suggestions by email.

Trees and Forestry, Strategy Engagement and Analysis Team February 2024.

Date of the next two meetings - 12 March 2024 and 15 May 2024.

[Note that an additional ad-hoc meeting is likely to be called for late March/early April]