



The one-hundred-and-twelfth meeting of the
Joint Nature Conservation Committee to be held at 08.45 on
14th September 2017, at JNCC, Monkstone House,
City Road, Peterborough, PE1 1JY

This paper was provided to the Joint Committee for decision/discussion
or information. Please refer to the minutes of the meeting for
Committee's position on the paper.

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Joint Nature Conservation Committee 111th Meeting Minutes Unconfirmed (non-sensitive)

Date: 8 June 2017

Time: 09.00

Venue: JNCC offices, Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough, PE1 1JY

Present

Professor Colin Galbraith
Independent member

Professor Chris Gilligan
Independent Chair

Dr Madeleine Havard
Natural Resources Wales

Dr Joe Horwood
Natural England

Dr Hilary Kirkpatrick
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Professor Howard Platt
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Dr Susan Walker
Scottish Natural Heritage

In attendance

Mr Colin Armstrong
DAERA

Dr Bob Brown
Observer

Ms Ceri Davies
Natural Resources Wales

Mr Guy Duke
Observer

Dr Steve Gibson
JNCC

Dr John Goold
JNCC

Dr Tim Hill
Natural England

Professor Michel Kaiser
Observer

Ms Sue McQueen
JNCC

Mrs Tracey Quince
JNCC

Mr Paul Rose
JNCC

Mr Marcus Yeo
JNCC

Dr Chris Cheffings (item 14)
Ms Joanne Day (items 11 and 12)
Mrs Sarah Harrison (items 11 and 12)
Mr Paul Robinson (item 15)
Mr Lawrence Way (item 15)
Mr Ulric Wilson (item 15)

Apologies

Professor Ian Bateman
Independent member

Dr Mike Cantlay
Scottish Natural Heritage

Diane McCrea
Natural Resources Wales

Mrs Helen Anderson
DAERA

Mr Mike Evans
Natural Resources Wales

Mr Ian Jardine
Scottish Natural Heritage

Professor Michael Winter
Natural England

1 Chairman's opening remarks

- 1.1 Professor Gilligan welcomed Dr Brown, Professor Kaiser and Mr Duke as ex-members of the Joint Committee and observers for this meeting.
- 1.2 Professor Gilligan informed members that an extension to his term as Chair of JNCC for a further three years had been agreed with ministers prior to the announcement of the General Election. Pre-election restrictions had prevented publicising his second term, but this would be rectified once the restrictions had been lifted.
- 1.3 The Committee reflected on the staff engagement session and the income generation workshop the previous day. All felt the events had been successful and welcomed the opportunity to liaise with staff on an informal basis. Events of a similar nature for future meetings would be planned to increase the engagement between staff and members and provide an opportunity to showcase JNCC's work.
- 1.4 Professor Gilligan updated the Committee regarding the current status of Joint Committee vacancies. Ministerial approval for a recruitment campaign for three new independent members would be sought after the General Election. Professor Gilligan informed members that the Committee's competency framework had been shared with Defra and used to inform the role specifications. The areas of expertise in the role specification included marine, IT and data, business development and international. These were not mutually

exclusive. Professor Gilligan expressed his wish that existing members and ex-members assist with the induction of new members over the coming months.

- 1.5 Professor Gilligan informed members of the recent appointment of Dr Mike Cantlay as Chair of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).
- 1.6 The Committee was informed that Mr Andrew Bachell, Director of Policy and Advice in SNH, would be leaving his post in the next few days to take up a new post with the John Muir Trust. Professor Gilligan will write to Mr Bachell to thank him for his work on the Committee.
- 1.7 The Committee was informed that the Welsh Minister for the Environment had been invited to attend the November Joint Committee meeting to take place in Cardiff.
- 1.8 Professor Gilligan advised members that he had recently attended a Chief Scientists Group meeting. He was grateful for the invitation to attend what had been a very productive meeting with an impressive Group. The Committee agreed to receive a report from Chief Scientists Group meetings as a standing agenda item.

2 Declaration of interests

- 2.1. Dr Walker and Professor Galbraith declared an interest under item 6 as current and potential members of the Remuneration Committee.

3 Confidential minutes of the March 2017 meeting (JNCC 17 14)

- 3.1 The minutes of the March meeting were approved with the following amendments:
 - i. Dr Goold's affiliation corrected to JNCC;
 - ii. Dr Hill to be added to the list of attendees.

4 Matters arising (JNCC 17 15)

- 4.1 There were no matters arising for this meeting.
- 4.2 The Committee noted the report of outstanding actions in Annex 1.

5 Chief Executive's report on topical issues (official-sensitive) (JNCC 17 16)

6 Appointment of a JNCC Deputy Chair and changes to Committee Sub-Group membership and terms of reference (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 17 17)

7 Report from Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Sub-Group (oral)

- 7.1 Dr Brown reported on the latest meeting of the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Sub-Group which was a teleconference on 17 May. The teleconference considered the post-consultation report for the Croker Carbonate Slabs; MCZ Tranche 3 advice; Irish Sea Front SPA consultation; conservation advice; the Scanner and Braemar Pockmarks SACs; and the process for endorsement of consultation reports for three joint SPAs.
- 7.2 The Sub-Group was content with the post-consultation report for the boundary amendment to Croker Carbonate Slabs cSAC. Dr Jon Davies had forwarded confirmation of this to the JNCC Chair in Dr Brown's absence.
- 7.3 The Sub-Group had already considered and approved the detailed consultation documents for MCZ Tranche 3. In this discussion, the Sub-Group agreed that a summary paper, presenting the key aspects in a more user-friendly form, would be useful, and it would be helpful for the Joint Committee to have sight of this paper for information. Proposals for the paper, to be termed an 'Overview Report' had been submitted to the Joint Committee as an intersessional paper (JNCC 17 29) in May. The Committee noted the proposed approach in the intersessional paper.
- 7.4 **Official-Sensitive**
- 7.5 The Sub-Group discussed a proposed new approach for revising offshore conservation advice packages, including those where the site straddled the 12-nautical mile boundary. It was intended to be more accessible, clear and consistent. A key element was close liaison with agencies responsible for adjacent inshore waters. This entailed reaching agreement on who took the lead in preparing the advice and consulting with the other, and cross-referencing on each other's advice packages.
- 7.6 The proposed boundary amendments to Scanner and Braemar Pockmarks cSACs were currently under discussion.
- 7.7 To make the process for endorsement of consultation reports for joint SPAs as efficient as possible, and to use the Sub-Group's time efficiently, the Sub Group had agreed that the level of scrutiny could vary according to the degree of complexity. In the case of sites where there is low complexity and little or no controversy, the Marine Operations Director could be mandated to sign off, although the Sub-Group reserved the right to call in such post-consultation documents if needed. For more complex sites where some controversy has emerged, the Sub-Group would continue to scrutinise in detail and sign off.
- 7.8 Dr Brown thanked Professor Kaiser for all his dedication and work with the Sub-Group, and paid tribute to the staff for all their efforts, hard work and patience

over the years. Finally, he wished Dr Horwood, his successor as Chair of the MPA Sub-Group, much success in his new role.

- 7.9 The Committee noted the high-quality papers presented to the Sub-Group and the subsequent audit trail of decisions. The Committee agreed that a short paper setting out the protocols and authority for signing off decisions of the MPA Sub-Group would be helpful.
- 7.10 The Committee were informed that 2018 was “The Year of the Sea” in Wales. This offered opportunities for communication and raising awareness.

Action point(s)
AP02 Dr Goold to produce a summary paper setting out the protocols and authority for signing off decisions of the MPA Sub-Group for the September Joint Committee meeting.

8 Report from ARAC on 7 June (oral)

- 8.1 Professor Galbraith gave the Committee a presentation on the key issues discussed at the ARAC meeting on 7 June.
- 8.2 The meeting had focussed on a number of matters and the Committee was informed that:
- i. ARAC had welcomed the new Head of Internal Audit, Paul Lambert, who had been appointed following interviews in April. Paul is a senior audit manager in the Environment Agency and Head of Internal Audit for Cefas;
 - ii. ARAC had discussed the new Framework Document being prepared for JNCC. The current document is based on a Defra template and is focussed on the Defra Target Operating Model. Issues around planning, reporting and funding need to be resolved to ensure the document takes account of the needs of the devolved administrations;
 - iii. the final audit in the 2016/17 programme (follow-up on audit recommendations) had been discussed with good progress noted in implementing past recommendations. ARAC had noted that a number of recommendations were still being progressed past their deadline and stressed to management the importance of implementing recommendations to the deadlines set and to determine realistic deadlines when agreeing recommendations with the internal audit team;
 - iv. for 2016/17 the final opinion of the Head of Internal Audit is substantial assurance over JNCC’s framework of governance, risk management and control. This represented significant hard work on behalf of staff to maintain sound systems of governance and internal control. ARAC asked the new Head of Internal Audit to produce a less formulaic report for next year, tailored to JNCC to reflect the judgement used in arriving at the annual opinion;
 - v. **Official-Sensitive**
 - vi. **Official-Sensitive**
 - vii. ARAC had thanked Nigel Reader for his thorough review and scrutiny of the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) on behalf of ARAC. ARAC had discussed management’s decision not to provide an environmental report in the ARA.

Tracking and reporting on JNCC's environmental footprint was considered by ARAC to be an important component, with non-reporting seen as a reputational risk. ARAC agreed that the Board should discuss the issue of environmental reporting and provide a steer;

- viii. ARAC had discussed the Audit Completion Report from the National Audit Office (NAO). The report had raised one recommendation around completing accruals correctly which management will address. All 2015/16 recommendations had been addressed. NAO advised that following the General Election the accounts would be cleared by 12 July for laying before Parliament prior to the summer recess;
- ix. Anil Pillai from Defra had given ARAC a presentation on the Defra group risk management approach which had recently been implemented. ARAC noted the new approach and welcomed the use of a common risk language, although added a note of caution regarding the risk of additional work through having to present risks in a format suitable for Defra and the need for JNCC to map their risks not only to the Defra priorities, but to those of the devolved administrations also. Defra's next steps in the approach include the development of an overarching risk strategy and risk appetite. ARAC agreed to share JNCC's work on the latter;
- x. ARAC had discussed the new significant risks register for 2017/18 and asked management to consider the addition of a risk on cyber security given its current high profile nationally. ARAC asked management to look again at the residual risk rating on Joint Committee turnover as green seemed optimistic given the current recruitment issues;
- xi. ARAC had received for the first time a report on cyber security, noting its timeliness given the recent high profile attack on the NHS. ARAC were pleased to see robust processes in place in JNCC, but asked that that management explore an offsite storage facility for backup data and strongly urged management to resource the two external penetration testing exercises planned for this year, prior to JNCC's move to the use of cloud storage; and
- xii. ARAC had noted an increase in fruitless payments in quarter 4 and the tripling of fruitless payments since last year. All had related to travel and subsistence payments. A notice has been circulated to staff reminding them of their responsibilities when booking and undertaking travel.

8.3 The Committee noted the report from ARAC and that the new Framework Document would be presented to them for sign off at a future meeting.

9 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's annual report to the Joint Committee for 2016/17 (JNCC 17 18)

- 9.1 Professor Galbraith presented the paper, which provided the Committee with an annual report of the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Professor Galbraith explained that this year's report had been produced in a different format to reflect the vibrancy of ARAC.
- 9.2 The Committee approved the new style and format of the report and thanked Professor Galbraith for a most comprehensive report.

10 Report from Chief Scientists Group (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 17 28)

11 End of year performance report 2016/17 (Official-sensitive) (JNCC17 19)

12 JNCC business plan for 2017/18 (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 17 21)

13 Strategic partnerships with the academic community (official) (JNCC 17 22)

- 13.1 Mr Rose presented the paper and summarised key points from the dinner discussion the previous evening.
- 13.2 The Committee made the following further comments in discussion at the meeting:
- i. the Joint Committee could provide assistance with prioritising opportunities;
 - ii. there was potential to rationalise JNCC/CNCB approaches to interest groups and networks, to avoid duplicating effort;
 - iii. there is a lot of funding available for 'innovation' (i.e. opportunities to apply science to markets).
- 13.3 The Committee supported progressing this work area. Key tasks involved identifying JNCC's objectives and compiling a list of questions to discuss with potential partners.

Action point(s)
AP06 Mr Rose and Dr Gibson (working with Chief Scientists Group) to draw up a list of questions to be answered through academic partnerships.
AP07 Mr Yeo to circulate to the Joint Committee a list of the current studentships and interns in JNCC.

14 Terrestrial Evidence: the surveillance portfolio and mechanism for review (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 17 23)

15 Earth observation – defining JNCC's role (Official) (JNCC 17 24)

- 15.1 Dr Gibson introduced the item with staff providing presentations on three challenges in applying earth observations (EO) to nature conservation and ecosystem services: habitat condition, big data and budgets.
- 15.2 The Committee considered a set of questions (Annex 2) and made the following points in discussion:
- i. JNCC's earth observation (EO) function is impressive;
 - ii. JNCC has a valuable role in producing analysis-ready data for use by the country nature conservation bodies and others;
 - iii. secondary products and analysis (for example to meet operational needs) will often be country-specific but in some cases it may be more cost-effective for work to be undertaken jointly through JNCC;
 - iv. Chief Scientists Group and JNCC should seek to identify additional funding sources for this area of work. Setting out the nature conservation questions EO can answer would inform the business case for funding;
 - v. reducing funding for existing monitoring schemes could provide the resources to invest in EO; and
 - vi. EO offered the opportunity for substantial savings in ground compliance checks.
- 15.3 In concluding the item, Professor Gilligan re-affirmed the Committee's strong support for analysis-ready data shared by the voluntary, public and private sectors. In the longer term, JNCC could set a standard for data. There were several avenues to pursue to secure funding for the work. Collaborative working with the country conservation bodies was essential.

16 Proposals for changing Joint Committee arrangements (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 17 25)

17 Joint-Committee self-assessment: Draft work objectives for 2017/18 and a report on members' contributions to the 2016/17 objectives (Official-sensitive) (JNCC 17 26)

18 Joint Committee forward programme (Official) (JNCC 17 27)

- 18.1 The Committee queried whether an annual report on health and safety should be included in the forward programme. The Committee agreed that ARAC should continue to oversee compliance in the health and safety area and that future ARAC annual reports include a paragraph summarising activity in this area.

Action point(s)
AP08 Mrs Quince to include a paragraph in the next annual report from ARAC due in June 2018 summarising activity in the health and safety area.

19 Any other business

- 19.1 Professor Gilligan reminded members of the need for full attendance at the September meeting to maintain quoracy.

Annex 2

Questions posed to the Joint Committee in relation to JNCC's role in Earth Observation

Question 1

Produce robust and cost-effective EO based evidence of habitat and key ecosystem service status and change across the UK

- Should JNCC aim to provide evidence of this kind?
- Or to facilitate the countries in generating it themselves?

Question 2

Provide standards for analysis ready Sentinel 1 & 2 data that are shared by voluntary, public and private sectors

- Should JNCC continue to lead both the development of standards and the delivery of data that meet the standard?
- Or should JNCC transfer or wait for leadership to come from the space sector or other bodies?

Question 3

Provide mechanisms for open and efficient sharing of EO data to support environmental applications.

- JNCC has demonstrated the type of solution needed. How can JNCC catalyse the governance and funding so that facilities are put in place?

Question 4

Provide tools and analytical services that enable EO to be rapidly deployed in support of decision-making

- How should JNCC get its modelling, IT and EO skills recognised and integrated into country activities that can exploit the common EO resource?

BUILD STATUS:

Version	Date	Author	Reason/Comments	Classification required
1	14/06/2017	TQ	First draft	OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE
2	19/06/2017	MY	Second draft	OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE
3	22/06/2017	MY	V3 (incorporating amendments from directors)	OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE
4	22/06/2017	TE	Formatting	OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE
5	27/06/2017	CG	amendments	OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE
6	03/07/2017	TQ	Amended action point numbers	OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

DISTRIBUTION:

Copy	Version	Issue Date	Issued to
Electronic/ Paper/Link			
Electronic	v1	14/06/2017	Marcus Yeo
Electronic	v2	19/06/2017	Directors
Electronic	V3	22/06/2017	Tracey E
Electronic	V4	22/06/2017	Professor Gilligan
Electronic	V5	27/06/2017	Committee members
Electronic	V6	03/07/2017	N/A