

OPM Advisory Group Meeting minutes 15th October 2013, Guildhall, London

Present: Sue Ireland, Alison Field, Andrew Hoppit, Mark Townsend, Dave Lofthouse, Craig Harrison, Adam Wallace, Colin Buttery, Jane Carlsen, Andrew Jones, DEFRA: Mark Smethurst, Stephanie Godliman, Alison Mitchell, Barry Walsh

Apologies: Richard Trippett, Mike Robinson, Tony Leach, Stewart Snape, Dougal Driver, David Allister, Julia Branson, Nigel Straw, Greg Vickers

1 Summary of actions from this meeting

New & outstanding actions from this meeting

<i>Action Point</i>	<i>Details</i>
Outstanding actions from previous meetings - none	
New Actions	
1	Andrew H to investigate whether 3 spray applications are permitted
2	AG members to provide further comments and potential solutions on what, SOP??? to Andrew Hoppit by <u>end of October</u>
3	Andrew H to have further discussion with Nigel and Stuart re SOP to find a proportionate approach
4	Andrew H to redraft SOP in light of advice and group feedback
5	Andrew to liaise with LTOA & AA re good/best practice implementation on publicly owned land, ensuring senior Borough officials are also informed
6	Any further AG member comments on draft OPM review to Andrew Hoppit by end of October
7	FC/NE AG members to encourage high level discussion on OPM control, especially designated sites
8	Craig/Andrew to arrange for OPM AG work to be published on FC website
9	Craig to discuss AA/ISA involvement in AG with Jago Keen & Simon Holmes late November
10	FC (Andrew H) to invite Surrey representative onto the group

2 Introductions and welcome

Introductions were made for Defra attendee benefit

3 Review of Actions from last meeting

<i>Details</i>	<i>Progress</i>
1. Mark Townsend to provide further information on the knowledge centre that has been developed on the continent	Outstanding- Mark T to action
2. Emer to arrange PHE input to control plan	Outstanding -Emer/ Barry to action by end Nov

3. FC to liaise with Defra animal health leaders to find appropriate vet body for cascading information	Outstanding, Andrew H to discuss with Charlton Clark
4. AH to check with Ian Willoughby re chemical dosage	Done – see below
5. AH to liaise with Dave re LTOA involvement with pheromone traps and send guidance to AG	Done
6. AH to draft a response to Dealga on behalf of Sue	Done
7. Craig to find out indicative timetable for report/funding bid to Defra for future years	Done – see below
8. Sue to seek a CoL venue for the lessons learned meeting, other group members to consider possible venues for 50, if needed	Done
9. Communicating AG work beyond members to all stakeholders to be future agenda item	On agenda

Matters arising

Chemical application dosage: FR advice is that it's difficult to precisely calibrate application rate. G&T studies at Richmond show no excess application. There was debate whether 3 applications in a season was permissible

Action **1 Andrew Hoppit to investigate whether 3 spray applications are permitted**

Securing future Defra funding - the OPM review report needs to be sent to Defra asap. Confirmation of future funding not expected very quickly but the review will emphasise the need for earliest possible decision so plans can be prepared; the AG needs to plan on assumption funding is forthcoming

4 Movement of small wood from OPM infested sites

Andrew provided a brief background to the issue.

The draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is based on previous experience of Pine Lappet Moth in Scotland, and informed by AA/LTOA feedback. The SOP has been field tested by contractors in Wandsworth and feedback has been positive.

The approach taken seeks to implement adequate controls on a collaborative and good practice basis, trying to strike a balance between desired outcome of preventing OPM spread without a burdensome regulatory approach (for both FC and the sector). A more rigorous regulatory approach of issuing licences to permit timber movement could be employed but recognised as burdensome and could only be applied to sites where a notice has been served i.e. smaller scope than the core/buffer area.

Mark T highlighted some of the practical issues surrounding the draft SOP. Small volume chip is difficult to put to incineration processors. Strip down and cleaning of machinery would be a significant burden. The issue was raised whether the SOP could include seasonal variation to reflect the stages of moth development; Nigel's (FR) advice was that the SOP should be consistent all year round.

The group noted that there are chip storage facilities within the infested zone; would be helpful to give this advice to contractors to aid SOP implementation and minimise the need for movement outside the zone. Sue suggested possibility of providing support for designated chip storage sites within the infested zone to aid operational challenges.

The group debated whether the SOP is proportionate to the risks of OPM spread via movement of material, but agreed a key solution is the need for chipping; question was about what happens to the chips.

Sue suggested whether a combination of best practice guidance (based on SOP) is published alongside plant health requirements.

The intention is to send the SOP letter to LTOA, AA and those served with SPHNs. The group suggested the same message should be sent to senior Borough officials to support Borough Tree Officer efforts.

The group discussed issues regarding larger size timber which is unlikely to have egg plaques, and agreed this needs to be considered in the guidance. The group were unsure what branch size are egg plaques found on?

- Action**
- 2 AG members to provide further comments and potential solutions to the draft SOP by end of October to Andrew H**
 - 3 Andrew H to have further discussion with Nigel and Stuart re SOP and finding proportionate approach**
 - 4 After comments have been received Andrew H to redraft SOP and re-circulate in light of advice and group feedback**
 - 5 Andrew to liaise with LTOA & AA re good/best practice implementation on publicly owned land, ensuring senior Borough officials are also informed**

5 Review of OPM 2013 and way forward

Andrew and Alison summarised the OPM review. The group first discussed and agreed that the target audience for the report is Defra, Advisory Group and wider stakeholders with an interest in OPM control. The group agreed that an executive summary is needed that teases out the critical information, as the report is unlikely to be read by many stakeholders.

In summary, the report sets out what activity has taken place this year, the results of that work, lessons learned this year and proposed approach for 2014 and beyond, with associated resource needs.

Andrew summarised what has happened at Pangbourne, with an enhanced pheromone trapping programme that has detected OPM moths (no nests found this year).

The group discussed the West London outcomes in terms of nest numbers and extent of spread. The group agreed the control programme has had an impact on OPM spread but 223 sq km could not be considered small. The group noted the outcomes needs to be considered relative to the major survey programme employed this year, and that smaller nests have been anecdotally noted this year.

There was insufficient time for thorough discussion about the report, so AG members were invited to provide their feedback to Andrew asap. Some points discussed at the meeting included:

- Page 3 – weather factors unclear; make clear it was wet weather in 2012 and cold in 2013 that is suspected to contribute to lower OPM infestation
- Reference to Kew experience in 2013 and re-infestation after not spraying would be a useful case study to highlight the need for spraying for several years
- Make clear why Royal Parks were excluded from some data (which was due to different control regime) and ensure their results are included in the report

- Confusion over what “the ask” was for future years control - £1M for next year in addition to underspend from this year. The group discussed whether £1M is enough for next year. Efficiencies are expected via more forward planning, though a key contingency needed is the ability to cope with a population explosion, which has been found to occur on the continent some years
- Barry summarised PHE review of risk assessment of public health and research on hairs in recreational sites. The evidence suggests very small risk, though there is a higher occupational health issue for those working in the tree sector. Work in Richmond indicates low setae numbers in wider environment. The group discussed the apparent evidence versus what is being employed in Holland, where advice suggests it has been funded via public health risk assessment
- Confusion re what spend has been this year - roughly £1M Defra spend this year, and another £600k of resources from others (FC, LAs etc - considered an underestimate due to incomplete returns and known underestimation)
- The group felt contingency funding is needed to cope with potential population explosion which would undo all of the hard work and what has been achieved this year. A contingency of ~£500k was suggested
- Colin asked that Royal Parks resources are presented separately in the report, given the scale of input
- The group suggested contractors could provide info on what was invoiced outside FC / Defra funded activity that could be reconciled against the underestimates of other resource inputs
- Royal Parks – 12% reduction in nest numbers versus previous exponential increase. Evidence that spraying has been effective
- Adam highlighted the concerns of large scale spraying on designated sites and the group agreed the need to discuss principle of OPM spraying between Defra, FC & NE asap

- Action**
- 6 AG member comments on draft OPM review to Andrew Hoppit by end of October**
 - 7 FC/NE AG members to encourage high level discussion on OPM control, especially designated sites**

6 Communicating Advisory Group work to wider stakeholders

The group agreed it should publish AG notes, especially actions, on FC website; also terms of reference, member contact details

- Action**
- 8 Craig/Andrew to arrange for OPM AG work to be published on FC website**

London Councils summit at Guildhall – Sue has secured a stand so we can raise OPM awareness (amongst other things). 16th November – FC will also be present

Colin suggested the executive summary of 2013 work will be a key communications tool for wider communication

Alison noted the desire to ensure SPHN recipients are kept abreast of 2013 work, so they see the work on their sites in the context of the overall programme

The group agreed communications with Borough CEOs needed, using the exec summary and raise issue re Borough commitment e.g. via GLA, London Councils

AA & ISA involvement – group had already agreed they were represented via existing members but welcome additional representation if they want it.

Action **9** **Craig to discuss AA/ISA involvement in AG with Jago Keen & Simon Holmes late November**

The group agreed that additional member involvement of Surrey is appropriate, given spread of OPM and risk to Surreys woodlands

Action **10** **FC (Andrew H) to invite Surrey representative onto the group**

7 AOB & date of next meeting

AOB

Sue – OPM show garden at Chelsea, City of London investigating the possibility of funding it. FC are providing technical support and endorsing the project to help get sponsorship.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 19th November 2pm – key task to review the OPM report before it goes to Defra etc