

Devon Green Infrastructure Group

Meeting notes from 22 June 2017

Forde House, Newton Abbot

Attendees: Jonny Miller (Teignbridge DC); Simon Bates (Exeter and East Devon Growth Point); Andy Jones and Andrew Austen (North Devon DC); Melanie Croll (Devon CC); Rob Sekula (SW Devon DC); Hilary Winter (Devon Countryside Access Forum); Tim Spurway (East Devon DC); Morgan Roberts (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

Apologies: Tom Lowry (Plymouth CC); Andrew Austin (North Devon DC); Poie-Yee Li (Mid Devon DC); Julien Sclater and Denise Ramsay (Natural England); Sarah Jennings (Devon County Council)

1	Introductions and Apologies	
1.1	<p>As per above.</p> <p>Morgan Roberts was invited to join the discussion following his presentation as part of a Devon LNP seminar on Biodiversity Net Gain. Presentations are available from Natural Devon website and below are JM's 10 key take home messages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The US and UK have quite different regulatory frameworks however there are many similarities in the opportunities and challenges faced in setting up net gain systems.2. US have 40 years of experience which UK can learn from to more rapidly implement a Net Gain system.3. UK has the policies and processes in place to deliver Net Gain now. There are examples from Teignbridge and across the country. Links were provided for useful tools and guidance.4. Net Gain is simply a cost of doing business. It has not affected the ability to deliver development in US.5. Following a robust mitigation hierarchy is essential to avoid license to trash6. Funding in perpetuity management is critical to outcomes. In US, management is funded by investment returns on non-depreciating endowments.7. Habitat banking proved best approach – minimises monitoring burden, provides cost certainty, is more often expert-led and ecologically sound. Teignbridge District Council are working with partners to establish one.8. The US has a simple tariff-based approach for small scale development with site-specific analysis for larger sites.9. Framework for delivery is important to standardise practices but detail of calculator and conservation priorities are likely to vary by region.	

	<p>10. The Devon LNP will work with partners to help establish a Net Gain framework for Devon based on the UK 10 Good Practice Principles and emerging guidance.</p> <p>The conversation on Net Gain extended into the GI Group meeting. There was support for shared guidance but recognised lack of resources to carry out and challenges of different approaches within the county. GESP will be considering Net Gain during the plan-making process. Where possible a GESP framework will be designed to be applicable to the rest of the county.</p>	
2	Plymouth LNP and Joint Plan	
2.1	Plymouth LNP: Plymouth CC officers unable to attend.	
2.2	<p>Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon Joint Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To 2034; completed Reg19 consultation; 2,500 reps but none challenging green space / biodiversity policy - Formally submitting plan by end of July - In Plymouth Plan designates Local Green Space (introduced through NPPF) and Strategic Green Space (strategic version of LGS) plus landscape designations with almost everything else allocated. - No LGS designated in MDDC or SHDC; left to neighbourhood Plans to designate LGS - Much of the growth will be outside Plymouth CC boundary and therefore determined by SHDC planners but to Plymouths green space policies. A new team being established to deal with growth. - Starting to prepare their SPD next year which will include GI and biodiversity issues. 	
3	Devon LNP	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The latest newsletter is available here - 2016 lecture by Prof Sir John Lawton on Making Space for Nature - 2017 lecture by Prof Dieter Helm CBE on Natural Capital and Sustainable Growth - Plymouth and Devon LNP's are working with the LEP to build Natural capital thinking into their Productivity Plan. This will include commissioning a NC informative to advice decision makers on opportunities and how to take forward. 	
4	Round table catch up and discussions	
4.1	<p>South Hams / West Devon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alexis Huggins and cover are both on maternity leave. - Main focus has been on the Joint Plan 	
4.2	<p>Greater Exeter Strategic Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The GESP will set out policies and allocations for development up to 	

	<p>2040. Housing allocations exceeding 500 homes and associated employment land will be delivered through the GESP, whilst smaller allocations will be delivered through refreshed local plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new GESP staff team has been established to deliver the plan, led by Simon Thornley. - Tim Spurway has been appointed to lead on Green Infrastructure. A GI strategy only focusing on strategic and cross boundary GI will be prepared for GESP. A Net Gain policy is being drafted. - Alex Lessware has taken up the management of an Environmental Working Group which has been convened to ensure good communication across environmental theme groups. MC to circulate methodology for the landscape sensitivity work. - To help evidence and bring together multiple themes to inform the plan, GESP are commissioning an ecosystem service evidence review. Methodology is proposed to build on that previously developed and applied by WCRT to form reviews for catchment partnerships across Devon. Documents circulated here via links. - Information on the process of the plan, delivery, timetable, progress so far and method of public consultation is all available on the website www.gesp.org.uk. JM to follow up with MC as to how landscape is best factored into the process. 	<p>MC</p> <p>JM, MC</p>
<p>4.3</p>	<p>East Devon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SB successful in £50k bid to Lottery for historic trees project - To include citizen science, surveys, planting, discovery walks - First stage of working towards Clyst Valley Park - Letters of support were essential 	
<p>4.4</p>	<p>Teignbridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TDC are working with RSPB to deliver a habitat bank for cirl buntings and other wildlife affected by development. If successful more announcements in September. 	
<p>4.5</p>	<p>North Devon and Torridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalising main modifications - Consulting in July/August with the intention to have an inspectors report before Christmas. - Got policies but will need an SPD. - If get 20% fee increase then use amongst other to pay for a GI strategy - Are host for a 2yr Landscape and a Marine Natural Capital Pioneer. - Test bed for delivering the Defra 25yr env plan - Currently are producing baseline maps of what is there and what the flows of services are. - Three themes that they are looking at exploring further: land management, planning, public health. - 11th July initial findings being presented. To forward on. 	<p>AJ</p> <p>AJ</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send round summary of the programme - Possible future seminar topic - Exmoor National Park are due to adopt their Local Plan imminently as got their inspectors report now. On their website. 	
4.6	<p>Devon Countryside Access Forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statutory body set up by the County Council under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The role of the Forum is to improve public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment. - The Forum is a voluntary body with 16 members, appointed following advertising, to represent land managers and owners, users of land and those with other interests. The Forum will advise the local authority and other bodies on access issues and will also consider wider strategic issues such as the Rights of Way Improvement Plan - More information here - https://new.devon.gov.uk/prow/devon-countryside-access-forum/ - Attendees raised specific projects with access issues and will take them up outside of the meeting 	
4.7	<p>Devon Landscape Policy Officers Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Devon Landscape Policy Group is an informal partnership of officers from planning authorities and land management organisations across the geographical county of Devon. The Group facilitates joint working on landscape planning and management issues that have implications across administrative boundaries. - Last meeting was combined with county-wide Tree Officers meeting and discussed: tree data and diseases, best practice for urban trees and how DCC can better support delivery of trees. - JM and MC to discuss combining GI and Landscape Group next meeting. - DCC updating validation information. - Guidance on LEMP going out for consultation. MC to circulate. - Recently had a cross discipline workshop on tranquillity: how to define and protect it and what the vision is for it. Written up in a report. MC to circulate. 	<p>JM, MC</p> <p>MC</p> <p>MC</p>
5.0	AOB	
5.1	Any ideas welcomed for future seminars, site visits etc	All

JM 26/06/17