The **Environment** Council

Hen Harrier Dialogue

Combined Working Groups 22 June 2011, Newcastle

Summary Record of Discussion

Date of issue: 29 June 2011

Email @envcouncil.org.uk
Web www.the-environment-council.org.uk

Note on the Discussion Record

This document is a summary record of the meeting discussion. It was produced by The Environment Council during the meeting and is intended as an aide memoir for participants. Its meaning may not be clear to people who did not attend the meeting. Please contact The Environment Council for clarification if necessary. Comments have been summarised without attribution, which is one of the working agreements of the group.

Sentences in bold italics describe the meeting process and aid recall of the context in which the participants' contributions were made. These also summarise any key actions or agreements made during the discussions.

If you have any comments or queries regarding this report please contact:

, The Environment Council @envcouncil.org.uk

The Environment Council is a UK registered charity of nearly 40 years standing. It works to put sustainability at the heart of people's choices, decisions and aspirations. Its goal is to transform conventional decision-making by the use of best-practice engagement to achieve sustainable outcomes. It has long-standing experience of raising awareness, training, facilitation and providing a forum for dialogue. The Environment Council helps all kinds of organisations make the difficult and complex decisions needed for a sustainable future.

www.the-environment-council.org.uk

The **Environment** Council

Registered Charity Number: 294075



3. Reintroduction Project

• The latest update on this is that Natural England no longer has funding to take this up. There is a suggestion that group might do this ourselves.

of Natural England was invited to give an update on project progress of its feasibility study for reintroduction.

- From a financial perspective this project would not be possible for Natural England
- The sites most favoured were Exmoor and Wiltshire.
- The basis for Exmoor is that prey availability is similar to the habitat used already by harriers, though it is limited in extent so could be faced with a 'Bowland'. The harriers could spread to Dartmoor or Bodmin Moor. But it would increase numbers. And it's the safest place to put birds. So we know how they behave, but it would be limited in terms of population increase.
- Wiltshire did not score so well for prey, and cereal fields are unknown in terms of breeding in the agricultural context and intervention might be needed. However, the potential for range increase is much higher.
- The recommendation was that you would do both sites in tandem.

There were then some questions and discussion about the scheme:

- What about Wiltshire was preferable?
- The key criteria were a high quality area; the presence of hen harriers and that nesting has been successful in the past. It also supports a wintering population.
- Costings haven't been developed. It could be £30-40k per year for a single release site. It drawing on both Scottish and French birds this would entail double or tripling that figure.
- The reintroduction would be done over six year period
- That's £50k per year multiplied by 6.
- Once you'd release you'd need a presence to continue; across 10-15 years
- This does not account consultation with the local population
- The main report has not yet been published but it's expected in due course.
- Natural England would not be able to fund it: does some one have a spare half a million to make it happen?
- We could go for EU Life Funding for match funding

- The cereal area is interesting seeing as Montagu's harriers have experienced problems in France in this context.
- Hen harriers would be breeding earlier, so they'd be less at risk from harvesting operations here. You would need to speak to farmers to make sure nests are not missed.
- What about impacts on native species, for example, partridge.
- These were not significant according to studies, though could be problematic in other parts, for example Norfolk etc so have avoided these areas.
- Does anyone have the appetite to explore this?
- It sounds like it's only going to happen if significant money is available from our crew.
- Whether they would actually put their hand in their pocket remains to be seen. The only way to find out is to approach them.
- If we could find it, then give it to Natural England then they could apply for match funding and manage it.
- Exmoor is heavily shot over low ground and with pheasants and partridges.
- Would need to consult on this aspect.
- There has been a limited amount of consultation, only in terms of feasibility so far.
- Would need to take account of any potential conflict with pheasants and partridges.
- Need to see whether there is appetite for funding first.
- Would need to look at the mechanism for giving Natural England the money
- Would need to put application together.
- With any feasibility study that is trying to establish best areas for introduction, there's no guarantee that it will work, though of course we hope it will.
- We would find information from the study, even if it were not successful
- Was any discussion undertaken with Scotland regarding the population source?
- Would need to take account of recent numbers
- OK to go ahead.

The group agreed that there was potential for the group to support the scheme and that funding sources should be explored as a first step.



Appendix 1: Attendees, Agenda and Working Agreements, 22 June 2011

Attendees

Name	Organisation
	Aberdeen Centre for Environmental Sustainability
	Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland (BioSS)
	Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland (BioSS)
	British Association for Shooting and Conservation
	Countryside Alliance England
	Countryside Alliance Scotland
	Defra
	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
	Hawk and Owl Trust
	Moorland Association
	Moorland Association
	National Gamekeepers Association
	Natural England
	Natural England
	North of England Raptor Forum
	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
	Scottish Natural Heritage

Apologies

Name	Organisation
	British Association for Shooting and Conservation
	Buccleuch Estates
	Country Land and Business Association
	Defra
	National Gamekeepers Association
	National Gamekeepers Association
	Natural England
	North of England Raptor Forum
	The Scottish Government

The Environment Council Facilitation Team

Name	Organisation
	Independent facilitator
	The Environment Council