

CSGN Regional Advisory Forum Meeting – 12 November 2015

Present

James Ogilvie, FCS

Max Hislop, GCVGNP

Gordon Roger, CC

Toby Wilson, RSPB

Simon Rennie, CSGNT (*Chair*)

Sue Evans, CSGNT (*Minutes*)

Charlie Cumming, ELGT

John Esslemont, AGNP

Arthur Keller, SNH

Keith Geddes, CSGNT

Emilie Wadsworth, CSGNT

Meeting Note

1. Welcome & Apologies

Apologies were noted from Gareth Heavisides, SG, Alison Chisholm, LFGNP and Mark Smillie, CSGNT.

Later arrivals following the Development Fund Launch were James Ogilvie, FCS and Keith Geddes, CSGNT Board.

Toby Wilson, Senior Conservation Officer, RSPB and Emilie Wadsworth, CSGNT were welcomed to the meeting.

2. Minutes of Meeting of 10 September 2015

The Minutes were approved and will be loaded onto the CSGN website.

3. Matters Arising (Paper 1)

3 Item carried over from earlier meetings - Further thought needed on GI Guidance for Development.

Action: SR/MH

4 MH/PS to meet to see how the EcoCo programme can be factored into the Resourcing work – MH confirmed that he and PS had been exchanging emails. More information will be received and will be fed into the review. MH noted that this is a time bound fund but it would be reasonable to assume that similar programmes would be developed in the future.

5 Info on funding sources and other mechanisms to be shared with MH – MH confirmed that he was receiving occasional information. Everyone should continue to flag income sources to MH as he completes the Resourcing work.

Action: All

6 Comments on the Valuing work to be fed back promptly to RESAS so the report can be finished ready for the Oct CSGN PC meeting – The Valuing work is nearing completion. RESAS are carrying out a further element of benefits analysis for flood management.

9 MS/AK to discuss what other SRDP actions could be prioritised. MS and AK have discussed this briefly and need more discussion to arrive at any firm actions.

9 Comments on the SESplan MIR to be passed to AC as soon as possible. CC reported for AC saying that had been some input to the LFGNP response by RAF members. SE confirmed that following a discussion with AC, CSGNT had also sent in a response.

4. Information Sharing

CSGN Programme Committee Update

SR updated for KG. The meeting is now chaired by Bridget Campbell, Director ENFOR. The tone and pace of the meetings has changed for the good with senior level attendance being encouraged. GH presented his thoughts on principles for the next Programme Plan (PP). The Benefits Study, and other valuing work, was reported. Members were impressed by the Valuing figures; five outcomes valued at £9.1Bn by 2050. SR stressed how important it is that this work is seen as credible in SG; shows the sense in having this work delivered by SG researchers. CSGNT and GH will be looking at broader dissemination of the work in the next few months. A critical audience is colleagues within government. The Programme Committee meets in February when it will sign off on the PP. the PP will inform CSGNT's business plan.

The SG settlement for 16/17 won't be known before 16 December, so it will be some time before we'll know SNH, FCS and LA settlements and then slightly later the CSGNT settlement.

Revisiting the Gateway Review

The last review was held in 2013 and was the basis for government revisiting and then moving ownership from FCS/SNH to within SG in the form of the CSGN Programme Committee. It also resulted in the creation of CSGNT and flagged the critical role of the regional partnerships. All the recommendations for change have been carried out to greater or lesser extent. The PC has decided a new review will take place in summer 2016 after the election.

SR felt this was more of a sense check rather than radical change. He felt the biggest current issue is probably around the health of the regional partnerships in terms of willingness of partners to support their local team. AK agreed noting the risk to regional partners is due to pressure, now and anticipated, on funding squeeze.

The meeting discussed the issue further, noting this is a 50 year project which needs greater certainty about staffing. The only truly dedicated CSGN resource, excluding CSGNT, is the regional partners and yet only GCV is fully staffed. There is now a gap in Ayrshire, there's no equivalent in the centre and in the east, L&GNP is under severe pressure. MH suggested building into the Resourcing study a component on structures and funding to support the delivery.

SR concluded the discussion confirming that this work was critical and he would like to lead on a process where at the next RAF meeting there will be a full discussion on shaping the best approach for a more sustainable CSGN 'architecture' with a view to then taking a recommendation to the February meeting of the Programme Committee that the recommendations be fed into the 2016 Gateway Review. AK thought the work should start before the next meeting. SR agreed and will produce a first 'straw man' proposal for issue prior to the meeting

Action: SR

GR noted that funding for maintenance was even more difficult to win and this also needs to be looked at. SR confirmed that the plan was to commission a further piece of work on revenue needs and funding.

2016/17 CSGN Development Fund

The Fund was launched this morning at Cassiltoun Trust. Up to £700K is available (made up of contributions from SNH, FCS, SG Food & Drink and Transport Scotland). This will facilitate projects delivering woodland creation, green infrastructure, active travel and community growing/greening. Because of the delayed design phase and launch, there is a one stage application process with all bids to be received prior to 18 January. Full details will go live on CSGNT's website once the launch press item has been released.

GH is dealing with some fine detail with the funders. The fund will offer better value to FCS than previous years (from 80/20 to 50/50 reflecting the value of the other funder's contributions).

MH asked about how projects would be assessed. SR confirmed this was a decision for the funders.

ERDF IGI Fund Update

AK updated. The SNH team led by Zoe Kemp is still developing the fund. It looks likely that the fund will open for bids in the New Year with a decision in the first quarter of financial year. The delay (of what will be nearly a year) has been very problematic for some projects but will suit others. The main issue ahead is that the completion date remains unchanged so the delivery period has concertinaed.

EcoCo LIFE+ Programme

SE updated on behalf of PS. The projects are going well and content is being added to the dedicated website. PS has also started tweeting.

Resourcing the CSGN

MH updated on progress. He is using the same 17 components as for the Costing work. He has completed work on 5 components, more or less, and is working on a further two just now.

In terms of current action, MH noted the following

C13 – He's awaiting information from SLFD quantities prior to completing Woodland Creation.

C17 – He'll be meeting Neil Langhorn next week

C4-6 – These are fairly straightforward as they rely on private sector delivery.

C1-3 – These are probably the most difficult. There are double counting issues. MH may present a scenario instead and test assumptions with the RAF group.

CC asked about the difference between greenspace and green infrastructure. MH explained that for this work he was treating greenspace as parks, open spaces etc. and green infrastructure as street level greening, green walls, roofs etc.

MH also has some questions out on new funds. For example, the Tesco carrier bags fund could be as much as £1.5M per year in CSGN depending on how the total value of £3M a year is distributed across Scotland.

MH confirmed that the full report should be ready by the end of year.

Valuing the CSGN

SR updated on behalf of GH. The RESAS valuation is so far sitting at a CB of £9.1B with a fifth element on flood management to come. With this and Max's work becoming available we now need to do something with it. SR is keen for CSGNT/SG to host some kind of event demonstrating the relevance of CSGN to wider SG ambitions.

MH asked if as part of this we should raise the need to talk about the delivery 'fulcrum' too. SR thought this would need further thought as this is more of an 'ask' and that he would be guided by GH.

Action: SR

Visualising the CSGN

SE updated. A brief was prepared and issued to four consultants to price. Tenders were returned on 4 November and LDA Design Consulting Ltd. was appointed on 11 November. A focus group will be used to help shape the products created. The group comprises board, staff and RAF members. Both MH and GR have kindly agreed to sit on the group to represent the RAF. Meeting dates will be confirmed now the consultant has been appointed. The work should be complete in early March. The visual products created will be used to illustrate the Vision, the Costing and the Valuing work.

5. Presentation by Toby Wilson on RSPB's work on the Garnock Valley Futurescape

As a response to previous Resourcing item, TW noted the role of the voluntary sector in delivering the CSGN on the ground. There is still a gulf between policy and delivery. RSPB has spent the last 9 years raising the value of GI/greenspace but little changes. If planners don't ask and developers don't deliver the risk is that nothing happens.

The Futurescapes programme is RSPB's response to landscape scale delivery. The landscape scale approach has allowed RSPB staff to move out of reserves-based and case work and move into wider environmental projects with partners. The largest project currently is the £4.5M Inner Forth Living Landscape HLF funded partnership, a public/NGO project delivering natural and cultural heritage works.

TW leads on the Garnoch Valley (GV) Futurescape project. This has a strong focus on biodiversity and nature conservation. The project covers 400 Sq Km straddling Renfrew and North Ayrshire centred on the River Garnock catchment and taking in Lochwinnoch, where RSPB has a reserve and visitor centre. The project boundary is discrete and coherent ecologically and reads at a human scale. The project has a strong people element and has been going for over three years now.

The GV comprises upland moors, lochs and wetlands, riparian corridors, farmland, estuary and coastal habitats. This provides scope to work with community groups and volunteers on a range of small-scale projects.

There are 7 main partners on the programme Steering group along with local groups involved in delivery/action. There is one full t-time project officer.

A scoping phase in 2012/13 confirmed there was lots going on in the area, but the effort was not coordinated so opportunities were being missed. With funding from CSGN Development Fund initially and now EcoCO Life there is scope to develop projects and build capacity in local groups.

The project takes in the Muirshiel Hills SPA. This area is important for hen harrier and juniper. One of the partners is Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park who sits on the GV Futurescape Steering Group. There are proposals for a major peatland restoration project within the Park, focussing around council-owned land. The peatland is a significant resource but has suffered from drainage and over-grazing. The Peatland Restoration Fund and new SRDP could potentially fund any restoration.

The Lochwinnoch Reserve comprises wetland and woodland habitats with most of it designated as a SSSI, important for breeding birds and aquatic plants. It receives over 30,000 visitors a year. It is 25 minutes from Glasgow, with a train stop next door.

The natural water system has been heavily modified over many years through the introduction of drainage systems which have bypassed the main water body, Barr Loch, resulting in its unfavourable condition status. There are also issues with water quality.

Working with SEPA, two projects have been to reconnect the Millbank Burn and to create new wetland at Aird Meadow. A new delta is forming at the mouth of the renaturalised Millbank burn and River Lamprey have been sighted there. In the future the hope is to reconnect and restore the route of the Dubbs Water by recreating a meander where there is currently a heavily straightened channel. This would benefit wintering and breeding waders and salmon. Key to this will be landowner cooperation but this is a long process.

The Central Valley area is an area used predominantly for grazing and silage. It is a priority catchment for SEPA, in part due to faecal contamination result from the dairy farming, particular where cattle gain access into the water courses.

Treating the catchment can solve other issues not least addressing flooding. Kilbirnie has been badly flooded in the past. RSPB have carried out a study and prepared a report to show how sustainable flood management can address the issue creating an area for flood storage which will also act as a wildlife haven. This solution is in line with wider planning policy, however, the worry is that the Council are moving towards a conventional grey solution, which illustrates the difficulty in getting positive, sustainable policy translated into delivery on the ground.

As part of North Ayrshire Council's review of its Local Nature Conservation Sites, RSPB and project volunteers have carried out breeding bird surveys to inform the review.

Bogside Flats, at the confluence of the River Garnock and River Irvine is an SSSI. It is a haven for wintering waders and wildfowl. With SNH funding, RSPB bought a small reserve of 10-20ha to help enhance the coastal network of habitats and with the aim of acting a foothold to build a bigger project.

Further wetland creation is planned at Ardeer Quarry near Stevenston working with the local friends group including helping them with funding bids.

Dunes and heaths occur along the coastal strip. Although a brownfield site, the former Nobel's Explosives Factory is a Local Nature Conservation Site, and has been rated by Buglife in a 2014 study as being of National importance for bees and wasps. There is real scope to create a Nectar Network from Irvine to Girvan along the coast working with a range of partners, including Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) and businesses/landowners under the umbrella of the Ayrshire Sustainability Network. Funding has been won from the Royal & Ancient to run a six month programme of sowing wildflowers, creating bee banks and scrapes and other habitat work engaging with local communities and schools. The project's Coastal Masterplan Map highlights the location and ownership of potential habitat assets. This will record dispersal rates etc. to show how the project will increase species connectivity.

As well as specific community projects, the Futurescape also runs volunteer parties which go out twice a month to carry out habitat enhancement works. For efficiency and to improve their experience, volunteers from RSPB, SWT and the Council pool their resources and work on each other's sites. There are also regular walks and events delivered by the project partners.

New signage is planned for Irvine Harbour. Coastwatch Scotland is proposing to restore the listed Pilot House, which will include a wildlife viewing floor, which RSPB and Futurescape partners have offered to help with.

So what are the key lessons and challenges?

The scale of the project has to be understandable and manageable – develop close partnerships with strong community links

Define the project area – this ensures focus and is manageable for staff

Staff funding is difficult – it is much harder to develop long term projects when most funding is short term

Project funding – success in winning and managing smaller funds builds confidence and in future partners might look at an HLF application.

SR thanked TW for his presentation and asked for questions.

TW was asked about the status of the project and where it sits in terms of policy. TW confirmed that RSPB and SWT should have spoken earlier about their 'competing' titles for large projects – Futurescape v. Living Landscape. This would have helped. However the GV project title really just reflected what the area is known as. The GV Futurescape title though is now in use and is being written into key documents like the local biodiversity action plans, the local development plans etc. People get it.

MH commented that in the CSGN context, this is the scale we should be talking about. The 17 cost components being covered by a single project. This is inspiring but yet again the issue of revenue support has not been addressed. In terms of the Resourcing work, this flags another cost we haven't looked at – the transaction cost – lots of effort needs to be invested into enabling the project to exist – this represents lots of staff time. We need to cost the project process from inception to tapping into the big pot of money. Think about GCV's own 7 Lochs project and how many years this has taken. Shovel ready projects just don't happen.

SR asked about the replicability of the process. Is it about the project lead or about finding the right area? TW felt the approach won't work everywhere. It would need to be adapted to suit the local conditions and what local people want. It needs to be coherent and understandable to them.

GR commented that the Inner Forth project is quite different. It is about re-engaging communities with their landscape and culture. What both demonstrate though is the value of an independent non LA lead; the third sector agent.

JE noted how GV was almost a bottom up approach where the environment has become the catalyst bringing in others like SEPA. It has become a strategic project at the Ayrshire level. If something is working well and more work is required then we need to put the money in to keep it going and to maintain the trust that has been built up with local people and landowners.

BD advised that, whilst not formal partners, EAW has a work team at Ardeer LNR supporting the Friends group. He asked whether the project could come to LEADER for funding. BD chairs the theme group 'Celebrating the Environment' and is looking for big and bold projects. TW will follow this up as a possible match to HLF.

JE noted the significant extent of VDL in the area and potential access opportunities.

Given the considerable interest in the project, it was suggested that the RAF visit the project in Spring 2016. RSPB could host and CSGNT could cover the minibus hire from Lochwinnoch. SR/TW to agree themes for the visit.

Action: SR/TW/SE

6. Presentation and Discussion on the Disadvantaged Area CSGNT work strand (ERW)

SE introduced the item, explaining that this was the third presentation by CSGNT staffing leading the NPF3 theme work (previously Mike Batley updated on VDL work and Mike Ewart on Active Travel). SE then handed over to ERW to make a short presentation.

The CSGN Programme Plan identifies four actions for CSGNT in respect of environmental improvements (EI) in disadvantaged areas (DAs). CSGNT's Business Plan translates this into six milestones. ERW leads DA1 and DA2 with the others being shared by the development officers.

DA1 was to develop criteria to identify DAs in which to target EI work. The process began with a workshop in August 2014 attended by a wide range of stakeholders (from health, transport and housing, plus our usual contacts) to look at this. The meeting established possible criteria, which were then explored in more detail. This included follow up discussion with partners and data suppliers. This process reduced the number of data layers from 15/16 down to 11 where quality data was available across the whole CSGN area. There was other good data however not available across the whole geography.

Consideration was also given on how the SIMD data should be used as the base layer. Here there was strong board direction to use the lowest 15% datazones of the National SIMD.

So the analysis uses the 15% SIMD baseline and then layers over the other 12 datasets. ERW ran through the datasets noting the following:

Contaminated land survey – there is only one registered site and this in South Lanarkshire. This could be used at the detailed study level.

Climate change – here there are three datasets. Values were calculated by our GIS + Data Officer

GR noted that a Flooding Disadvantaged Map for Scotland should become available in the next few months. ERW noted that this could be used for a planned 2016 rerun of the audit.

Health – Here the SIMD data was not so useful so more relevant data was identified and included.

In terms of methodology, the process used was a GIS-based multiple criteria decision analysis, where each dataset was assigned a High, Medium or Low value depending on the likely importance of the information and the quality of the data. Lower quality data is given a lower value. Then each dataset was weighted between 0 and 1. This was straight forward except for the SEPA data where there were 9 options to weight.

ERW then used examples of the mapping to show how each data zone was overlain with data with a combined DA score between 0-1. To create a graphical interpretation of greatest need the map has 5 levels of disadvantage. This is intended to point to areas where projects should take place, however, this is not automatically the case as solutions for flooding and carbon sequestration may lie in treating peatlands or river catchments miles from where the issue is manifested.

ERW noted that the high resolution of the Greenspace Map needs to be interpreted and aggregated back up to the datazone level.

MH noted that aggregate scores would be most relevant to SG.

SR asked about stakeholders' feedback. ERW explained our colleagues were using the output with LA colleagues explaining how it could be used. So far there hasn't been any work to get feedback though this could be done. Staff are also offering secondary, more detailed analysis for areas which have more data available, such as spatial data on quality of g/space.

SR flagged the usefulness of the methodology if a funder wanted to prioritise where it was applied. MH agreed explaining how the thinking mirrored GCV's process which was helping with prioritisation in the GCV area.

JE confirmed that Gillian Barrie had used the maps in discussion with Ayrshire staff.

ERW then briefly touched on the remaining 15/16 milestones.

DA4 – ERW has been working with Dunedin Canmore on a pilot project. The original intent was to provide information and gardening advice for new tenants in their home pack. However, there is so much information provided that DC staff advised against adding to the packs. Instead another approach was agreed based on local distribution of a small biodiversity pack (focused ladybirds and their habitats, which are good for a range of other species) for families and school children. These have been distributed free of charge and the campaign has been promoted through DC's own communications campaign. Take up has been high and the plan is to do more next year and to extend the concept to other housing associations.

MH asked if all tenants were resident in DAs and queried the impact. ERW confirmed that she couldn't guarantee that all pack users lived in the DAs though there was a good probability. The main purpose at this stage is to build relationship with housing associations which could then lead on to a much more structured approach like drafting management plans for whole estates to improve the value and use of the public and semi-public greenspace.

CC noted that ELGT is also working with Dunedin Canmore doing up gardens in Edinburgh so there could be scope to link up the two strands of work. ERW to follow up with CC.

Action: ERW

GR asked if this could be developed for local groups. ERW confirmed noting a lot of her work was around joint campaigns with other NGOs and LBAP staff. She's currently busy on an orchard campaign for IFLI.

DA6 – *With reference to Objective 3 of the LUS (“Urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use”), identify key learning points from community engagement in an urban setting with a particular focus on hard to reach groups projects.* This is proving much harder to tackle. A potential group at Lanthorn Park, Livingston has been identified but staff are struggling with the 'hard to reach' requirement. She asked RAF members for their help in identifying possible projects.

Action: All

AK noted that in deprived areas there also need to be capacity support for community groups so whatever the strategy it has to include capacity support, not just cash or advice. He suggested looking at Cultenhove, Stirling (SNH contact is Isla Campbell) and perhaps look at recipients of CSV Action Earth grants.

Action: ERW

7. Land Reform Bill & Community Empowerment Act – implications & opportunities (SR)

Simon Rennie spoke to the attached notes when introducing the CEB to the RAF.

JO noted the intent was fine if communities are genuinely empowered. However, we know that many communities of disadvantage lack the skills or capacity to act. So this may be great enabling legislation but it needs to be support with funding to inject project staff to support local action.

SR agreed saying that there is a role for ‘stronger architecture’ in project posts. GR also agreed noting that this could highlight a huge capacity issue in councils to deliver the legislation and to support local action.

SR confirmed he will circulate a full report once it is finished.

Action: SR

8. Agenda for the Next Meeting

Update Items to cover in January will be:

- ERDF GI Fund
- EcoCo LIFE+
- Visualising the CSGN
- Resourcing the CSGN
- Valuing the CSGN

Main Discussion items:

- CSGN Architecture
- Input into the Gateway Review

Action: SE

9. Programme for future meetings

The forward programme for future meetings was not agreed but is proposed below:

March 16		May 16		July 16	
CSGN Architecture – what do should it look like?	SR	Findings from the 2015 report against the 2010 baseline – where/what next	SE + M&E Manager	Land Reform & Community Empowerment	SR/GH
Early input into the Gateway Review process	SR/GH	Land Use Strategy – plus Urban v Rural focus and arising issues?	GH	NPF4	JE/GR

10. Any Other Competent Business

JO noted that there is an Itree seminar aimed at LAs on 7 December run by TDAG.

SR noted that he was speaking about the CSGN and our recent business survey at the Natural Capital Forum (as part of the ‘Scottish stream’) on the 23 November.

KG noted that he was speaking at the Homes for Scotland Annual Conference in his work capacity but would use the occasion to speak about McTaggart & Mickle's Shawfield Development, Stewart Milne Homes' RUBY competition and Taylor Wimpey's work with SGIF/CSGNT on rain gardens. He will be asking house builders to work with the CSGN and embrace broader policy agendas.

11. Next Meetings

14 January 16 at 10.00am at the Dower House, Kilmarnock

17 March 16 at 10.00am at CSGNT

14 July 16 at TBC

SE, 8 December 2015