Draft Grey Squirrel Management Action Plan for Wales

Stakeholder Workshop

6th July 2017 – 10-4pm

Welsh Government Offices, Rhodfa Padarn, Aberystwyth, SY23 3UR

You, or a representative of your organisation, are invited to a stakeholder workshop being held by Welsh Government to discuss a draft Grey Squirrel Management Action Plan for Wales. This has been produced by Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales with input from a working group of stakeholders from both the woodland and conservation sectors.

The purpose of this workshop is to

* Update wider stakeholders and their organisations of the background and content of the draft management action plan developed by the working group.
* Enable stakeholders and their organisations to comment/ feed in the views of their members to further develop the plan prior to consultation in the Autumn.
* Explore a collaborative approach to delivery.

Owing to the current financial climate, there is currently **no** dedicated budget to manage grey squirrel populations in Wales. The draft action plan seeks to utilise **existing** delivery mechanisms, share best practice and encourage a partnership approach to the delivery of grey squirrel management in Wales.

The draft management action plan aims to address commitments under the Welsh Government’s Woodlands for Wales Strategy, as well as support the delivery of the Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales drawn up by the Wales Squirrel Forum. The plan also aims to address requirements under the EU Regulation on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species (the IAS Regulation), in relation to grey squirrels. We recognise that due to their wider scale distribution, it will not be possible to eradicate Grey Squirrel from Wales.

The draft Grey Squirrel Management Action Plan is attached for information. Following this event, a full consultation on the revised plan will be undertaken in the Autumn.

In order to manage arrangements to ensure a balanced range of representation, please consider whether you wish to present your views through attendance at this event, through an attending representative, by correspondence via the attached template or during the full consultation in the Autumn. Key points from both the event and those responding by template will be collated into a summary and made available in the public domain.

Please register your attendance using the attached registration form and returning it to the Forestry Policy mailbox - ForestryPolicy@wales.gsi.gov.uk. **The closing date for registration is 20th June 2017.**

**Draft Grey Squirrel Management Action Plan for Wales**

**Stakeholder Workshop**

**Thursday 6th July 2017 – 10-4pm**

Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3UR

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Name:**

**Organisation:**

**Address:**

**Email:**

**Telephone:**

**In accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards, we would like to establish your language preference. Please confirm your language preference for contributing at this event:-**

**Welsh/ English**

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| Responses to engagement event or consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: |  |

Do you have any special dietary requirements or need any special facilities at the venue?

**Please respond by 20th June to** [**ForestryPolicy@wales.gsi.gov.uk**](mailto:ForestryPolicy@wales.gsi.gov.uk)**. We will not be able consider responses received after this date.**

**Correspondence Template – draft Grey Squirrel Management Action Plan**

The following questions will be put to stakeholders attending the workshop. If you prefer to contribute by email or post, please complete the template below and return it to Forestry Policy - [ForestryPolicy@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ForestryPolicy@wales.gsi.gov.uk) or by post to Forest Resources Policy Branch, Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth SY23 3UR – **by 12th July 2017**. A full consultation will be held in the Autumn.

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| **Workshop 1 – Wider principles** |
| *Targeting of Resources – p.10 of the draft management action plan*  Those stated in the action plan are not in order of priority as this will depend on the objectives of landowners and local groups. However they recognize the importance of the categories identified and could form the basis of further targeting in future. |
| Do you agree with these priorities? Are there others? |

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| *Governance – p.18 of the draft management action plan*  The Wales Squirrel Forum is a partnership of stakeholders with an interest in red squirrel conservation and grey squirrel management in Wales. The Forum currently provides a steer on the implementation of the Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales. Their remit includes grey squirrel management. Many members have direct experience in managing grey squirrel populations to benefit red squirrel. Expanding the existing Forum membership to include those with specifically grey squirrel interests would acknowledge the common goal of managing grey squirrel populations and provide opportunities to share best practice.  It is felt that setting up a separate steering group specific to the grey squirrel management action plan would duplicate common areas of work. |
| Do you agree that a partnership approach through the Wales Squirrel Forum membership is the appropriate way to deliver the draft grey squirrel management action plan?  How should the Wales Squirrel Forum be adapted to take on this new role?  An annual event is proposed to update wider stakeholders on progress. Do you agree this is needed? |

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| *Monitoring – p.18 of the draft management action plan*  Useful evidence can be gained in monitoring the effectiveness of management measures. |
| Do you agree that the 3 monitoring options listed are appropriate?  Are there other monitoring methods that are presently being used which are not stated? |

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| **Workshop 2** **– Draft Actions 1- 6 and action 9.** |
| *Sustainable Management of Natural Resources – p.16 and 17 of the draft management action plan.* |
| *Draft Action 1)*  Ensure Area Statements consider the impact of grey squirrel on the woodland resource and biodiversity.  NRW will, in collaboration with others, prepare and publish area statements which will facilitate the implementation of Natural Resources Policy. Area statements will be an important evidence base for bodies operating within an area as they will include information on the priorities, risks and opportunities for sustainably managing natural resources. While these are a work in progress, it is important that grey squirrel management is considered in the development of these.  *Draft Action 2)*  Encourage the establishment and support of landscape-scale collaborative grey squirrel management partnerships.  *Draft Action 9)*  Examine the feasibility of incentives for a strategic and collaborative approach to grey squirrel management in the design of future natural resource management schemes.  A landscape-scale approach to grey squirrel management is likely to be more effective owing to the mobile nature of greys squirrels, than at an individual level. |
| Do you agree that support, when available, should focus on a strategic and collaborative approach to grey squirrel population management? |

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| *Draft Action 3)*  Investigate the development of a Vulnerability Analysis of Wales’ woodland resource to provide a focus for a co-ordinated approach to grey squirrel management by local partnerships and landowners.  A vulnerability analysis would examine the age and species type (broadleaves v conifer) of woodlands across Wales, and examine likely dispersal routes. It would provide a first step in identifying clusters of vulnerable woods where a collaborative approach to grey squirrel management would be beneficial. |
| Do you think that this tool would assist the establishment of grey squirrel management groups in vulnerable areas? |

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| *Draft Action 4)*  Where it is feasible and beneficial to do so, undertake grey squirrel management activity on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) as part of a co-ordinated landscape scale partnership approach.  *Draft Action 5*)  Continue to provide support on grey squirrel management for red squirrel conservation on private land through provision of advice, research and loan of equipment.  *Draft Action 6)*  Continue to manage grey squirrel for red squirrel conservation on the WGWE in line with the Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales through a partnership approach. |
| Owing to limited resources, it is not possible or feasible to manage grey squirrel on every part of the do you agree that grey squirrel management on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate. Do you agree that this should be focused where it is feasible to do so and there is a partnership approach with other woodland owners?  Two of these actions list activity that NRW undertakes to support red squirrel conservation. Do you agree that this should continue? |

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| **Workshop 3 – Actions 7, 8 and 10-14** |
| *Sustainable Management of Natural Resources – p.17 of the draft management action plan* |
| *Draft Action 7)*  Work with squirrel partnerships/ initiatives to improve the dissemination of information, and the co-ordination of red squirrel conservation and grey squirrel management efforts.  *Draft Action 8)*  Participate in the Wales Squirrel Forum and contribute to the delivery of both the Conservation Plan for Red Squirrels in Wales and the Wales Grey Squirrel Management Action Plan.  A lot of expertise, best practice and activity on grey squirrel management already exists and is on-going within organisations involved in conservation, woodland management and red squirrel protection. |
| How could sharing this information be done more effectively?  What is needed/ what methods would work best?  How could you contribute to the delivery of either plan for red or grey squirrels? |

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| *Guidance - p.17 of the draft management action plan* |
| *Draft Action 10)*  Raise awareness of the impacts of grey squirrel on woodland and wider biodiversity, and the need to assess the risk of damage and implement a plan of management.  *Draft Action 11)*  Promote best practice, ensuring information is up to date, and encourage the continuation of grey squirrel management training through a range of partners. |
| What mechanisms could be used to achieve these actions (existing or potential?)  How could you contribute to delivering these actions? |

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| *Research and Monitoring – p.17 and 18 of the draft management action plan* |
| *Draft Action 12)*  Continue to support research into improvements in management methods through the Defra England and Wales wildlife and biodiversity research and development budget.  *Draft Action 13)*  Maintain an overview of grey squirrel management research in the UK and identify research gaps that would better inform grey squirrel management. Flag to research organisations.  *Draft Action 14)*  Further develop methods to monitor the impact of grey squirrel management measures; minimising the impact on biodiversity, non-targeted species, related ecosystem services and economy.  In the main, Defra manages research budgets and programmes for England and Wales. Welsh Government, as part of the wider Defra research group, which includes Forestry Commission, Animal Plant Health Agency and others, engages in research on grey squirrel. |
| Do you agree that these actions should continue? |

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| Are there any actions listed that you feel are unnecessary?  Are there any actions that you feel have been missed? |
| Are there any other comments you would like to make? |

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| Your Name  Your Title/Organisation  Address (postal or email) |

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