

**COUNCIL FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND THE COUNTRYSIDE
182nd MEETING**

KLONDYKE BUILDING
GASWORKS BUSINESS PARK, BELFAST
Friday 06 December 2019
10.00AM

In Attendance:

Members

Dr. A.H. Kirkpatrick (Chair)
Prof. J. Orford
Dr. A .Cooper
Prof. S. Christie
Mrs. E. Smyth
Ms. P. Davidson

Officials

Ms. Helen Anderson
Mr. James Warnock
Mr. Michael Dempster
Ms. Hilary Downey
Ms. Angela Gibson - Secretariat

1. Apologies

Apologies were sent by Mr. Sean Kelly, Mr. Oisín Murnion, Mr. Richard Gray, Mr. Ken Bradley, Ms. Renny McKeown and Mr. Colin Armstrong.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 In response to the Chair asking the members if they had any declarations of interest in terms of items on the agenda, the members confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest to declare. The Chair reminded the group that it was acceptable to declare an interest at any point during the meeting.

3. Minutes of last meeting

3.1 In response to the Chair, Council members confirmed that they were content that the minutes of the last meeting were a true record of the meeting. Members noted their concerns around extensions to appointment and successors to EU committees.

New Action Point 3.1: Chair to look at the future of EU monitoring committees and what the situation would be if someone left.

4. Matters arising

4.1 Previous Action: To liaise with JNCC Secretariat regarding options for CNCC

representative to attend JNCC meetings along with the CNCC Chair. Ongoing

4.2 Previous Action 3.26: Chair to take information on marine skills from the CNCC skills audit to the next MCWG meeting on Thursday 25th September 2019. Chair took to Sept meeting however, amendment now required due to the resignation of Mr Peter Archdale. Ongoing

4.3 Previous Action 3.28: Chair to forward copy of Emily Smyth's text on the public realm to Emily Smyth, **Complete**. Emily Smyth to review text and send to Chair. Chair to write to Department to see if reviewed document can be issued to Bio – Diversity Officers in Councils for advice and guidance.

4.4 Previous Action 11.1: Emily Smyth to provide to Chair by 30/8/19 a report on examples of good practice re Green Infrastructure and Climate change to feed into the NI Environment Strategy. Emily Smyth to provide report to Chair for the Environment consultation response.

4.5 Previous Action 9.1.1: Dr Kirkpatrick to provide notes to Ms Smyth so she may lead in response to Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan and Belfast Open Spaces Strategy 2019-2035. Ms Smyth to provide her input to Dr Kirkpatrick prior to the consultation deadline of 20/09/2019. Chair/ Secretariat to look out final copy and issue to members for information.

4.6 Chair to issue agreed paper on microplastics to Helen Anderson (item 11.3.2 of minutes of 7/9/2018). The Chair reported that there has been ongoing input from MCWG but the final draft has not been agreed. **Ongoing and carried forward**.

4.7 Chair has asked members for any final comments on the Natural Capital paper by Friday 13/09/2019. Once updated and agreed the Chair will issue the paper to Paul Caskie. **Ongoing**

James Warnock joined the meeting at 10.55am.

5. Departmental update : extension to term

5.1 Hilary Downey gave an update to members on the current position regarding a resolution to making appointments to CNCC. She advised the department have asked The Executive office (TEO) to have CNCC added to Secretary of State Legislation, to allow a decision in the absence of a Minister. She noted the department tried this last year and was unsuccessful and she advised this time the case had been strengthened by highlighting having no Deputy Chair and the potential impact on JNCC. Moving forward the department have also sought legal advice re moving forward with appointments.

5.2 Members discussed the importance of this matter, noting their concerns and impact on members and the ability to provide advice to the department on issues eg Environment Strategy. They advised on the urgent need to raise this with the department.

New Action Point 5.1: Chair to write to DAERA Permanent Secretary to highlight CNCC concerns in the absence of a Minister re future recruitment and appointments to CNCC.

5.3 Chair advised she had discussed the provisions around the options for an Interim Vice Chair with the Chair and Deputy Chair of JNCC. She acknowledged Members concerns around Climate Change and Air policy and the need for CNCC's advisory role to be considered in future discussion/meetings within the department.

New Action Point 5.2: Chair to write to DAERA Permanent Secretary to ask how CNCC as a statutory advisory body to the Department can feed into ongoing discussions/meetings and various interactions within the department re Climate Change and Air policy to enable a successful Environmental Programme.

Helen Anderson joined the meeting at 11.50am

6. Draft CNCC workplan

6.1 The Chair asked the members to have a look at the latest draft workplan provided by the department for their consideration. She advised this comprehensive document covered full reporting procedures for both CNCC and the department to report back on issues raised.

6.2 Hilary Downey gave a short PowerPoint presentation of the draft workplan explaining how the document was created on the back of the joint workplan day between CNCC members and department staff. She advised on how information/issues would be captured and advised moving forward members would receive an updated plan before each meeting. It was noted the aim was to have all advice requested, received and provided noted, captured and archived for all parties to see in one document. Hilary further explained the Workplan Advice Template, why it had been created and how it would be used to ensure all requests for advice and responses provided would be captured and would provide a good reference point in future.

6.3 As this was the first time members had seen the draft workplan and advice template they offered their thoughts and comments around the plan. The general consensus was that this was a good starting point and Hilary Downey advised members to take it away and come back to Secretariat if they had any suggested amendments. Concerns were noted around the advice template in that it was more for the department and not for CNCC to raise their issues.

New action point 6.1 Secretariat to draft template for Chair to enable CNCC to raise issues to CNCC workplan.

6.4 Emily Smyth advised she had provided a significant amount of work to Mark Hammond after the joint workplan day in October and asked for this to be captured on

the workplan.

New action point 6.2: Emily Smyth to send her paperwork provided to Mark Hammond on Review of National/Regional landscape strategies, policies etc. Within UK and Ireland.

Helen Anderson left the meeting at 1pm.

7. CNCC Workplan – Development of EFS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

7.1 Chair made a declaration of interest at this point that she was an EFS planner.

7.2 Dr. J. Warnock gave an overview of his paper provided to members in relation to EFS Monitoring & Evaluation Framework of EFS. He advised re the outline of the MEF structure provided and highlighted moving forward his role would be concentrating on the first two points on of metric of measurement in the table at pages 9 and 10 of this paper at annex A for tiers 1 and 2 . He noted tier three would be completed under a different contract. Dr. Warnock commented this was the first completion of the new CNCC workplan template and asked CNCC members for their advice and comments on the monitoring and evaluation framework.

7.3 Members offered some initial thoughts on this paper and in particular the need for the department to consider the assessment of soil and peat depths.

New action point 7.1: Members to send to Chair comments re future modelling of EFS and how to place values on eco systems and the monitoring of soil and peat depths by Cop 17/01/20. Chair to then issue final comments to Dr. Warnock by 31/1/20.

7.4 Chair noted and thanked the input into this piece of work from Dr. Cooper on behalf of CNCC, and, thanked Dr. Warnock for his time and presentation of the paper at today's meeting.

Dr. Warnock left the meeting at 1.30pm

Mr. Dempster joined the meeting at 1.30pm

8. CNCC workplan – Preserve by recording approach to certain Quarternary sand and gravel sites.

8.1 Mr. Dempster gave an overview of his paper to in relation to conservation of glacial sand and gravel landforms in NI. He advised he had spoken to his counterparts on the mainland and noted the aim although, not a universal approach was to preserve these sites, however in this instance using a significant change of approach.

8.2 Mr. Dempster advised he was looking CNCC to provide advice on his recommendation in the paper of conservation by recording, and to provide any

comments or potential implications for consideration by the department.

8.3 Members indicated initial thoughts around the proposal had merit however concerns were raised re landscape features, giving an example of North Coast and noted 2 points; 1. De-designation, (how do you do this?), and 2. Consideration of Geo-conservation.

8.4 Chair noted the input from members and thanked Mr. Dempster for his time and presentation of the paper at today's meeting.

New action point 8.1: Chair to fill out the Workplan CNCC advice sheet to go back to Michael Dempster on the basis of the comments made at the meeting and issue to Members. Comments from members to be with Secretariat by COP 17/01/20. Chair to then issue comments to Mr.Dempster by 31/1/20.

New action point 8.2: CNCC would like to see the programme forwarded through the Department procedures for supported designations. Chair to ask the department to see the procedures for supported designations.

Mr. Dempster and Ms Downey left the meeting at 2.35pm

9. Consultations

9.1 Chair referred to the active consultation list and in particular advised Members re the timescale for reply to the Environment Strategy for NI consultation. She noted the draft response issued to members was a starting point and asked them to consider further and provide comments to the initial thoughts.

9.2 Members raised concerns in the merit of completing the proforma provided by the department. They highlighted they thought it was not the right approach as the strategy needed to be more radically restructured to drive Zero Emissions and the Carbon economy. Chair noted their concerns and asked members to reflect these point in comments to her to be included on the response to the department.

New action point 9.1: CNCC members to consider and make comments on Environment Strategy for NI to Chair, cc'd to secretariat by 15.00, 11/12/19

10. LNR proposal

10.1 Ms Downey advised she would update members on LNR's and apologised there was no-one available from Biodiversity, Conservation Science Group. She confirmed there was only one LNR for consideration which members had already had sight of. It was noted this had now gone through due process with local council.

10.2 Members were content to approve this application for Chaines Wood, noting it was a well written report. Members agreed there was the need to remind all

Councils when sending LNR proposals through to have consideration of Climate Change included.

New action point 10.1: Chair to write to Local Council to endorse their suggested plan and highlight the need to have consideration given to Climate Change within the proposal.

New action point 10.2: Ms Downey to feed back to NIEA re the need for consideration of Climate Change to be encouraged with all LNR proposals

11. MCWG update

10.1 Chair wished to formally record her thanks to Peter Archdale for his service as a co-opted member of MCWG and wished him well in his future endeavours.

10.2 Chair noted MCWG members had provided input to the department re comments on 2013 HRA Strangford Lough review, advice on Coastal process chapter and gave thanks to Prof. Orford for his work on sediment. Chair advised one member was checking out the legislation and metrics to use before group will reply on the complicated issue of measures of equivalent environmental benefit. She noted it was anticipated the department would reply to the group for the next meeting to be held in January 2020.

10.3 Prof. Orford noted Dr. Bob Brown from MCWG had remaindered that co-opted members wished to see the CNCC review report. Chair confirmed this would be considered.

12. Chairman's report

12.1 Chair updated members on her recent attendance with Prof. Orford and representatives from the department at a Net Zero, Nature Based Solutions meeting in London. Further to Prof. Orford's record of the meeting already forwarded to members she advised it was a very informative meeting at the initial development stage. She noted JNCC had picked up this area in their ongoing strategy as a driver for all to work together, which will provide very real opportunities in the future.

12.2 Prof. Orford commented this was the most influential meeting he had attended in his entire time in CNCC. He advised he thought CNCC need to engage further with NIEA and DAERA to progress this area, and noted it was on the CNCC workplan.

12.3 Chair updated members on her recent attendance with Helen Anderson at an ALB event hosted by Iain Greenaway, Director of Historic Environment Division looking at the potential engagement of working together towards the creation of a Heritage Forum. Chair said she would keep members updated re the

progress of this group.

12.4 Chair updated members on her recent attendance at JNCC in Peterborough and provided a meeting report to members at the meeting for their information.

12.5 Chair concluded with noting a proposed meeting was anticipated in April 2020 with the SN's and Scottish Government with thematic sessions on delivering and improving drivers

13. Meeting reports

13.1 No issues were raised at this part of the meeting.

14. Date of next meeting

The date of the next CNCC meeting was confirmed as 31/01/2020.