

Progress report for Derbyshire (outside PDNP) LBAP Project SA/2002/107 up until end of December 2004

Progress is listed under aims submitted on the application form.

To engage the LBAP partnerships and provide regular feedback and support.

Regular contact is made with major LBAP partners via e-mail to inform of progress and or inform them of major issues from both within the LBAP area and within the Region.

Thought and initial discussions have taken place to consider the format and invite list for the annual forum which will take place in March 2005.

Revise priority Lowland Derbyshire HAPs in line with current standards and ensure partners have commitment to actions.

The grassland Habitat Action Plan has been through its last stage of consultation and is now finalised with agreement from all grassland LBAP Partners. A copy of the finalised HAP is attached. The format may change slightly when it is uploaded to the website.

An initial meeting took place in November to discuss the priorities for the wetland habitat action plans. It was agreed to have HAPs for wet grassland, swamps (including reedbeds, mires and fens), rivers and streams and ponds. Draft HAPs have been distributed to LBAP partners for comments.

It has been agreed to write a Habitat Action Plan for heathland which will include both upland heathland/moorland relevant to the LBAP area and lowland heathland which is only present in small fragments in the south of the county. The work for the heathland HAP will be done and monitored under the grassland HAP group.

It has also been agreed to start a farmland group to discuss the Habitat Action Plans for hedgerows, field margins as well as for Species Action Plans for Farmland birds and the brown hare. This initial meeting will take place early in 2005.

Ensure partners understand and implement relevant actions and develop ability to work without support.

One main LBAP partner has been provided with a list of their lead and partner actions under the current and revised LBAP HAPs and SAPs. Their progress since LBAP was first launched in 1997-8 was also collated. Contact has been made with all relevant local authority planning departments and with local strategic partnerships (LSP). Meetings have taken place with two LSP co-ordinators discussing how biodiversity can be incorporated into Community Strategies.

It has been decided that the best way about achieving understanding is the construction of a Derbyshire Biodiversity website. This is envisaged to act as a 'one stop shop' for biodiversity information and sources of information in Derbyshire. It will have the Lowland Derbyshire HAPs and SAPs on it and links to the Peak District and National Forest HAPs and SAPs and a lot more 'genetic' information to LBAPs in Derbyshire. For example information on local natural history groups, information

on LBAP partners, information on how various sectors of society can engage in the LBAP process and what they can do. A draft 'site map' is attached.

A contractor has been engaged and information is currently being sourced and written for the website content. The contractor is familiar with biodiversity issues, has designed other LBAP websites and is currently updating the Lincolnshire LBAP website.

Ensure Lowland Derbyshire LBAP includes all species of conservation concern and identifies appropriate action.

Information has now been received from County Recorders and a list of UK National Priority species present within the LBAP has been finalised, a copy of which is attached.

At a recent steering group meeting it was discussed how to proceed with the species within the LBAP. A short report is attached, detailing how we propose to deal with species. This lists organisations other than the main LBAP partners who else will be involved in the drafting and commenting of SAPs (mainly County Recorders). In addition, a list of local species is being compiled with help of the County Recorders for action after the UK priorities have been dealt with or as and when appropriate opportunities arise.

Work will begin on Species Action Plans (SAPs) when time and resources become available. Priority will be given to those species where an external group have a particular interest in getting involved in drafting a SAP. Work in this period has begun on the bats SAP. A draft bat SAP was sent out to the Bat Groups and other relevant organisations for comment before Christmas. A draft SAP for Oak Polypore has also gone out for comment to relevant landowners and local fungi experts.

Discussion has taken place with the Derbyshire Ornithological Society (DOS) about their input into the SAPs for relevant birds. They have also expressed an interest in joining in the farmland HAP and SAP group.

Invitations have also gone out to LBAP partners and other relevant organisations and individuals for an initial meeting in February to discuss the water vole SAP.

Enable progress towards targets to be monitored locally and contributions to regional and national targets reported. All to be linked with national and local recording initiatives.

A review of progress for the woodland HAP showed that much had been achieved. A copy of presentation is attached. It has been agreed to do a very quick revision of the targets of the Woodland HAPs so they will fit in with the 2005-2010 timescale proposed by the other HAPs.

Discussions have taken place with neighbouring LBAP areas such as Peak District and National Forest about co-ordinating effort to extract monitoring information from various LBAP partners. Currently LBAP partners are asked for the same information from the 3 LBAPs, it was agreed to consider that they should be asked once and that this information is disseminated between the LBAP areas.

Due for release in January is the results of a county GIS project gathering information on habitats throughout the LBAP and neighbouring areas. It was agreed to not consider drawing up a monitoring strategy until this information was available and the implication of BARS was known and the Project Officer has received training on it.

Ensure that resource needs and work programmes are co-ordinated and recognised by all parties.

Implementation of the grassland HAP has been discussed at the last draft stage and all LBAP partners are aware of their commitments and responsibilities. Current action and projects that are likely to be implemented in the next 5 years have been flagged up and are included in the HAP. All partners, led by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust have been involved in the drawing up of a funding bid to achieve much of the work identified in the HAP that will not be achieved through normal working practice of the partners.

Implementation was also considered at the initial meeting to discuss the wetland HAPs. All the partners are aware of the need to co-ordinate work programmes and are all happy to work together to achieve HAP targets. There had been some personnel changes in some of the LBAP partners in recent years and it was the first occasion that many of the partners had met to discuss wetland issues.

Seek funds for action

Discussions have taken place about LBAP implementation and co-ordination beyond the life of this currently funded project. Letters providing information about funding LBAP co-ordination and requesting initial contributions were sent to all LBAP partners including Local Authority planning and leisure departments and the Local Strategic partnerships. Contributions, which currently amount to about £10,000 will either be matched by the local English Nature office for the continuation of the Project Officer role or used as match funding for an ALSF bid for 2 years worth of funding for LBAP co-ordination and implementation. This therefore shows the support for the continuation of this post from the Local Authorities and other LBAP partners.

An LBAP partner has applied for funding to purchase some grassland machinery to enable a number of small species-rich semi-natural grassland sites be managed efficiently. The Biodiversity Project Officer has written a supporting letter as the application will help deliver LBAP targets.

Ensure that partners actions are recognised and publicised

Information is currently being gathered from the main LBAP partners on LBAP progress and achievement since the publication of the LBAP in 1997-8 in preparation for the publication of a 5 year report for distribution on or about the time of the Annual Forum in March.

Enable partnership and steering groups reps. Make substantive contributions to LBAP development.

Secretariat has been provided for the HAP meetings, draft HAP and SAP distribution and keeping partners informed of LBAP development and biodiversity issues within the LBAP area, the region and within the UK.

Ensure LBAPs are co-ordinating action with appropriate organisations, & contributing to regional & national action.

The Project Officer has met with the other regional LBAP co-ordinators at the East Midlands Regional LBAP meeting and attended the Regional Biodiversity Forum as a representative of the LBAP co-ordinators. As mentioned above, discussion has taken place with the Peak District and National Forest about issues we can work on together including monitoring and information to go on the Derbyshire biodiversity website. The Project Officer attended the steering group of the Peak District LBAP to discuss these issues.

Ensure LBAPs recognised as a key initiative in sustainable development.

As mentioned above, contact has been made with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) in the LBAP area with a view to including biodiversity priorities and targets in the Community Strategies. Copies of the publication 'Life support – incorporating biodiversity into community strategies' have been disseminated to all LSP co-ordinators.

Copies of the TCP/EN publication 'Biodiversity by Design – a guide for sustainable communities' and the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE), 'Increasing the momentum – A vision statement for Biodiversity in Local Government 2004-2010' has been disseminated to the planning departments of the Local Authorities.

A standard talk entitled 'Derbyshire's Biodiversity Jigsaw – fitting the pieces together' has been developed in partnership with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. This talk discusses what biodiversity is, what habitats and species are important in Lowland Derbyshire and how the various partners are working together to achieve the targets as well as how the various local groups and individuals can help. One such talk was delivered in December; four more are booked in the winter with further requests beyond the period of this project. Articles have also been written for local group newsletters based upon this talk.

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