

UK Urban Ecology Forum

Minutes of the meeting held at University of Manchester Tuesday January 8th 2019

Present

David Bell (DB) by invitation	Natural England
Mark Champion (MC)	Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Ian Douglas (ID)	University of Manchester
Pete Frost (PF)	Natural Resources Wales
David Haley (DH)	Artist and Educator
John Handley (JH)	University of Manchester
Philip James (PJ)	University of Salford
Nigel Lawson (NL) (Hon. Sec.)	University of Manchester
Sarah Lindley (SL)	University of Manchester
Terry Robinson (TR)	Outdoor Recreation Network
Elizabeth Rollinson (ER)	Linnean Society
Richard Scott (RS) (Chair)	Eden Project
Joanne Tippett (JT)	University of Manchester

Apologies

John Box, Paul Evans, Mathew Frith. David Goode, Nick Grayson, Jane Houghton, Alison Millward, Kerry Morrison, Paul Nolan, Julie Proctor, Joe Ravetz, Alan Scott, Judy Long Wong.

Minutes of meeting held September 11th 2018

The minutes were accepted

Actions from the meeting held September 11th 2018

Raised in agenda items below.

Link to UN-Habitat Urban Agenda

RS, in building on connections he had made on behalf of the Forum with UN-Habitat in February 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, attended World Cities Day staged by UN-Habitat in Liverpool on October 10th. He reported that UN-Habitat wishes to flagship green infrastructure and examples of sustainable urban development and that it is keen on having a link to the Urban Ecology Forum.

RS confirmed that the Forum has been invited to submit an application for affiliation to UN-Habitat. The application should include our ideas and provide details of our group and of our members. All members must therefore by latest 21st January 2019 send a brief profile and details of their activities in relation to urban ecology to RS for inclusion in a summary statement about the Forum.

ID felt that we should respond to UN-Habitat's sustainable development goals by showing what UK UEF has done in the past and by demonstrating member's expertise in urban ecology.

In discussion members very much welcomed this development. The feeling was that the Forum is in a period of transition and that affiliation to UN-Habitat could become a launching platform for the future well-being of the Forum.

IMPORTANT URGENT ACTION BY ALL MEMBERS

All members of the Forum to send details of activities/examples of their work to Richard Scott by latest 21st January 2019. Individuals should send examples of work, on a single sheet or 2 sides A4 rscott@EdenProject.com

Action: RS to submit our application for affiliation to UN-Habitat as soon as possible.

Urban Ecology Manifesto/Charter/ Principles

DH circulated a draft document summarising the discussion on this topic at the last meeting. His document is attached hereto as Appendix 1.

TR pointed out that the Forum is concerned with making ecosystems thrive in urban environments in practice. SL pointed out the need to make a link between the natural environment and to the health and well-being of people in urban areas. JH spoke of the notion of a 'liveable city' and of making towns and cities where people and nature can thrive together. DH spoke of the Forum's ability to link the arts and the sciences and the importance of triggering academics and practitioners and in promoting best practice; in 'making it happen' and that it is concerned with delivery and deliverables emotions in getting people to make decisions

In further discussion it was felt that the real strength of the Forum was in forming the link between.

Action: Ideas and thoughts to David Haley by 21st January 2019 so that they can also inform the application for affiliation to UN-Habitat.

Awards

In advance of the meeting John Box suggested that all discussion on the Forum's Award for Excellence process be postponed until we have redefined the purpose of the group and its new alignment with UN Habitat. His suggestion was accepted unanimously.

Greater Manchester Urban Pioneer (Dave Bell for Jane Houghton)

Dave Bell (for Jane Houghton) provided an update of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Urban Pioneer. His document is attached as Appendix 2.

The Pioneer is expected to publish a Natural Capital Investment Plan which will inform decision makers on where to invest and how to attract funding in January 2019. It will concentrate on three main areas:

- A carbon bank and a carbon market
- Modelling parks and the management of parks and green spaces
- Urban drainage and the links to water companies.

It will cover issues such as pre finance investment, how to create new opportunities and forms of investment. The objective is how to establish policies making a net gain in biodiversity mandatory.

Going forward the Pioneer will be looking at decision making, promoting business, working with Defra on the 25 year Environment Plan, accessible natural greenspace standards, highlighting areas in Greater Manchester deprived of natural greenspace and how to extend national policy down to local groups and the formation of Local Natural Capital Plans. Urban Pioneer is also planning for the start of the IGNITION Uia Innovative financing aNd delivery of natural climate sOlutioNs in Greater Manchester project looking at building the business case for private investment into Green Infrastructure for climate resilience.

IGNITION Uia Innovative financing aNd delivery of natural climate sOlutioNs in Greater Manchester

PJ distributed a one pager outlining the project, its' aims and background and key work packages- Appendix 3.

The project aims to focus on Greater Manchester, how to adapt to climate change, how to address the link to funding, how to identify funding and to implement a net gain of 10% in green space in Greater Manchester by 2038. A key element of the programme will be the establishment of Salford University Campus as a 'living laboratory' to provide evidence of how investment in green infrastructure such as living walls, green roofs, sustainable urban drainage systems etcetera works and hopefully how technology pays for itself. The project is focused on how to make this happen.

Discussion included the links between the various current and about to commence urban environmental research programmes taking place in Greater Manchester involving members of the Urban Forum: Philip James with Innovative financing aNd delivery of natural climate sOlutioNs in Greater Manchester (IGNITION); Sarah Lindley with Green Infrastructure and the Health and wellbeing Influences on an Ageing population (GHIA); John Handley with Climate Resilient Cities and Infrastructure (RESIN) and Jane Houghton with the Greater Manchester Urban Pioneer.

Landlife's legacy and work on the development of new creative conservation projects

RS reported on the legacy. Landlife was about low-cost urban landscaping and creative restoration and that its initiatives such as the Norther Flower House need to be re-built. He proposed that the Forum should become more activist and consider how this might be achieved, how the Forum could use this legacy.

In discussion PF felt that we need to get angry about the most deprived areas being able to attract private finance initiatives. It was felt that the Forum should consider how to improve the environmental well-being of disempowered people and JT proposed that all members contribute to a core study under the auspices of UN-Habitat.

Action: Post affiliation to UN-Habitat the Forum should consider undertaking a study on how to improve the environmental well-being of disempowered people.

Membership

Members recognised the important need for the Forum to attract new younger members and to increase its diversity.

Action: all members to propose new members able to make active contributions to the Forum

Web site

NL reported that due to health issues which could result in his early retirement Graham Bowden (cartographer at University of Manchester) was no longer in a position to develop the proposed new up to date web site for the Forum. Graham was also responsible for maintaining and updating the site for the Forum but has undertaken to instruct a Forum member on how to do this.

It was decided that in the short term NL would try to learn how to keep the current site updated and that potential help might be available from one of SL's or JT's students and that the development of a new site should be postponed until potential new funding might be available post UN-Habitat affiliation.

Members wished to record their thanks and appreciation to Graham Bowden for his most valued and much appreciated work for the Forum and their hopes for his future well-being.

Treasurer's report

NL reported that the current bank balance is £3524.06. Expenditure per meeting, if held at University of Manchester which seems to be the most cost-effective and easiest accessible venue for most members, is costing between £100 and £200 per meeting dependant on members' travel expenses. There are no current income opportunities but this could possibly change with UN-Habitat affiliation.

Format of future meetings

JB had submitted a proposal in advance of the meeting that the Forum moves completely to a conference call format and has either no face to face meetings or just one per annum. In discussion it was felt that the current technology is still inadequate and potentially not readily available and useable by many members. ER reported that the Linnean Society is currently evaluating tele-conference systems.

It was thus decided to defer any decision on this proposal.

Any other business

ID circulated an update on the Routledge Handbook of Urban Ecology (Second edition).

ER wondered if there were other parallel groups to the Forum. In response it was pointed out that the Forum's uniqueness is its award system, link to UN institutions and focus on urban ecology. In discussion it was felt that post affiliation to UN-Habitat the Forum could consider links to other networks such as the British Ecological Society and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management as well as connection to various arts and science events.

ER also suggested a possible joint event with the Linnean Society in London hosting the launch event for the Forum's affiliation to UN-Habitat.

Subsequent to the meeting ER has informed RS and NL that the treasurer of the Linnean Society is very supportive of such an event.

Action: RS to meet with ER to discuss an affiliation to UN-Habitat launch event at the Linnean Society.

Date of next meeting

At a date to be advised in April 2019.

Appendix 1

MANIFESTO / VISION UK Urban Ecology Forum

DRAFT 07.01.2019

Who we are	Diverse collective, representing our interconnected world of arts and sciences, design and engineering
What we do	Engage the interdependent patterns of society and environment Challenge the status quo Seek capabilities to address ecological problems potential
How we do it	Share and support each other's work
Why we do it	In response to the transformative challenges of climate change, the extinction of species, human demographics and increasing urbanisation
Where we do it	In urban contexts (anthropogenic infrastructure) in the UK and abroad As the first industrialised nation and as an island, the UK presents a unique case to study
When we do it	
What do we want to achieve	Promote learning through critical dialogue Influence policy locally, nationally and internationally Self-determined, ecologically resilient urban futures

Appendix 2

NATURAL CAPITAL GROUP

Date: 13th December 2018 Item 7a

Subject: Urban Pioneer Update

Report of: Adam Booth, Environment Agency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Natural Capital Group with an update on progress and activity to date for the Urban Pioneer and its next steps and to highlight any critical actions or elements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Group is asked to:

Note the contents of the report.

3. CONTACT OFFICERS

Name: Adam Booth

Email: adam.booth@environment-agency.gov.uk

Tel: 07876392426

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Since the last update provided in September a number of elements have moved forwards.

Natural Capital Accounts

4.2 The acknowledgement and signoff of the natural capital accounts has progressed which has seen Councillor Alex Ganotis, in his capacity as Green City lead, use the benefit flows and values in a number of presentations. The same evidence is supporting input into the consultation on the Local Industrial Strategy championing the critical role the natural environment plays in supporting local businesses.

4.3 The communications and engagement Task and Finish group have met a number of times looking to draw out and create a series of compelling and engaging headlines based on the accounts that can be used to educate and raise awareness of the impact of GM's natural capital. Additionally the group have identified a series of policies that the Urban Pioneer could seek to inform and this was narrowed down based on existing relationships and dialogue

initially to those policies listed below for which we will craft bespoke messages.

1. Beelines consultation
2. Green Summit 2
3. My Place (pending rollout in GM)

Biodiversity Net Gain

4.4 Significant progress on establishing biodiversity net gain for planning and development across the city region has been made and whilst the timetable for this has been pushed back by around 3 months, this will give the necessary space and time for further testing and refinement of the methodology to be applied. We are also expected to see the Governments consultation on mandating net gain during this time and it is hoped the extend time line will allow for this to be considered.

Natural Capital Investment

4.5 Work is nearing completion on the drafting of the Natural Capital Investment Plan (NCIP) and this is anticipated to be published in January.

4.6 Other work in the future funding and financing space is progressing including a commission to scope the feasibility of a GM centric carbon market which could be used to augment the developing GM environment fund. This fund is been picked up in the NCIP. We are also looking at scoping what would be required to progress work on developing an Investment Readiness Fund. And we are continuing to plan for the start of the IGNITION UiA project looking at building the business case for private investment into Green Infrastructure for climate resilience.

Sharing Learning

4.7 We are looking to commission a project designed specifically at extracting the lessons learned from the Urban Pioneer in order to support the sharing of these lessons with others.

4.8 Discussions have started via the Environment Agency and Natural England at replicating some of the work undertaken as part of the Urban Pioneer including the replicability of the natural capital accounts.

4.9 We are developing an in depth how to guide and accompanying toolkit to facilitate the rapid replication of the accounts and their results in other urban and nonurban areas

Other

4.10 As previous updates, feedback and insights are been shared with key policy leads within Defra working on the 25 Year Environment Plan and the environment bill. One area of particular note is that of Local Natural Capital Plans where we are helping to shape how these may work, the governance and skills required and the scale they operate.

4.11 A potential end date for the Pioneer projects has been earmarked for 30th March 2020 and in turn we are now reviewing our work programme working

towards this date.

Recommendations

The Group is asked to:
Note the contents of the report.

Appendix 3

Ignition 1 pager

1) The project

Innovative financinG aNd delivery of naTural cllmate sOlutioNs in Greater Manchester

This is a 3 year ERDF funded 'Urban Innovative Actions' (UIA) project which runs until November 2021, with a fourth year in which the outcomes of the project are disseminated. UIA projects are based on testing out 'risky' ideas for positive social, economic and environmental outcomes, and new, 'untested' solutions to global problems.

There are at present 12 partners. Lead partner: GMCA, plus Environment Agency, United Utilities, Salford and Manchester City Councils, Universities of Salford and Manchester, Groundwork, City of Trees, RHS, UK Green Building Council and Business in the Community. Atkins have been helping to develop the project plan which is still evolving at this point.

2) Aims and background

The challenge for Greater Manchester (GM) is that a lack of funding is resulting in insufficient numbers of climate adaptation projects being delivered.

The impact is that the number of surface water flooding incidents has increased 10 times and the number of heat stress incidents has doubled due to increased temperatures since the 1950s. Vulnerable citizens have been particularly affected.

University of Manchester estimates that a 10% increase in urban green infrastructure (GI) is needed to adapt GM to climate change by 2038. Nature-based solutions (NBS) are particularly effective at doing this. As well as climate adaptation, NBS also deliver health, biodiversity and economic benefits. To achieve the 10% target this project will:

1. Establish a pipeline of NBS projects to increase GM's urban GI by 10% by 2038, and establish phases valued at €10m+ to attract investment
2. Establish innovative business models and financing mechanisms to enable investment in Phase 1 of the pipeline
3. Build investor confidence in GM NBS projects
4. Establish a GM Climate Adaptation Services Company to deliver Phase 1 of the pipeline

This project is innovative because no EU city currently has the mechanisms to fund, deliver and maintain projects at the rate needed to adapt them to climate change.

By 2021 GM will have:

- Capacity and investor confidence to deliver NBS projects to increase GM's urban GI cover by 10% by 2038
- Contracts signed to fund and deliver Phase 1 of the pipeline

3) Key work packages

WP3 – Communication and Engagement: work with all key stakeholders that need to be involved in developing and implementing innovative solutions for NBS funding and delivery.

WP4 – Project Development: develop the pipeline of NBS projects that GM needs to increase its urban green infrastructure cover by 10% by 2038, from 2018 levels, and will develop Phase 1 of the pipeline for funding and delivery in WP6

WP5 - Business Models and Funding Mechanisms: will set out how potential investors can receive a return on their investment when funding GM NBS projects, by establishing innovative new business models. This work will be underpinned by an understanding of the financial and non-financial benefits that NBS can deliver.

WP6 - Climate Adaptation Services Company: will establish a new GM-wide company, with the capacity and expertise to deliver Phase 1 of the project pipeline and maintain it over the long-term. And design it so that it can be expanded to deliver Phases 2+ of the pipeline post-project

WP7 - NBS Innovation Centre (Living lab at University of Salford): will install multiple NBS components. Surface water run-off and temperature will be monitored and modelled internally and externally. Models will be used to project performance into future climate. These measures form the basis of calculating financial and non-financial benefits of GI which are projected with the critical precision required to inform other elements of the project in WPs 4, 5 and 6. Indirect climate change effects (human adaptation, indoor and outdoor air pollution, building performance) will also be assessed.