

FOURTH WORKSHOP REPORT NATURE AND PEOPLE

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RESOURCES FOR CHANGE LTD

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11th June 2024

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SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – WORKSHOP 4 NATURE AND PEOPLE

Date: 11th June 2024

Venue: Merrist Wood Agricultural College

Time: 10am to 3pm

Facilitators: Resources for Change (R4C)

PURPOSE

To involve a group of local stakeholders in learning about, deliberating, and identifying priority outcomes related to local nature recovery in the county.

PRINCIPLES / OBJECTIVES

- Participants learn about local nature recovery and establish common understanding.
- Participants work together to develop draft outcomes.
- Participants finalise and prioritise outcomes.

PREPARATION/ HOMEWORK

Participants that have not been to the webinars were asked to watch these back (there was a short recap at the beginning of the event).

EVENT REPORT

Following the welcome and introductions, participants were asked:

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT SURREY?

Responses were:

- Where I live. Forest, heathland locally. Even though heavily populated
- Free to access / accessible.
- Greenery. Really green county.
- Reverence Surrey people have for nature. Close to [nature].
- So wooded and diverse woodland too.

SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – SEE PRESENTATION (APPENDIX)

Q&A

Following the presentations, there was the opportunity to ask questions. These will be used to generate a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) page on the website:

Questions	Answers
Who do you define as a landowner? How can we encourage gardeners?	We will promote what people can do in their gardens. This may be linked to Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) ie [if your garden is in heathland area] plant [native] heather.
Have you mapped gardens?	14% [of Surrey] = private gardens. Basingstoke and Dean offer garden surveys. Not overlooked but there is a question of resource. The NRS will tend to focus on larger land-holdings.
Is there scope within the NRS for the creation of bye laws? Eg [against] astro-turfing of gardens.	Not scope within LNRS but may be a role for local authorities. The government approach tends to be towards voluntary agreements.
What can the LNRS do to engage with homeowners? Can we provide suggestions to local networks?	A role for Nature Recovery partners. There will be a duty linked to Local Authorities and Biodiversity Plans by January 2026.
How do you define biodiversity friendly development?	Biodiversity Net Gain is being delivered / required [on all new developments] and there is a need for monitoring and enforcement. Local authorities are employing more ecologists.
How do we manage short-termism?	LNRS duty to co-operate will start to mainstream these activities.

NATURE RECOVERY IDEA GENERATION BY HABITAT (GROUP ACTIVITY).

The participants undertook a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for the following themes:

- Heathland
- Woodland and forestry
- Waterways, wetlands
- Species rich grassland (watermeadows)
- Farmland including hedgerows, field margins
- Parks, golf courses, school grounds, health, higher education, business and industrial estates

In the last few minutes they were asked to underline the most important factor (particularly but not exclusively from “opportunities”). The results are set out below:

PARKS, GOLF COURSES, SCHOOL GROUNDS, HEALTH, HIGHER EDUCATION, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Strengths	Children (schools) keen to help and have 'parent persuasion'!
	Large areas of blank canvases
	Lots of people want to help, especially in their local green spaces.
	People aware of climate change and biodiversity emergencies
	Start with enchantment, especially children
Weaknesses	Lack of enforcement of existing powers ie Tree Preservation Orders
	Perception if it is green it's good ie golf courses, amenity grassland.
	Agency over spaces
	Accessibility by public transport

	Lack of toilets
	Accessibility - mobility
	Small pockets - isolated
	Lack of education / understanding
	Golf courses aren't [are] that environmental green desert
	Sustained management and funding
Opportunities	Golf course eco-awards
	Raising awareness
	Health estate - so much green space
	Lots of evidence of the health benefits of being in nature
	Rewilding - managed properly
	Linking establishments to local community groups
	Youth communities, also work experience, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Linking into existing programmes
	"Move from ego to eco" ie [give] young people agency
	Bolster environmental groups - connect them - networking
	Community cohesion and empowerment
	More co-operative / partnership working by environmental and other groups
	Make it fun
	Medicine optimisation - reducing need for medication
	Tree planting - recover outdoor spaces for nature
	Give people more ownership ie Tree Guardians
	Blue green strategies - healthy streets, greener streets. Connect with more urban strategies
	Multi-functional opportunities in urban areas
	Move away from bedding to more natural planting
	Softening hard surfaces with tree planting and greening
	Make it fun ie Pokemon Go, Seek - harness technology / Apps, Minecraft
Mineral and Waste Plan - land restoration	
Utilise Section 106 / CIL to pay for education as well as infrastructure ie [teaching people] surveying [skills]	
New ways of managing golf courses. Changing attitudes	
Tie recreation to responsibility	
RHS Campaign - National Education Nature Parks. Changing perceptions	
Threats / Barriers	Golf courses and housing development - loss of green space
	Accessibility can result in damage ie dogs / destruction of wildlife, littering, trampling. How to address?
	People can be overwhelmed and "check-out"
	Cats!

HEATHLAND

Strengths	We have some in Surrey
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	Where we have local/level walks for disabled users
	Diversity of animals which live here - 5 reptiles
	Settlements are built around heathland
	Grazing for animals to slow regrowth
	Some of the trees could provide for carbon reduction
	Lichens should [unreadable] a positive nature step for carbon and environment
	It is a positive that it's protected
	Not much grows there so army use for training - looks like Germany
	Open landscape - more inclusive to people with physical disabilities. More accessible and open allowing for lots of 'gateway' nature connection opportunities.
Weaknesses	We need to be able to drive to access.
	Not connected; no corridors. Maybe due to environment.
	Settlements are built around heathland for quick access
	[People] don't realise how rare heathlands are
Opportunities	More active travel
	Being able to hire "correctly purchased" electric bikes
	Wetting areas to stop fires - not putting water on it but allowing water to stay longer
	Could be used for more animal grazing
	Filming {unreadable} income helps protected landscape
	Captive audience - opportunity for education - gateway to other areas ie Frensham Pond
	Very accessible
	Heathland Connections - partnership and work to connect heathlands
	Pullup your own Christmas tree
Threats / barriers	Disabled people - it is not accessible due to transport and some barriers were no local walks
	Fire threat
	Battery bikes where not purchased correctly [threat of fire]
	Development of buildings and new roads
	Run off from roads and farms - increasing nutrients
	Filming on heathland
	MOD ordnance - causing fires
	Dogs - ground nesting birds / reptiles / dog treatments in water, disturbance to water
	Very accessible - also a threat if not managed
	Dirt biking, quad biking [need to manage]

WOODLAND

Strengths	Carbon capturing - but can be threatened by fire loss
	Can absorb pollution
	<u>Reduce mental health issues / blood pressure</u>
	Boardwalk at Newlands Corner (but needs to be increased as it doesn't start at the car park)
	Active[ly] regenerates
	Biodiversity

	Fungi - mycelium networks
Weaknesses	If enclosed / deep, can't be accessed by some people with certain illness / mental health / disabled
	<u>Travel to woodlands</u>
	Continuation of collection of date has increased
	Hard to restore [ancient woodland]
	Fear of fungi plants because [we] don't understand them
Opportunities	Coppicing would open up the woodlands - correctly managed wood
	<u>Provide opportunities to people to get involved with natural spaces ie forest bathing, or art engagement</u>
	Forest Schools
	Step back and let our nature areas govern themselves [sic]
	Genetic resistance / self-seeding
	<u>To be able to work / have an income from woodland</u>
	Sweet cherry flavour beer / bring back seasonal activities
	Forestry combined with other farming techniques. Pigs, trees and acorns
	<u>Citizens' Science - engaging and learning</u>
	BNG - more woodlands
Threats / Barriers	Built environment
	<u>Climate change - change type / species</u>
	Not planning ahead; factoring in of non native species due to weather
	Lost workforce who work in forestry
	Forest Schools - very expensive
	Oak Processional Moth and Ash Dieback - biosecurity
	<u>Poor management of private woodland – over-tidy</u>
	Private landowners / developers - lack of knowledge of trees and [their] value
	Trees in the wrong place
	Lack of understanding of importance of range of ages / spaces in woodland

WATERWAYS AND WETLAND

Strengths	With right education, river catchments are quite clearly defined - good for more specific management
	As things are so bad, potential for quick and measurable impact which can be motivating
	We have lots of waterways and wetlands
	Opportunities to shift power
	People live on waterways on boats - are natural stewards
	Gone fishing - mental health
Weaknesses	Pollution, poo and nitrates, run-off, pesticides and herbicides
	Infrastructure is not able to cope - storm surges, below ground network / assets, leaky pipes!
	Surface water run-off - including from roads
	Can't store water - hose pipe bans

Opportunities	Holding people to account
	Sustainable Urban Drainage - in urban areas
	Water companies have money [to invest]
	Existing communities around rivers - fishermen, boaters, local residents
	Plant up your front garden, ponds and rain gardens
	Embrace temporary wetlands - but also water butts. Educate, slow the flow
	Young people might be more open to ideas - new ways of acting
	(Throw) evidence at people
	Restoring old ponds
	Beavers = water voles [what works for one, works for the other]
	Leaky dams - alleviating flood damage [likelihood]
	River Fly - monitoring by fishermen [and women]
	<u>Educate people ie dogs and ponds [flea and worming treatments entering watercourses]</u>
	Stewardship
Responsible recreation - swimming and sunscreen [entering the water environment]	
Threats / Barriers	Increasing wet weather - climate change
	Poor maintenance - ditches, highways drains
	Straightening waterways and building on flood plains and meadows
	Scale of problem is so great even with the money companies appear to be making
	Economy vs environmental good
	Safety - cover ponds - health and safety [culture]
	People don't want / like change
	Perception of the "aesthetic" [negative]
	Bio-security - not cleaning your kit [fishing]
	Frustration / conflict between boat owners and waterway bodies
	Tick [flea] and worm treatment of dogs are affecting invertebrate water life in ponds
	Dredging and water manage vs benefits to wildlife
	Invasive species ie zebra mussels and Himalayan balsam

FARMLAND INCLUDING HEDGEROWS AND FIELD MARGINS

Strengths	<u>Biodiversity, farmland birds, connectivity and corridors</u>
	Careers in agriculture
	Carbon capture of hedges
	<u>Local produce / food</u>
	Conservation grazing
	Buffer zones - regulating pollutants
	Green roofs and solar panels on farm buildings
	Beneficial to mental health due to accessing nature
	Culture - our heritage and our connection to where our food comes from
Weaknesses	Mono-culture
	<u>Chemical use</u>

	Intensive farming
	Lack of financial incentive
	Communication in management / contractors' availability
	Agricultural run off into water sources [courses]
	Climate change
	Poor public rights of way
	Water extraction
	Industrial farming eggs
Opportunities	Regenerative farming - including access [for] children - and how to include agroecology
	Farm cluster groups
	Natural barriers - [hedges] instead of using fences
	Hedge planting
	Hedge laying
	Connectivity – corridors
	Landscape scale restoration
	Education around seasonal
	Maintenance
	Government funding eg FiPL [Farming in Protected Landscapes grants]
	Wilder areas within areas not typically considered 'field margins'
	Regenerative farming - linking with farmers with links to community groups
	Farm diversification - urban people - holidays
	PGL Adventure Groups [residential holidays for children]
	Kids accessing farms for education
	Heritage links to hedges
Links to training providers LANTRA [accredited training body - sector skills - for agriculture and forestry]	
Threats / Barriers	Time
	Climate change
	Health and safety rules for school visits
	<u>Funding and resource</u>
	Machine management of hedges
	Education / training in hedge cycles
	Road verge management / safety
	Mental health / loss of workforce
	Not handing farm over [to the next] generations
	<u>More lucrative to sell for development</u>
	Bee keepers / farming - is there enough natural forage?

SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND

Strengths	Butterflies - small blue and [other] rare species
	Specific relationships [such as Adonis Blue Butterfly and yellow ants]
	Rainforests of the UK

	Pollinators (also of crops!)
	Accessible to many abilities
	Quick growing
	Mental health benefit and allows people who don't like enclosed spaces to access
Weaknesses	<u>Ticks</u>
	<u>Lack of education around dog rules</u>
	Perceived to be not used
	Contradictory needs of plants (ragwort) vs feeding animals
	Temporary
	Pathways / delineation
	<u>Not signposted for 'normal' people</u>
	<u>Not enough boardwalks for disabled people</u>
Opportunities	Habitat for ground nesting birds
	Scything
	Pollinator highways
	Access opportunities
	Skills development and heritage linking to community groups for management
	Free education and recreation - eg butterfly spotting
	Paths / designated places to walk and education around
	Animal feeding
	Citizen science
	Conservation grazing
Threats / Barriers	Dogs trampling nests / poo
	Human ashes - soil PH balance
	BBQs - wildfires / ashes
	Active travel
	Fire [threat]
	Plant identification for reporting of those walking the areas
	Management heavy / expensive equipment / contractors

IDEA GENERATION BY PLACE

Participants were able to review maps showing already designated areas (SSSIs, SPAs etc) and ancient woodland (irreplaceable habitat) and asked using the Lawton principles:

1. More
2. Bigger
3. Better
4. More joined up

To identify opportunities for Nature Recovery in specific locations. These will be mapped for the September / October workshops but in the meantime here are the results:

DEVELOPING NATURE RECOVERY OUTCOMES (GROUP ACTIVITY)

Following a break for food and networking, participants were asked to select a high priority from the earlier SWOT activity to explore in more depth and to identify priority outcomes and actions that could be taken forward into the strategy. The following are the results:

General	Connection of rivers and associated wetlands
General	Make use of railway lines
General	Opportunities around development to connect green spaces better
General	Consider perhaps targeting B-line linking between designated nature sites via wildflower verges
General	Stop sewage discharges into River Mole at assorted locations from Gatwick to Molesey
General	Recognition of wildlife corridors at Local Plan level or formal designation
Preston Farm development site	Chalk streams on Preston Farm Development Site need formalising
Surrey Hills National Landscape	Active hedge restoration programme to restore the landscape and biodiversity
General	Dragonfly education and improvements through Surrey wetlands, rivers, heathlands etc.
General	Weald to Waves link corridor between N Downs and Sussex Hedge [sic?] via Wey and Arun Canal and Downs Link
Godalming	Town centre and all new developments swift bricks and urban greening for wildlife
Rodbergh Common, Milford	Manage[ment] is help to current nightingales
River Wey (Tilford)	Big enough buffer between livestock and river banks in catchment
Harlesmere Ecological Network	How can we connect the Harlesmere Ecological Network (HEN) with other parts of Surrey and across the borders with West Sussex and Hampshire
B-Line	Creating and connecting patches of meadowland to support pollinators in the B-Line
Harlesmere	Encouraging Waverley Borough Council to hand over green space to Harlesmere Town Council to manage for biodiversity
General / Downs	Link via N Downs to Winchester
General	Incentives to get involved
Waterways	Can timber and wheat travel by canal and river like it used to be?
Brookwood Country Park	St Johns
Basingstoke Canal	More education about Dapdune Wharf in Guildford
General	Greater access to all areas for wheelchair users and pushchair users, sensory areas for visual impaired, loop system and two way texting
Ash and Pirbright Ranges	Link in MOD land
Woking	Joined up Woking, less sites

Mount Brown	Surrey Police [HQ land to be included]
Whitmoor Common	Linking Whitmoor Common SPA, SSSI, LNR, BOA with the Hogs Back [Surrey Hills] National Landscape
Horsell	Horsell Preservation Society and Goldsworth Park Community Association
General	Link golf course to commons and open spaces (colleges and university) to create better wildlife corridors
Horsell	Horsell common more facilities
Goldsworth Park	Better facilities around the Goldsworth Park Lake ie picnic areas, café, education about swans and Canada geese
Mayford	Mayford Riding Stables
Pyrford	Pyrford Common more facilities
Shey Copse	Riding Stables
Hoe Bridge Golf Course	
General	Linking organisations ie Surrey Wildlife Trust, National Trust and Woodland Trust to work together to create corridors
River Eden	Friends of River Eden Ecosystem (Free) hellofreesurrey@gmail.com
General	Opportunity for cross county (LNRS) collaboration Kent, Sussex ie via Medway Catchment and Partnership
River Eden	Linking along and across the River Eden Catchment Area
General	Create a coalition of owners of small pockets of land. Provide co-ordination resource.
General	Opportunities to improve 'deprived' neighbourhoods in partnership with residents ie Hurst Green
General	Land that has been "rewilded" with no management - is this helpful to nature?
General	Working to make the best of inevitable development.
Tandridge	Where can we add "dark green" in Tandridge?
General	Add SNCI status [to APIB Layer]

FEED BACK / REFLECTION

Before breaking for lunch, participants were asked for their feedback / reflections on the morning's activities and what was most important / remarkable for feeding into the LNRS:

- Education - affects all area - you are nature
- Responsibility - general public - marrying enjoyment with responsible behaviour
- More engagement with idea urban areas can contribute to Nature Recovery ie street trees, verges.
- Or is this [LNRS] about much bigger areas / land?
- Need to link to Local Authorities' Blue Green Infrastructure Strategies
- Let people know what nature is doing for us. It's about saving us. Young people are exploring this.
- Connect actions in communities. Get people involved.

OPEN SPACE – PRIORITY OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS (MEASURES)

Based on the underlined as most important topics from the SWOT analysis, participants were invited to sign up to dive into a topic in more detail in the afternoon session. Also to try and identify potential priority outcomes for these for the LNRS. The following were proposed:

TIE RECREATION TO RESPONSIBILITY - EDUCATION, STEWARDSHIP, EVIDENCE

Outcomes	Actions
Sustainable and sufficient funding for projects for nature conservation (with easy to fill in applications)	Challenge funder specifications / outcomes more Link local councillors, local parish councils, local trusts (eg Mersham Community Fund) to local community groups
Small landholdings eg parish councils may own small pieces of land - projects for small rewilding social action projects	Link different groups to help manage spaces for wildlife
Community led / collaborative education which factors in different background / cultural / historical etc management techniques	Working with wide groups of people from different backgrounds with tried and tested different methods
Combined benefits of nature connection for well-being benefits as well as conservation benefits	Educate people on the benefits of nature connection through opportunities to be in nature through social prescribing activities etc which can lead into practical conservation volunteering and advocacy
Engage key community organisers - schools, parent groups etc to	Signposting - linking up with social prescribers, youth services and other referrers
Surrey is a benchmark for connected communities sustaining meaningful actions fo nature	Community organisers to spread message [about] nature recovery
All barriers to unrepresented communities are overcome	Link different groups to funding opportunities for nature connections eg parish councils

CLIMATE IMPACTS: FIRE, FLOODING, ADAPTING ETC

Outcomes	Actions
Climate change thinking is in all planning for corridors / habitat areas	To use climate change impacts to plan habitat connectivity
Fire resistant heathland habitats	Fire breaks that still facilitate connectivity
Drought resistant habitats	Rewetting areas of heathland
Hyper resilient species / opportunity areas	Better water management (storage, beavers) underground and reservoirs
	Allowing natural regeneration that allows natural resilience
	Increased slow the flow schemes where flooding is an issue
Section of LNRS that focuses on climate change impacts / mitigation / adaptation	

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Outcomes	Actions
To educate and raise awareness	
Government buy-in / funding	Contact [party associations] associations - get support
A population who buys into the science	Make it fun, relevant, gamify, story[telling], use media

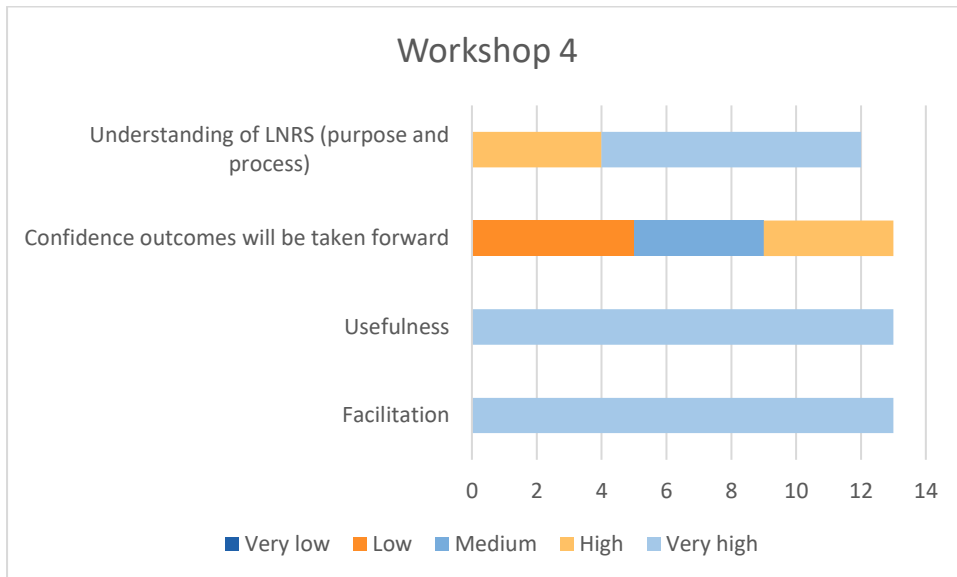
Usable rich data	Seek well defined goals
Usable rich data	Training / data
Break down barriers to further understanding	AI and build on what is already there

15 MINUTE GREEN COMMUNITIES

Outcomes	Actions
Adoption of self preservation of "home" green space (for nature)	Educate on what is a 'good' green space
Journey to green space is enjoyable, green, non-threatening, healthy	
Access for all	Discussions with all stakeholders and local groups for inclusion within the design
Collaboration with planning / developers, to provide green amenity withing new developments that's rich in biodiversity	
Team up with SUDS measures	Planting with flood areas to be provided by water authorities - [corporate] social responsibility - reduces the sewer [outflow] levels
Make the right green spaces a destination	Add play areas where dogs [can]not access
	Add dog only areas
	Add toilets
	add café
	add green gyms
	Add accessible paths and gates
	add information (signage, plant info)
	Add activities boxes
Community ownership of urban green spaces	allow for community events
	Back alleys
	Planters
Engagement on social prescribing	Who to speak to local authority to allow this to happen / not dismissive
	Allow LA, government, NHS, businesses to open up green spaces for all and give them ability to work in those areas
Adoption of Home Space concept	Educate and support

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Participants were asked to evaluate the workshop and give some feedback at the end:



- Don't forget people power!
- Really hope we can take this stuff out of the bubble
- Great day thank you
- Need biscuits
- Might be too early in the process but it would be great to have opportunity to say how we can help deliver the outcomes.

GLOSSARY / JARGON

At this and the other events, inevitably some acronyms or jargon were used. These will be used to populate a glossary on the website. Here they are explained:

30X30	International target to protect 30% of land and sea for biodiversity by 2030
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	an obligation on development either on / off site so can provide new [biodiversity] resources [spaces]
BOAs	Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
CIL or Community Infrastructure Levy	As above but calculated by unit / m2 commercial space
Ecosystem services	services provided by nature ie flood relief, food, enjoyment
FIPL grants	Farming in Protected Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
Improved grassland	Golf courses, horse and pony paddocks, pasture for livestock (sheep and cattle)
LANTRA	Land and Training organisation / accredited awards
Lawton Principles	More, Bigger, Better and More Joined Up

National Environmental Objectives	includes biodiversity targets for habitat creation and species recovery, improve public access to nature and water quality, expanding and improving natural habitats
National Landscape	new name for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Natural capital	value given to nature services £
SCA	Special Conservation Areas
SCNI	Site of Nature Conservation Interest
Section 106 Agreements	Legally enforced planning conditions whereby developers contribute or deliver infrastructure (social or physical) near development
SFI	Sustainable Farming Incentive grants from government reward and support sustainable food production while protecting and enhancing nature
SPA	Special Protection Area
Spatial	Can be mapped
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage - swales, reed beds, rain gardens, ponds, attenuation
WINEP	Water Industry National Environment Programme

Jim Boot, Senior Consultant, R4C 26th June 2024