

OPM Advisory Group Meeting minutes 19th November 2013, Guildhall, London

Present: Sue Ireland, Adam Wallace, Andrew Jones, Barry Walsh, Mike Robinson & Rebecca McIlhiney FERA, Craig Ruddick, Julia Branson, Stewart Snape, Alison Field, Andrew Hoppit, Craig Harrison

Apologies: Richard Trippett, Tony Leach, Dougal Driver, David Allister, Greg Vickers, Jane Carlson, Mark Townsend, Dave Lofthouse, Colin Buttery,

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 Hoppit to share Nigel's email re number of permissible chemical applications permitted
2	Andrew Hoppit to share revised OPM good tree practice document with AG before end of November for sign off
3	Andrew Hoppit to resend Barry the link to Holland OPM 2012 report
4	Advisory Group members to pass comments & suggestions on the report to Craig by 29 th November
5	OPM 2013 report to be endorsed by the Advisory Group early December (date to be confirmed when FC send final version)

2 Introductions and welcome

Introductions were made for those who hadn't attended the group before

3 Review of Actions from last meeting

AP	Details	Progress
1	Andrew H to investigate whether 3 spray applications are permitted	See matters arising
2	Andrew H to have further discussion with Nigel and Stuart re SOP to find a proportionate approach	On agenda
3	Andrew H to redraft SOP in light of advice and group feedback	On agenda
4	Andrew H to liaise with LTOA & AA re good/best practice implementation on publicly owned land, ensuring senior Borough officials are also informed	On agenda
5	Any further AG member comments on draft OPM r to Andrew Hoppit by end of October	Comments received - on agenda
6	FC/NE AG members to encourage high level discussion on OPM control, especially designated sites	Discussion at high level has been noted as required but yet to happen
7	AG members to provide further comments and potential solutions on SOP to Andrew Hoppit by end of October	Comments and meeting held, on agenda
8	Craig/Andrew to arrange for OPM AG work to be published on	Andrew spoke with FC comms

	FC website	colleagues. Agree they need to be published but precise home for AG documents to be confirmed.
9	Craig to discuss AA/ISA involvement in AG with Jago Keen & Simon Holmes late November	Craig to report back after meeting AA 27 th Nov
10	FC (Andrew H) to invite Surrey representative onto the group	Andrew spoken to the Elmbridge Tree Officer, who is struggling for capacity. FC to find other potential Surrey representative

Matters arising

AP 1 – Andrew H has sought guidance from Nigel Straw. In summary, there are certain limits in certain situations but in reality not the limiting factor for OPM control (which is ability to spray more than twice within the control window). The flexibility does allow >2 sprays e.g. poor conditions affecting efficacy, but would be exceptional circumstances

Action 1 Andrew Hoppit to share Nigel's email re number of permissible chemical applications permitted

4 Good practice guide on OPM for sector workers

Andrew provided a summary of progress since the last meeting, having had meetings with contractors and liaised with other stakeholders. One comment received was need to highlight occupational health risks which had perhaps been presumed as happening e.g. risk assessment to check for visible OPM nests before carrying out tree work

The group discussed Greg's email and agreed the good practice applies to all affected OPM areas, including Pangbourne (even though no nests found, OPM still present for past few years)

Craig Ruddick offered comments and queries:

- Boroughs could simply send this round their contractors, but needs to be clear what is enforceable? Good practice should be implemented by all, but if infestation found then they have a duty to notify FC and then it is enforceable through issue of SPHN
- Query re 'must use AA approved contractor' – agreed it needs to be general but with link to AA approved list
- What about contractors who are less aware of OPM? Agreed the document cannot exceed 4 pages but gives scope for some extra information
- Likelihood of tree waste incineration queries – not realistic that infested material is separated out during operations, and if chipped and transported in line with good practice, risks are minimal

The group agreed the map of restricted movements should be made available on a website or other means, at a scale and with backdrop that made it easy to use on the ground

Action 2 Andrew to share revised OPM good tree practice document with AG before end of November for sign off

Andrew J noted the sentence re need to consult FC if material taken outside the zone, and potential burden that could create e.g. Eddie Stobart lorries carrying chips. Agreed this sentence would be removed.

5 Review of OPM 2013

Andrew summarised key results:

- Numbers have been reviewed and confirmed, so now see >50% reduction in nest numbers.
- OPM has continued to spread but the rate has slowed. The control programme is key to the success but need to recognise other factors will have influenced e.g. weather
- Budget – Significantly less spend than original budget. Essentially did maximum amount of control work; could spend more on survey to find OPM but with diminishing returns; pheromone traps more appropriate further out

Query noted about the difference in pheromone trap results from one area to another relative to nest numbers – agreed the need to review reasons for this. Other anomalies noted e.g. the need for lures to be frozen, yet transported in polystyrene? Stakeholders want to help with their own trapping so keen to have consistent, effective methodology

Alison highlighted Nigel Straw's findings that 80% success re treated trees that were not reinfested.

The group discussed the varied level of contribution by Boroughs towards OPM effort and balancing parity of support versus effective control programme. The group agreed that whilst it would like to see a fair balance between central and borough funding, trying to set up a match funding approach would risk undermining the key objectives of the strategy. It was recognised that these numbers were known not to be a thorough reflection of stakeholder contribution to OPM effort, and that the figures could be sensitive, so the group were asked not to share them outside the group. Seeking parity between boroughs would be tackled through other routes such as the Mayors office.

Sue raised the issue of contractor capacity next year; Andrew Hoppit highlighted interested from contractors in investing in more machinery, but they were nervous won't without Defra funding certainty

Defra timescale – the Tree Health Advisory Group meeting is on the 14th January where we expect the OPM reports to be tabled, and hope for a decision shortly after.

Barry gave another update on PHE views on human health aspects of the report. H repeated the previous message that occupational risk is a recognised issue but felt public health impact is not significant based on literature review and field studies. This work is currently undergoing peer review. The group discussed action taken for public health reasons in Holland; Barry noted this wasn't directly using health authority funding.

Action **3 Andrew to resend Barry the link to Holland OPM 2012 report**

The group discussed the length of the report. It was agreed it was an excellent document but recognised many people would not read the full document. It was agreed it probably needs to be broken into more than one document – (1) review of 2013 actions, achievements & lessons learned (2) review of future options (with impact analysis), recommendation and resource implications. Both documents would need an executive summary of ~2 sides

The group discussed close working with NE to ensure their interests are embraced e.g. ensuring biodiversity interests and monitoring are in place to give confidence and inform future work. Adam highlighted NE concerns regarding spraying activity on sensitive sites and the risk that joining 2 issues - aerial spraying and how to treat sensitive sites – would be unhelpful and likely to increase resistance to the programme. The group were keen to use the OPM report as an opportunity to commission further work such as monitoring or analysis of less/more aggressive options

Sue noted the risks that writing '3-5' year financial commitment from Defra is too vague and it should clearly specify the need for a 5 year control programme and associated budget.

The group suggested making key points bold in the Executive summary to ensure they stood out. Improvements to the life cycle diagram were also suggested by the group

Sue suggested a review of the whole document, focussing on what is critical information and what should be moved to appendices. It was agreed information like the case studies would be better placed in appendices or a separate document

Sue noted the success regarding communications, which has built on years of FC communications network building

Action 4 Advisory Group members to pass comments & suggestions on the OPM 2013 report to Craig by 29th November

Action 5 OPM 2013 report to be endorsed by the Advisory Group early December (date to be confirmed when FC send final version)

6 Meeting with Defra 8th November @ Richmond Park

Andrew and Craig summarised the meeting with Defra plant health team – made up of Mark Smethurst / Stephanie Godliman from policy and Lisa Smith / Andrew Cotterill from the evidence team. The visit was an opportunity to show OPM in the field, give them an overview of OPM, what has been done, the operational challenges and achievements

In summary Defra were very impressed by the work carried out and the achievements made, and were keen to consider the full range of options for the future including increased effort to attempt eradication. They also saw connections with other plant health issues, seeing a site with both OPM and Acute Oak Decline

7 AOB & date of next meeting

AOB

Sue:

- London Council's Summit event 16th November at Guildhall, attended by Sue & Andrew - good liaison opportunities with Members and potential Members of most London Boroughs.
- City of London are sponsoring an OPM art installation at 2014 Chelsea Flower Show

Alison:

- final version will be circulated beginning of December
- FC will produce a summary based on executive summary that will be shared with e.g. SPHN landowners, so wider stakeholders know about the achievements, and how their contribution has helped deliver success
- FC looking to work with GLA to send letter to boroughs seeking ongoing/more support

Craig Ruddick:

- Bartletts 6 month review so expecting a summary report on what they've achieved

Adam:

- NE are meeting Richmond and Wimbledon re operational plans for next year, so likely OPM will be discussed

Date of next meeting

6th March 2014 at Irish Chamber, Guildhall