



Progress Report April – September 2007

**By Debbie Court
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September 2007

1. Linkages to national and local BAPs.

1.1 UK BAP.

The Project Officer attended the three day Local Biodiversity Action Plan Conference (18th – 20th September) in Exeter. At the conference the Project Officer raised a concern over the lack of communication between the UK HAP/SAP groups and the LBAPs. Copies of the annual report and newsletters were passed to UK BAP officer. Responses were made to various questionnaires from the UK Biodiversity Partnership.

1.2 Regional

The Project Officer attends the East Midlands Biodiversity Forum and now chairs the regional LBAP officers group. The LBAPs have contributed towards a number of different regional projects including communications and funding strategies.

1.3 Links with neighbouring LBAPs

Close contact and liaison has been maintained with the Peak District and National Forest LBAPs as well as Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire LBAPs.

1.4 Greenprints

The Project Officer has attended two Chesterfield Greenprint Steering Group meetings providing guidance and a holistic county-wide overview.

The Bolsover Biodiversity Network (BBN) has continued to be successful with key partners and groups working towards the targets. The Neighbourhood Renewal Funding provided £10,000 specifically for biodiversity projects in Bolsover. This has been divided between a number of small-scale projects. As the Chair of the BBN the Project Officer has been asked to deliver a ten minute presentation on the Bolsover Greenprint to the Bolsover Countryside Partnership's AGM on 1st October.

2. Local Feedback

2.1 Annual Forum

The joint Lowland Derbyshire and Peak District LBAP Annual Forum is arranged for 11th October and is entitled *Sustainable Wetland Habitats and Communities for the Future*. Talks and workshops will be led by both LBAP partners and national experts. Booking to date has totalled over 100 delegates.

2.2 LBAP Steering Group

The Steering Group of the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership met on 24th June. Ten members of the partnership were represented and participated in discussions on opportunity mapping.

3. Making the LBAP accessible.

3.1 Website

The usage of the Derbyshire Biodiversity website has continued to increase throughout the period. Unfortunately the stats package was unable to calculate figures for May, June and July but September has seen an unusually high usage possibly due to the forthcoming Annual Forum.

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Average No of visits per day	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Sept 2007	1288	2985	99.5	2985	32650	440.65MB
Aug 2007	826	1227	39.58	3243	32020	790.62MB
July 2007						
June 2007						
May 2007						
April 2007	888	1088	36.26	3532	48064	334.12MB
March 2007	978	1494	48.19	4473	41352	472.69MB
Feb 2007	910	1414	50.50	3079	28246	456.38 MB
Jan 2007	857	1339	43.19	2606	22152	573.23 MB
Dec 2006	747	1437	46.35	2701	18765	346.16 MB
Nov 2006	717	1582	41.55	3452	39852	597.94 MB
Oct 2006	703	1204	38.83	2510	20997	323.53 MB

The website has been visited by people from over 25 different countries.

3.2. Newsletter

Quarterly newsletters were produced and distributed in April and July. The next newsletter is due out in October. Contributions have continued to come in from LBAP partners as well and local community groups. Feedback from LBAP partners and local groups has been very favourable. The local groups like the newsletter allows them to feel more in touch with what everyone else is doing.

3.3 Talks

Biodiversity talks have been arranged with various community groups for the autumn and winter period.

3.4 Annual Report

The 2006/7 Annual Report is in its final stages of being produced. Information this year was received from over 60 organisations. Many of the local community groups were supplied with paper maps of their sites and were asked to draw areas of work on so area calculations could be made.

4. Implement Habitat Action Plans

4.1 Woodland

The Woodland Group met in the National Forest on 19th July. Discussion revolved around achievements to date, next years woodland seminars and an ancient woodland project to aid progress towards the LBAP targets.

4.2 Grassland

The Grassland Group has not met within the last six months but progress continues to be made by both the *Value in Meadows* and *Wild About Nature* projects. Grassland surveying within the Moss Valley has highlighted sites which require ELS and HLS

targeting and could be restored to species-rich meadows. The Project Officer helped the Bolsover Countryside Partnership put together a £25K bid to SITA landfill tax for grassland restoration. Derbyshire Countryside Service successfully applied to SITA for £21K to restore three heathland sites in Ashover.

Money was secured from the Local Transport Plan to pay for, and install posts, for the road verges within the LBAP area. Discussions have continued on the management prescriptions for the individual sites.

4.3 Wetland

The Wetland group had not met during the last six months.

4.4 Farmland

Field margin figures from ELS were provided by Natural England and following a round of consultation the Field Margins Habitat Action Plan was completed. Discussions took place over further hedgerow surveying to complement work in Chesterfield and Derby.

5. Implement Species Action Plans

Following the publication of the revised UK priority species the Project Officer has liaised with county recorders to compile a revised list for the LBAP area. The list has grown from 30 to over 60.

The water vole and crayfish group meetings have been combined into a riparian species group which will focus on water vole, otter, crayfish and various fish species.

6. Increasing capacity of partners in key sectors to implement HAPs and SAPs.

6.1 BAP Audits

The biodiversity audit for the Derbyshire Countryside Service has been completed with a number of recommendations for improving working practices. A biodiversity audit for Carsington Water has also been completed providing site staff with statistical information on their priority habitats and species and a calculation of the percentages of LBAP targets which they have achieved.

Following contact from Aggregate Industries work has begun on a Biodiversity Management Plan for Crich Quarry.

7 Monitoring and Reporting.

7.1 BARS

Following feedback from LBAP partners and local groups, progress has been calculated towards the achievement of the LBAP targets. This information is included in both the annual report and the delivery plan. Work has been ongoing to encourage/persuade LBAP partners to use BARS.

8. Community Strategies, Development Plans and similar strategic partnerships.

8.1 Local Strategic Partnerships & Local Area Agreements

The Project Officer attended a regional meeting to discuss biodiversity indicators for the LAAs. A progress report was provided for the current Derbyshire biodiversity LAA target and the LBAP partnership has lobbied for the inclusion of an as yet undecided biodiversity target.

8.2 Planning documents

The Project Officer was asked to comment on general biodiversity issues for the Core Strategy for Derbyshire Dales DC and a Sustainable Design SPD for Chesterfield BC. Comment has also been provided on the links between climate change and biodiversity for the Derbyshire Climate Change strategy.

8.3 Training for rangers and land managers

19th May - Severn Trent Water volunteer rangers – 4 vols

22nd Sept – Severn Trent Water volunteer rangers and Aren't Birds Brilliant vols – 11 vols/staff

9. Raise Funding for LBAP initiatives

9.1 Funding information.

Information has been circulated to LBAP partners on new funding schemes with the appropriate deadlines and criteria. The Delivery Plan has highlighted the gaps in delivery and suggested three specific delivery projects which require funding.

9.2 Support of Funding bids

The Project Officer has continued to discuss funding for biodiversity projects with LBAP partners. A large amount of input was provided to the Bolsover Countryside Partnership's grassland SITA bid and Derbyshire Countryside Service's Ashover Heathland bid. Five supporting letters were written by the Project Officer to accompany LBAP partners project funding applications.

9.3 Funding for co-ordination

Discussions have been ongoing regarding securing future funding for the Biodiversity Project Officer's post. During this financial year money has been provided by Derbyshire County Council, Natural England, Derby City Council, Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, South Derbyshire District Council, Environment Agency, Erewash Borough Council, Severn Trent Water and Forestry Commission. In addition the Project Officer has gained money from other sources - £380 (running IEEM course), £1,650 (Aggregates Industry for Crich Quarry plan).

10. NERC Biodiversity Duty

The Project Officer has been involved in regional discussions regarding the best way to disseminate information on the NERC biodiversity duty. A report reviewing NEDDC's services under NERC was produced for NEDDC and work has started on a similar review of Derbyshire County Council services. The Project Officer has discussed the duty with a number of other organisations including Derbyshire Police Constabulary and a couple of parish councils. A draft training session on the NERC Biodiversity Duty has been submitted to IEEM for inclusion in their 2008 training programme.