

HM Government

Natural Capital Committee

Second meeting, Nobel House, 17 May 2016, 13:00-15.00

Chair: Dieter Helm (DH)

Members: Ian Bateman (IJB) (telephone), Diane Coyle (DC), Paul Leinster (PL), Georgina Mace (GM), Colin Mayer (CM) (telephone), Kathy Willis (KW)

Secretariat: Nick Barter (NB), Maggie Charnley (MC), Julian Harlow (JH), Lizbe Pilbeam (LP)

Update on state of play

Chairman's Update

DH introduced the meeting and updated the Committee on a number of meetings he had held with key organisations. As agreed, DH has sent letters to the Chairs of other key bodies introducing the new Committee and proposing regular meetings, to: the Office for National Statistics, the Climate Change Committee, Natural England, the Environment Agency, and the National Infrastructure Committee. The Secretariat will be arranging meetings with each of the Chairs to supplement more regular working level meetings by Committee Members.

The Climate Change Committee will report on the government's progress towards meeting carbon budgets in Summer 2017. DH proposed that the NCC consider how to reflect the Committee's natural capital interests.

Admin and Other Issues

It was agreed that members would always report back to the NCC from meetings they attend as NCC members.

Reports from other meetings:

Environment Analysis Unit

GM and IB met separately with the interim head of Defra's Environment Analysis Unit (EAU). They found it to be a very helpful meeting. It was agreed that the NCC should submit its views on the EAU to Defra.

Office for National Statistics and HMT

DC and CM met with ONS, accompanied by JH. The question of natural capital valuation and what it means and how it is measured, was an important part of their meeting. DC reported on a meeting held on the follow up to the Bean review into the ONS and national statistics: Four working groups will be set up, including one on *GDP and beyond*, which DC will sit on and will be able to represent Natural Capital Committee views.

CM and DC will set up regular meetings with the ONS.

The NCC agreed that they will continue to advocate the inclusion of natural capital in the Treasury's Green Book guidance.

25-Year plan Update

NB updated the Committee on progress of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

Valuation discussion

A wide ranging discussion on the economic valuation of natural capital was held, and it was agreed that this should be captured possibly in a committee discussion paper.

Pioneers (formerly pathfinders)

DH suggested that the NCC produce a simple "How-To-Do-It" manual to assist those involved with the Pioneer projects and more widely to achieve Natural Capital enhancement. The How to Do It manual should be initially a simple guide which is an evolving document, to be agreed by all members.

It was agreed that the NCC should convene high level roundtables with each Pioneer to help establish a clear direction of travel by setting out the components of a natural capital approach, bringing together the catchment approach, with a balance between national priorities and local interests. This would build on existing local work and would include local leads.

It was agreed that the NCC should have a formal role with the Pioneers, and that coordinating meetings etc should be shared with the NCC. The Committee requested a governance diagram setting out how this would work, once Defra had considered further.

Next NCC meeting

The next face to face NCC meeting will be July 2016.