

Tayside Beavers Group

Terms of Reference – (draft for meeting on 3 May 2012)

Background

There is currently a breeding population of beavers living in the wild in Tayside. The Minister for Environment has decided that these animals should be allowed to remain in place for the duration of the official trial beaver reintroduction in Knapdale in Argyll. At the end of the trial period in 2015, he will take a decision on the future of beavers in Scotland – both those in Knapdale and on Tayside.

Aims of the Group

The group has two principal aims:

- To gather additional information and monitor impacts of the Tayside beavers on other wildlife and land uses in the area, to help inform Ministers' decisions on the future of beavers in Scotland in 2015; and
- To help resolve any conflicts between beavers and land uses in the area by providing advice and practical help to landowners at a local level.

The group will agree a programme of work to achieve these aims.

The group will commence in early 2012 and run until Ministers decide the future of beavers living in the wild in Scotland in 2015.

Membership

The group will be chaired by David Bale, SNH Area Manager for Tayside and Grampian.

The group shall comprise one representative from each of the following organisations:

Royal Zoological Society Scotland (RZSS)
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Scottish Government (SG)
Scottish Land and Estates (SLE)
Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
Scottish Wild Beaver Group (SWBG)
Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)
Tay District Salmon Fishery Board (TDSFB)
NFUS

The group may invite other individuals to attend to provide advice.

The SG representative would co-ordinate interests across central Government including the Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (RPID), Science Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA), and Veterinary Advisors.

Running of the Group

The group will agree amongst itself how the group should be run, including the frequency and location of meetings.

SNH will provide a secretariat for the Group.

Reporting

This group will report annually on its activities to the Minister for Environment, and provide briefings as necessary to the National Species Reintroduction Forum.

Resources

The work of the group will be primarily funded from the existing resources of its members.

SNH has up to £50,000 pa over the next three financial years (12/13 to 14/15) to contribute to the costs of gathering additional information to help inform the Minister's decision in 2015 on the future of beavers in Scotland. This is in addition to the current population survey being carried out. The deliberations of the group will help to inform SNH's decisions as to how to deploy these resources.

Exclusions

The remit of the group does not extend to the following activities:

- Promotional work designed to increase support for beaver reintroduction
- Compensation to land managers for any loss incurred from these beavers
- Monitoring and regulation of private collections
- Running or monitoring of the Scottish Beaver Trial at Knapdale
- Investigation and management of any beavers found outwith the Tay and Earn river catchments (*precise area to be confirmed*)
- Decision on any licence applications for the release of beavers in Scotland