FIRST WORKSHOP REPORT

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RESOURCES FOR CHANGE LTD

23rd May 2024

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SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – WORKSHOP 1 (LAND-BASED, NON FARMING BUSINESSES)

Date: 23rd May 2024

Venue: The Drift Golf Club, East Horsley, Leatherhead KT24 5HD

Time: 10.00 – 3pm

Facilitators: Resources for Change (R4C)

PURPOSE

To involve a group of 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:

- Provides activities for everyone: biking, birding, etc
- Accessible nature – but can everyone [access it]
- Complexity – you can lose yourself in woods / fields
- Jigsaw of nature reserves but isolated / separated
- Opportunity to introduce children to nature
- A wooded country but also diverse / a mosaic
- Chalk grassland, woodland
- Pressure, threats – but also resilient
- Quality of habitats
- Public rights of way - length – can walk for hours without seeing people – despite hotspots ie Box Hill
- Views
- Pockets – little spaces – also connected by walking and cycling routes
- Landowners potential to increase [accessibility] ie through permissive paths

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**
How do we make it accessible ie social prescribing for mental health?	The focus is on improving / new habitat - but it could also prioritise "where" to centres of population or disadvantaged areas
How will the SNRS get out to a wider population?	At the moment we are taking a more conversational approach. Delegates are happy to get the message out there.

How will landowners want to get BNG and credits promote their sites - access the opportunities?	What gets mapped may benefit from the wider opportunities.
What methods do you have to make people do what you decide?	There is no obligation on landowners / land managers. There can be voluntary agreements and as mentioned being mapped may enable access to grants etc.

NATURE RECOVERY IDEA GENERATION BY HABITAT (GROUP ACTIVITY).

Three groups undertook a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis each taking two topics. 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:

HEATHLAND

SWOT	Output
Strengths	Conservation grazing
	Visibility - able to see problem
	Access - often dry and accessible
	Visibility / sense of safety
	Carbon capture
	Sites of special scientific interest
	Recovers after fire
	People friendly
	Birdlife specific to heathland
	Wet heathland - yes carbon capture - not dry heath
	Biodiversity - amphibians, birds, reptiles, invertebrates
	Large part of Surrey high quality heathland - global [unreadable] - Responsibility we have
	Naturally is a habitat mosaic
Weaknesses	Climate vulnerability - heather not resistant to long dry periods
	Question what SSSI "good condition" is
	Fragmentation - and impact of road network
	Need for active management - resource heavy
	Needs to be managed
	Transient habitat 'always trying to not be heathland'
Opportunities	Mental health
	Bird watching easy to see
	Volunteering can be therapeutic
	Growth in reptile habitat
	To expand SSSI / designated sites
	Opportunities to replant around wet woodland areas
	Experimental areas in area no previously suitable
	Engagement with nature - volunteers managing
	Designing nature based solutions into current management eg large herbivores

	Less intensively managed but better connected Restore traditional / historical crafts - bracken control, soil improver, bedding Ecotourism
Threats	Dog - impact on biodiversity eg ground nesting birds Trees Development especially infrastructure Fire - threat is climate change Overgrazing - or under grazing Access quad bikes / dumping Ecotourism Air quality / nitrates - links to road network

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

Strengths	Lots of people use these sites Lots of opportunity – amount of land and state of land Skill set – green keepers Education – start young Should include gardens – huge
Weaknesses	Privately owned – need incentives [Unreadable] constraints – [unreadable] Wall to wall concrete Use a lot of water Align with bottom line Range of management approaches Contractors etc How they are managed / outsourced Conflicting policy
Opportunities	Connectivity – corridors People engagement – access to nature Improve biodiversity – industrial estates Mental well-being – workers satisfaction Improve air quality Education and nature connection Wider environmental benefits eg heat island, SUDS (sustainable urban drainage systems) Partnership working Motivating businesses – link bottom line
Threats	Good for biodiversity – does not look good Pesticide and herbicide, fossil fuel use (mowing) Hard landscape gardens Decking etc

WATERWAYS AND WETLAND

Strengths	Corridors / connectivity Usual species – box for ecology Wet-scapes crosses all habitats – mosaic Stepping stones for migratory species Inland reedbeds Small bit vital – peat Flood management Economy – pubs, shops Wild swimming – right place
Weaknesses	Lots of red tape Competing users Pockets of high quality Who owns what? Complex NFM – not strongly influenced Agricultural land drainage Boundaries Not seen as an asset (landowner perspective) Complex to do BNG on a river
Opportunities	Restoration - ponds / rivers Species introductions Chalk streams Flooding mitigation (River Thames) NFM - nature based Incentives improvements Community involvement Slow the flow (storage) Enhance peat
Threats	Water quality / pollution [Unreadable] habitat under threat Non native species [unreadable] Lack of management Distracted by other national policy [Unreadable] Water use Mind sets about river management - Bridge Human drugs in water supply Forever chemicals Reduces resistance Flea and tick treatment (dogs)

WOODLAND

Strengths	Huge carbon capture / storage

Strengths	Skilled management work Flood mitigation - absorbing water Shade - climate regulation Habitat variety Fungi Pollution absorption Hedgelaying materials Education Recreation eg forest bathing Carbon capture takes a long time Health benefits Cultural associations Nature benefits - carbon & wood Robust in terms of access Woodland is characteristic of Surrey Beautiful!
Weaknesses	Qualify carbon capture - what happens to the trees Enclosed space - impacts access - challenging Needs managing - ride management Use for wood burning pollution Tree guard littering! More liable to anti-social fly tipping Planning system too rigid eg not supporting natural regeneration
Opportunities	<u>Product circular economy (needs careful thought)</u> Biodiversity Shade Forest schools Recreation Creation opportunity including natural regeneration - good opportunity via funding schemes <u>Right tree, right place</u> Right habitat management & habitat diversity (structural diversity Habitat management mosaics Consider alternative habitats where not appropriate Can deliver better water quality and other NBS [Nature benefits] - buffering, slow the flow Spiritual, health and well-being
Threats	Careful consideration of non-native species Over use - mountain bikes, dogs Lack of skilled labour Invasive species - Himalayan balsam Lack of management Pests and diseases - impacts on choice of trees and quality Deer & grey squirrels

Threats	Put in wrong place - eg impact on water resources
	Failed planting schemes - eg drought, on bunds etc. Outsourcing to contractors not always successful.
	People's expectations of how [woodlands] should look
	Land use competition pressures eg food production

FARMLAND INCLUDING HEDGEROWS AND FIELD MARGINS

Strengths	Hedgerows connectivity and habitat
	Hedgerows planting more
	Pathways - permissive pathways
	Buffer strips
	Once you get a key influencer involved, you can start a ripple effect
	Changing the look of your farm to combine nature and food production
Weaknesses	What is the incentive for landowners
	Food security
	Competition with food production
	It's hard to make money from farming in Surrey so land is being sold for development
	Lack of local abattoirs
	No overall plan for farming ie replacement for CAP [Common Agricultural Policy]
	Not of arable in Surrey
	Land ownership - big estates or investment [in land] rather than actively farmed
	Mixed use farms have disappeared
	Not seeing / thinking big & strategically
	Farmers traditionally have been focussed on profit at any cost - pesticides and herbicides
Opportunities	Incentivise
	Regenerative farming
	Managing soil health
	Develop buffer strips
	Grassland and other habitats "allowing wildlife in"
	Maintaining such as hedgelaying / education
	Understanding where your food comes from ie Farm Visits
	For farms to be more open to the public - Farmers Markets & Farm shops. Direct sales.
	Education
	Rewilding / sustainable farming - balance food
	Renewable energy
Threats	Pesticides
	Ground water nitrates
	Run-off - flood risk too
	Methane from cows - depending on what you feed them
	Losing farming land
	Proximity / tension with people
	Viticulture - changes
	Biodiversity Net Gain 30 year commitment - devalues land

	Protection of hedgerows has been watered down Threat of development of farmland is greater because of protections elsewhere. Profit is greater on green field.
Opportunities	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Carbon sequestration - carbon agreements 70 years Lower grade agricultural land can give greater biodiversity opportunities than crops / livestock Map farmland & link the non-farmed habitat - buffers and links Grassland buffers and now trees in the landscape Agri-forestry / silvi/ pasture Viticulture

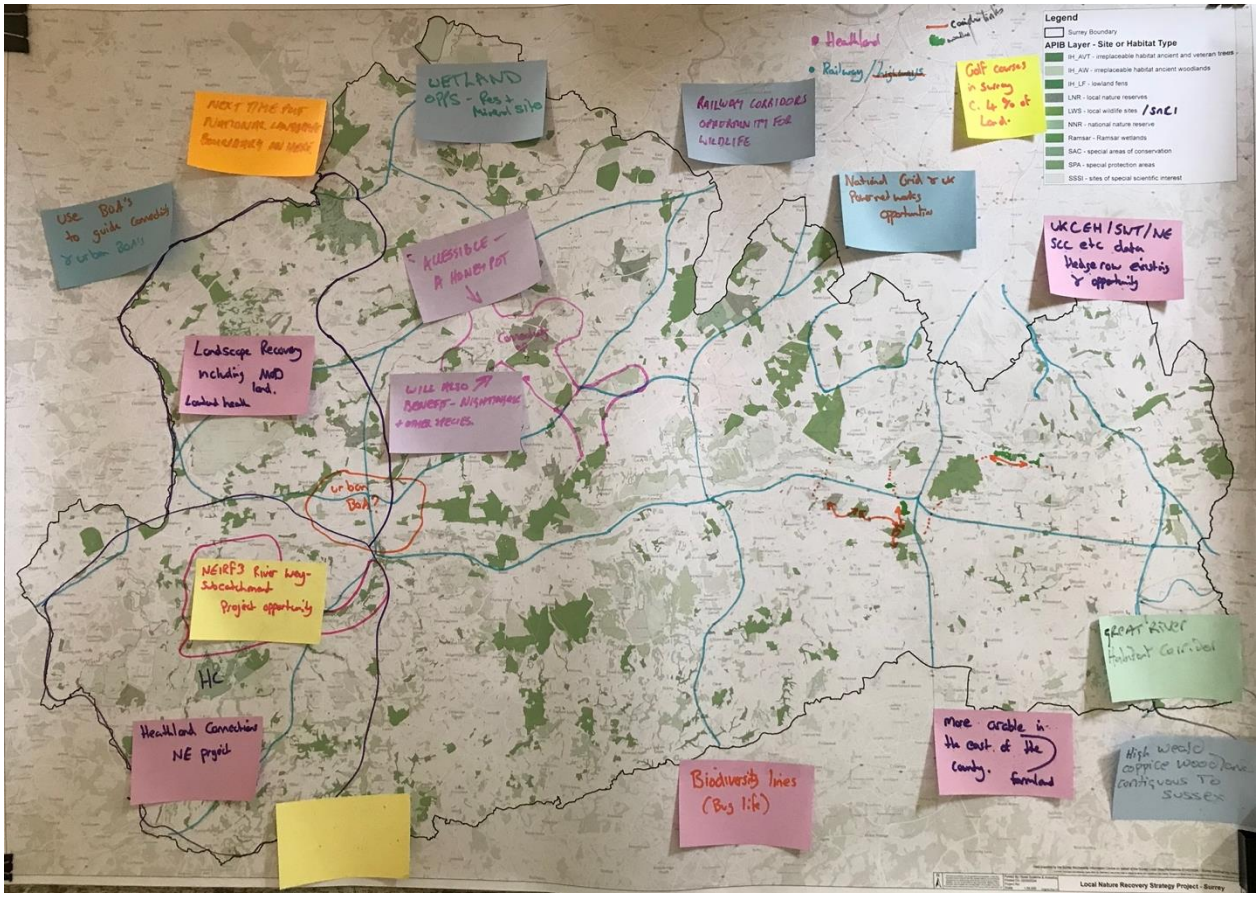
SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND

Strengths	Roadside verges / conservation verges It's easy to do (everyone could do it) Lowland meadows - limited but rich pollinators Reptiles Carbon sink / capture (but not regulated
Weaknesses	Overlooked / misunderstood 40% of the county is improved grassland Perception is that species rich grassland isn't as productive for livestock Lack of and heavily fragmented Inconsistent approach between different districts It takes time to create new species rich grassland
Opportunities	More education Blue Heart Verges - community scheme Tie in with bee keeping / Pollinators. Sowing wildflowers Areas that would make great meadows Regenerative farming. Eg Hamptons, Wintershall "Hedge Funds" are buying land for biodiversity / carbon credits Corridors Produce hay - do it the right way
Threats	Bee keeping competing with native bees Diseases spreading from apiaries to native [bees and bumblebees] Development - grassland an easy hit Pesticides and fertilisers take a long time to wash out Overgrazing - sheep or cattle and horses Horse grazing problem

NATURE RECOVERY IDEA GENERATION BY PLACE (MAPPING GROUP ACTIVITY)

At tables, participants were able to review AO maps showing SSSIs, LNRs etc. They were asked to place sticky notes with comments on condition, new sites in the pipeline, threats. Also to consider “More,

Bigger, Better, More joined up". Also draw or write directly onto maps boundaries etc. These maps are being digitised. Below and overleaf are photos of the maps:


Legend
Survey Boundary
APIB Layer - Site or Habitat Type
IH_AVT - irreplaceable habitat ancient and veteran trees
IH_AW - irreplaceable habitat ancient woodlands
IH_LF - lowland fens
LNR - local nature reserves
LWS - local wildlife sites /SNCI
NNR - national nature reserve
Ramsar - Ramsar wetlands
SAC - special areas of conservation
SPA - special protection areas
SSSI - sites of special scientific interest
Heathland
Railway / Highways
Golf courses in Surrey c. 4 % of Land.
WETLAND OPPS - Past Mineral Site
RAILWAY CORRIDORS OPPORTUNITY FOR WILDLIFE
National Grid & UK Powered works opportunities
UKCEH / SLUT / NE SCC etc data Hedge row existing & opportunity
Use BAP's to guide Connectivity & Urban Bats
ACCESSIBLE - A HONEY POT
Landscape Recovery including MOD land.
WILL ALSO BENEFIT - NIGHTINGALE & OTHER SPECIES.
Urban Bats?
NERP3 River Way - Shoreham Project opportunity
HC
Heathland Connections NE project
Biodiversity lines (Bug Life)
more arable in the east of the county. farmland
GREAT River Habitat Corridor
High wealth approx woodland contiguous To Sussex
Local Nature Recovery Strategy Project - Surrey


Legend
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NNR - national nature reserve
Ramsar - Ramsar wetlands
SAC - special areas of conservation
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SSSI - sites of special scientific interest
Biodiversity Benchmarking (Eftec / Leatherhead)
Leatherhead Surface water Pollution scheme (New)
Neon down to the Farm cluster
Pesticides in Eden Surface Water Catchment (Slowthe Flow)
Eden 25yr ENV plan
Pesticides & Phosphate in Eden surface water catchment
Local Nature Recovery Strategy Project - Surrey

FEEDBACK / REFLECTION

Following both activities, people were asked to feedback 2-3 findings – something surprising, high priority etc (site or area based):

- Local knowledge how to capture that
- Frequency mental health came up
- Map the "other" green spaces and other issues ie pollution, rivers, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, settlements
- Corridors at the small scale might be missed. The tiny scale differences that people can make.
- Map big landowners ie minerals, estates, utilities
- Fifteen minute journeys from disadvantaged areas to green spaces / corridors
- Areas ourside of AONB / NL treated as "second class"

DEVELOPING NATURE RECOVERY OUTCOMES (GROUP ACTIVITY)

Following lunch, participants were asked to select a high priority from the morning's activities 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:

TOPIC: HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, PARTNERSHIPS, 15 MINUTE ACCCESS, URBAN REGENERATION

Outcomes	**Actions**
Reduce health inequalities by promotion of access to green space	• Map out all 'free' access spaces • Transport links to those spaces - reduced costs • Create a broader awareness to [of] benefits • Need a guide for some who need help to access
Urban regeneration to better match the population	• Need to enforce planning regulations • Holding developers to account • Update 100 year flood policy • Commitments on 'needs' against the population • Balcony gardening and provide [unreadable] homes with a planter and seeds • Stop landbanks - 12 months to green space / activity space
Social prescribing - with and without a link worker. How is this facilitated?	• Engagement with landowners and those who need access • School engagement to address mental health etc • Starting people young to address education levels of children • Ensure all schools have a 'green space' or containers to give access to planted material • Map out circular route of timings of that work
Partnerships	• "The Green Street" project where council take a street and work with residents to make it a 'proud' area they will keep up 'Street Community' • Working with system - local authority, NHS, KS/ICB, Private business, free access days • Who can sponsor green space • 8 hour community days from business • Course for workforce in a 'green' job

	• Exchange programs with business and green jobs

TOPIC: SOIL HEALTH

Outcomes	**Actions**
Resilient to drought and flood - surface run off	• Improve soil structure - increase organic matter • Reduce surface run off / compaction/ tramlines / direction planning • Increase water storage, slow flow
Cleaner water - buffering nutrients, pesticides and manage inputs	• Integrated pest management • Field margins - grassland / hedgerows / riparian buffer • In field options - field drains, ditches • Technology and chemical use
Healthy biodiverse soil	• Increase organic matter • Regenerative farming • LEAF, rotation, reducing intensivty, companion planting, organic matter
Resilient crops	• Incentives for farmers • Beneficial crop[s]

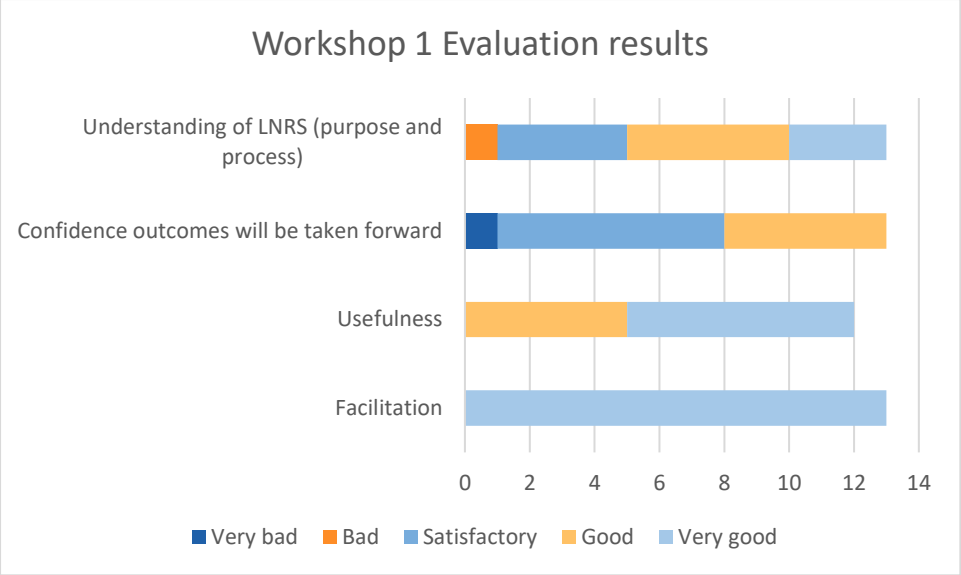
TOPIC: HOW WILD SHOULD WE BE?

Outcomes	**Actions**
Right animal / plant - right place, right time	• Mink control • Squirrel control • Otter encouragement (helps water voles) • Control invasive species
Natural solutions to new problems	• Pine martens for squirrel control • Lynx - probably not currently possibe so immediation action is education • Beavers for wetlands • We should encourage link ups between riparian owners (for mink) • Focus on species that would require reintroduction if habitat available
More resilient forests / woodlands	
More diverse species and habitats	• Control invasive species

END MATTERS

EVALUATION

Participants were asked to score the following out of 5 (with 5 being very good):



NEXT STEPS

As the first group / workshop, the Design Team (of the SNR process) were keen to get participants' feedback which included the following comments for consideration:

- Need next steps to keep us engaged. Monthly "meet up" groups
- More people, more cross sector, more discussion
- Enable some informal discussionsover tea / coffee. This helps with ideas and fuelling discussions
- No funding model discussed
- Need to be part of the decision process
- Clearer mapping - opportunity for connectivity, designated sites, includes rivers
- Context and aim sof the report / LNRS
- Keep it simple not like BNG

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

The following additional comments were made during the course of the workshop:

- Target landowning businesses such as golf clubs
- Invite Integrated Care Partnerships / Boards to be involved ie Surrey Heathlands, Surrey andd Borders

- Also hospitals ie St Peters, Royal Surrey, Frimley, NHS Property Serivces, private hospitals BUPA, Spire, Priory

- Roadside verges - even Conservation Verges - aren't captured as species rich grassland (ie on the "map")

JARGON

In an attempt to reduce and / or explain jargon, the following were recorded on a flip sheet with explanations during the course of the workshop. These will again be used to populate a “jargon buster” or glossary on the website:

- Natural capital - value given to nature services £

- Ecosystem services - services provided by nature

- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) an obligation on development either on / off site to provide new [biodiversity] resources [spaces]

- National Landscape - new name for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The event finished at 4pm.

Jim Boot, Senior Consultant 9th June 2024