



Progress Report 2011 – 2012



**Debbie Alston/Nick Moyes
Biodiversity Project Officers (job share)**

December 2012

This report summarises the activity of the Biodiversity Project Officers from Jan 2011 to Dec 2012. (There was no report during 2011 as all work focussed on re-writing the new LBAP)

Executive summary:

2011

Most work in early 2011 focussed on incorporating the five hundred responses to the public consultation in 2010 on updating the **Biodiversity Action Plan for Lowland Derbyshire**. Debbie Alston (DA) reduced her hours in summer 2011, and Nick Moyes (NM) was appointed as her job-share partner. (see 1) They worked together to completely revise the layout the Biodiversity Action Plan, which took a Landscape Character approach to setting BAP targets. (see 3)

The Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2011-2020) was launched at the **Annual Forum** for BAP Partners in November 2011, attended by 84 people. (see 4.1.1)

2012

The initial focus of work was to explain and promote the LBAP publication to key partners. **Presentations** were given by the Project Officers, both to local authority planners and to a number of local 'Friends of' groups around the county. '**User Guides**' were written to introduce the BAP document to schools and to planners. This led to an exciting initiative to develop a project to introduce **schools** across the county to the concept of Biodiversity Action Plans in their own grounds. (see 5.6)

The second main focus of work throughout the year has been input into the development of the new '**Local Nature Partnership**' for Lowland Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire – a key output of the Government's Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP). (see 2.3) Working with our LBAP partners in Nottinghamshire, and using DEFRA funding, a number of high-level consultation events were held in both counties. LNP status was granted in September 2012.

NM focussed mostly on LNP development work, whilst DA undertook opportunity mapping **contract work** for the Environment Agency. (see 6.2)

A review of the way the Biodiversity Project Officers communicate within the partnership led to a redesign of the **Derbyshire Biodiversity Newsletter** (see 5.2), and an on-going update of content (but not redesign) of the Derbyshire Biodiversity website. A new generic email address and a **Twitter** account have also been launched. (see 5.4)

Funding remains of concern. Two local authorities (Chesterfield and NE Derbyshire) have currently withdrawn their contribution towards the Biodiversity Projects Officer post. (see 9.3) Following on from Natural England's withdrawal of financial support to all of the country's LBAP partnerships, this currently leaves the post with an uncertain future beyond March 2014. Additional income has come from two pieces of contract work mentioned above.

The **Annual Partnership Forum** was held in November on the theme of Engagement and Education. It was attended by 60 people. (see 4.1.2)

CONTENTS

	page
1. Personnel Changes	2
2. Linkages to National & Regional initiatives	2
3. The Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)	4
4. Local Partnerships Feedback	4
5. Making the LBAP accessible	6
6. Increasing capacity of partners to implement the LBAP	9
7. Monitoring and Reporting	9
8. Community Strategies, Development Plans & strategic partnerships.	10
9. Raise Funding for LBAP initiatives	10

1. Personnel Changes

Debbie Alston (DA) has been the full-time Biodiversity Project Officer since Sep 2004, but in 2011 decided to reduce her hours to 18.5 hours per week. Nick Moyes was recruited as a second, part-time Biodiversity Project Officer, and the changeover made in July 2011. The two posts together make up one full-time equivalent post, line managed by Tom French, Derbyshire County Council's Ecologist.

Dan Abrahams step down from the Steering Group and as Chair of the Partnership, following internal restructuring at Natural England. He was replaced by Karen Davenport, then David Kingsley-Rowe and latterly Janet Belfield on the Steering and Executive Groups. Ed Green was appointed Chair of the LBAP Partnership in January 2012

2. Linkages to National and Regional biodiversity initiatives

2.1 UK BAP

Since October 2011 there have been far-reaching changes to the national structure of biodiversity co-ordination. Natural England's financial support for Local Biodiversity and regional partnerships ceased in April 2011. This posed problems in many areas of the country, due to their sole reliance on this funding. LBAPs were cut back and in many areas LBAP officers made redundant or had their jobs altered. In Lowland Derbyshire we were fortunate in having support from Local Authorities and other LBAP partners, and have been able to continue, albeit in the medium- term, without Natural England's contribution. (see 9.3)

2.2 Natural England White Paper (NEWP)

In 2011 the Government published its Natural Environment White Paper in 2011, setting out its vision for the next 50 years. It contained a number of initiatives relevant to biodiversity action planning, including Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) (see 2.3), Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) and Biodiversity Offsetting

2.3 Local Nature Partnerships (LNP)

Background: The 2011 NEWP identified that '**Local Nature Partnerships**' (LNPs) should be established across England. These were to be locally formed, high-level fora, capable of driving positive change in the environment and producing multiple benefits for people, the economy and the environment.

DEFRA invited bids for funding to develop the LNP concept. A joint bid for a Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LNP was submitted to co-incide with the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership area, already covering both counties. However DEFRA rejected this as it overlapped with a separate LNP application made for the Peak District by the National Park Authority. The area was subsequently reduced to cover Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and £20k of capacity-building funding eventually allocated in Dec 2011 provided to facilitate LNP development.

Working with our LBAP partners in Nottinghamshire, a number of high-level consultation events were held in both counties. BAP Officers identified potential invitees, booked venues and employed Alison Millward, a professional facilitator to lead six high-level meetings with representatives from a range of sectors across the two counties. Workshops notes and our application have been placed on a new section in the Derbyshire Biodiversity website on behalf of both counties. Ours was one of 50 applications from across the country. In late September we heard from Defra that it had received government approval. We are still in the throes of forming a Board.

An initial meeting was held on 18th December 2012 at the Toyota works near Derby, which we understand was a considerable success. Tony Walker, Deputy Manager Director at Toyota was elected Chair. Meeting minutes are expected in early January 2013

The project has been greeted with a considerable amount of enthusiasm and interest from many areas, but concerns remain that government is not funding any of the work going into servicing them. Secretariat support is currently being donated from one or other of the BAP partnerships. Ironically, Defra is currently spending money evaluating the LNP establishment process, and an East Midlands review meeting is expected sometime in January 2013.

2.4 Regional

Formal meetings of the East Midlands Biodiversity Partnership ceased in April 2011, but partners have been able to keep in contact via e-mail as and when issues have arisen which require a more regional consultation. It is likely that Local Nature Partnerships will be the focus for future discussion amongst regional BAP practitioners.

2.5 Links with neighbouring LBAPs

Contact has been maintained with neighbouring LBAPs. This was especially crucial during the consultation and application process for Local Nature Partnerships, to avoid boundary issues.

The links between Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire LBAPs has been considerable strengthened through the Local Nature Partnership process.

The Biodiversity Project Officer worked closely with the National Forest Company to ensure the 3rd edition of the National Forest LBAP complimented the approach of the Lowland Derbyshire LBAP 2011-2020. The Project Officers have attended meetings of the National Forest Conservation Working Group.

3 The Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

After more than two years work, and over 500 modifications suggested by partners to the draft LBAP, plus a major revision to its structure and layout, the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action plan was finally launched at the November 2011 Biodiversity Forum at the University of Derby. (see 4.1.1.)

Instead of taking a habitat-by-habitat approach to biodiversity action planning, the new LBAP now divides Lowland Derbyshire into eight 'Action Areas' based upon the distinct Landscape Character divisions of the county. Those actions relevant to the entire region are included in a section of 'Generic Action Plans' The new BAP is available on CD and as a download from the Derbyshire Biodiversity website. The Action Area boundaries are also mapped on the County Council's mapping portal.



Cumulative targets were retained so to be as relevant as possible to reporting via the updated BARS website. (see 7.1) Paper copies of the BAP can be provided in limited numbers, but the online version will contain all new revisions and updates.

4. Local Partnership Feedback

4.1 Annual Fora

4.1.1 Annual Forum 2011 (“Delivering Biodiversity in the Landscape” and Launch of LBAP)

A poster for the 'Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership Forum 2011'. The poster features the title 'Delivering biodiversity in the landscape' and a photograph of a green, rolling landscape. Below the photo, it states the date '5th November 2011' and the location 'Derby University, Kedleston Road, Derby'. At the bottom, there are logos for the University of Derby, the East Midlands Biodiversity Partnership and Natural England, and the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership. A small text block describes the forum as a programme of talks, workshops and displays.

The 2011 Biodiversity Forum was held on Saturday 5th November at Derby University. Its theme was *Delivering Biodiversity in the Landscape*, and was attended by 84 people. It included talks looking at projects with a larger, landscape-scale theme. It began with an overview of the government's new Environment White Paper and an introduction to 'ecosystem services' and the Wildlife Trust's Living Landscape approach. Various speakers presented local and national case studies of smaller biodiversity projects, too. Six different workshops were provided in the afternoon including using social media, managing groups, using the new LBAP to support your projects, outreach, fundraising and a fungal foray.

The event closed with an introduction and launch of the long-awaited *Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2011-2020)*.

4.1.2 Annual Forum 2012 (“Get the Message Across”)

The 2012 Biodiversity Forum was held on Saturday 17th November at County Hall, Matlock. The theme of the event was education and communication, using different ways to get biodiversity messages across to a wider audience. The event was attended by 60 people. The day started with three talks, including a very entertaining one by Gordon MacLellan (aka Creeping Toad) on using creative ways to convey biodiversity messages. Georgina Cass gave an overview of the Biodiversity Action in Schools Project, whilst Nick Moyes showed a variety of biodiversity projects utilising social media and mobile phone technology. Eight different workshops were provided, including using social media, running events and youth ranger sessions, working with schools, writing press releases, creating biodiversity story books, interpretation and environmental games.



All talks and workshops notes from both events were uploaded to the ‘News’ section of the Derbyshire Biodiversity website.

4.2 LBAP Steering Group

The Steering Group of the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership met four times in 2011 and 2012 (17th January and 6th July 2011, 25th January and 18th July 2012). The main topics of discussion were the emerging 2011-2020 LBAP, looking at the gaps in the landscape delivery, the developing Local Nature Partnership, our Biodiversity Action in Schools Project, and changes to the way we communicate with partners. Minutes of all meetings are on the Derbyshire Biodiversity website.

4.3 Servicing the partnership

The job-share Project Officers have both continued to work with, advise and distribute relevant information to the LBAP partnership. Advice and letters of support were supplied to a number of projects. We understand this has so far resulted in at least **£200,000** of external funding being offered for projects across the county. The Project Officers also attended SITA and WREN landfill tax funders as part of their expert panels.

During the report period, the Project Officers visited, or communicated with, a number of LBAP partners and local groups to discuss a wide range of issues including current and future projects and funding.

We visited, attended or met with the following groups or organisations:

- A1+ (Highways Agency advisers) – discuss possible biodiversity projects on HA land
- Barrow Upon Trent parish council – to advise on management of Greenacres nature reserve
- Derbyshire County Council – to advise on management for Unstone Line and Elvaston Castle LNR
- Don Rivers Trust – to discuss potential overlap issues/mutually beneficial issues
- Foston Prison – Initial habitat survey and advice for a site BAP
- Hasland Allotment Association – habitat management and funding advice for a wildlife area

- Kilburn Parish Council – advise on management of the nature reserve and on funding
- Morton Playfield group – advise on management and funding bids
- Ridgeway Methodist Church – advising on churchyard management and funding
- RSPB – to discuss potential overlap issues/mutually beneficial issues associated with Futurescapes

In addition there are a number of partnership projects where the project officers have attended meetings and advised on appropriate LBAP targets and actions.

- DerwentWISE – attending meetings and organising events as part of the Stage 2 consultation phase
- Doe Lea project – attending meetings
- Limestone Journeys – attending meetings and helping to submit SITA funding bid
- Local Wildlife Sites Partnership – attending panel meetings and participating in the revision of the selection guidelines
- Mercaston and Markeaton Brook project – attending meetings
- South Derbyshire Environmental Forum – attending meetings and delivered a workshop/talk
- OnTrent – discussed and advised on possibility of TREE (Trusley, Radbourne and Egginton Brooks) Project
- WildDerby – Chairing annual meetings, advising officers on project delivery and supervising students in the WildVolunteering project.

5. Making the LBAP accessible

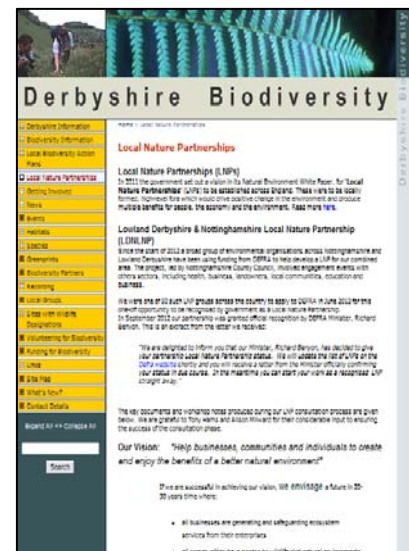
5.1 Website

The website continues to be a popular resource, and work is being carried out to correct or remove a number of out-of-date items and links from the main pages.

See www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk

A new page has been created to act as a temporary portal for all documents and updates relating to the Local Nature Partnership for Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. (see 2.3)

We have considered a redesign of the site, but feel that both the cost and the time this would take cannot be justified at this point. All new meeting minutes and conference notes are posted on the website.



5.2. Newsletter

The Derbyshire Biodiversity Newsletter has been redesigned to more closely reflect the appearance of the newly launched Biodiversity Action Plan for Lowland Derbyshire. Despite this, we will continue to seek content relating to the whole of the county and not just our own LBAP area. Because of the Project Officers' time commitments on other matters (especially the LNP), we have felt the need to reduce the number of editions being



produced each year. We will make up for this by investing more time in other forms of communication of topical news relevant to our partners. Two editions of the newsletter were produced in 2012, with three in 2011. The standard of contributions submitted remains high, and feedback has been uniformly positive.

Copies of the newsletter were sent to all LBAP partners, other relevant community groups and parish/town councils, plus a further 200 individuals on the LBAP e-mailing list. We would like to reduce the numbers of copies being sent out in paper format, but recognise that local groups like copies they can circulate to members.

5.3 Talks, workshops and training courses

A number of talks, workshops and training sessions have been delivered on the new Biodiversity Action Plan, including User Guides for Planners and Schools on the LBAP. (see 5.5) The various presentations are now on the Derbyshire Biodiversity website, and have been given to the following:

- 13th October 2011 - Friends of Darley Abbey
- 9th November 2011 – Friends of Allestree Park Group
- 21st November 2011 – WildDerby
- 17th April 2012 - South Derbyshire Environmental Forum
- 16th April 2012 – Moss Valley Wildlife Group

Training sessions on using the new LBAP, and ecosystem services, were offered to Local Authorities, primarily planning departments, as part of their CPD sessions.

- 8th February 2012 – Derbyshire County Council (8 attendees)
 - 22nd February 2012 - Amber Valley District Council (11 attendees)
 - 27th February 2012 – Derbyshire County Council (9 attendees)
 - 2nd March 2012 - South Derbyshire District Council (7 attendees)
 - 7th March 2012 – Bolsover District Council (12 attendees)
 - 8th March 2012 – North East Derbyshire District Council (10 attendees)
 - 20th March 2012 – Chesterfield Borough Council (13 attendees)
 - 15th October 2012 - Derby City Rangers (16 attendees)
 - 20th November 2012 – Derby City planners (4 attendees)
 - 20th November 2012 – Derby City Parks Dept (8 attendees)
- (Sessions have still to be scheduled for Derbyshire Dales and Erewash)

5.4 Social media (Twitter)



After careful consideration of the benefits and risks of using Social Media, we recently gained approval to launch our own Twitter account for the Biodiversity partnership. See <https://twitter.com/DerbyshireBAP>

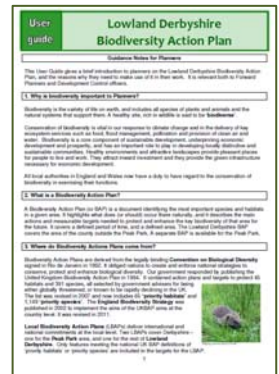
With around 80 followers after just a few weeks, we intend to share a range of local and national biodiversity topics and news stories.

We feel this will not only be a useful additional way to disseminate topical information, it will also encourage Partners to take up and use social media themselves, as well as providing us with a valuable source of topical environmental updates. We will pass selected news on

to all those who follow us. This proved especially relevant during the early period of the *Chalara* outbreak in the UK. We are keen to help any partner organisation interested in learning more about communicating with Twitter, and have produced an information sheet and special exercise to help them.

5.5 User Guides

Funding from the East Midlands Biodiversity Partnership (EMBP) enabled the Partnership to write two user guides to the 2011-2020 LBAP. One was aimed at Schools (setting the scene and explaining the relevance of a biodiversity action plan), whilst another was aimed at Planners, and included answers to questions raised at their CPD sessions. Both User Guides are on the Derbyshire Biodiversity website, and the Schools leaflet was a catalyst for a bigger schools initiative (see 5.6 below).



5.6 Biodiversity Action in Schools Project

As a result of our new Lowland Derbyshire BAP and the User Guides produced for schools, we felt there was an opportunity to work with colleagues in the county's Environmental Studies Service to set up a pilot scheme for schools to raise awareness of biodiversity action plans. (Awareness-raising is one of the Generic Actions in the LBAP)

The pilot was developed by DCCs Environmental Studies Services and the Eco- Schools staff member under guidance from the LBAP Officers. It guides schools towards resources to help them



produce Biodiversity Action Plan for their own grounds.

A review and presentation was held at County Hall on November 13th for the eight participating schools from across the LBAP area, to which a number of other practitioners in environmental education were invited. The children gave the most amazing presentations, and demonstrated they all had a clear understanding of the principles of biodiversity action plans.

Learning resources placed online should help further schools 'do-it-themselves', and we will probably try to do this in the form of an explanatory video aimed at teaching staff.



6. Increasing capacity of partners to implement the LBAP

6.1 BAP Audits

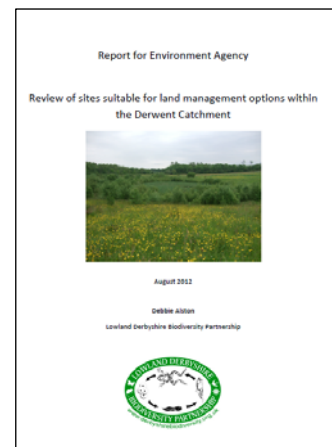
A biodiversity audit for Derby City parks was completed. This calculated the area of biodiversity-important land Derby City parks own and have management control over. The report also highlighted options for future management and possible funding for site management. Copies of the report were also sent to Forestry Commission and Natural England to show scope for agri-environmental applications.

The Project Officer (DA) visited Foston Prison, in the Trent Valley, to assist the gardening team who had been asked to produce a prison BAP, as part of the HMR Prison Service Biodiversity Action Plan. An initial habitat survey was undertaken and suggestions for actions. The BAP was completed by the prison and since September, a new pond has been created, a veteran tree saved and options for grassland management have been agreed.

In 2011, the Project Officer worked with the Stanley and Stanley Common Wildlife Group to produce a parish Biodiversity Action Plan. This work was funded by an Opal grant awarded to the Group.

6.2 Other project work

The Project Officer (DA) undertook a habitat opportunity mapping exercise in the lower Derwent Valley for the Environment Agency. The study looked at potential sites for woodland, wetland and hedgerow creation and sites for woody debris and buffer strips. Work was also undertaken to calculate the potential contributions sites could make towards the LBAP targets. Work was concentrated within the catchments of Alfreton Brook, Bottle Brook and upper parts of the River Amber.



7. Monitoring and Reporting

7.1 BARS

The UK Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) website has been re-launched, but the Project Officers need to be confident that the system will do what it is advertised to do, before committing time to it.

7.2 Spatial recording

The Project Officers have liaised with the larger biodiversity delivery projects and captured information on contributions towards the habitat LBAP targets on the master GIS LBAP layers.

7.3 Target Reporting

Progress towards our BAP targets had not been updated since the new LBAP was launched in 2011. The last major update from the contributions from agri-environmental targets towards LBAP targets was in January 2011.

However, as a result of recent work within the Partnership, including Higher Level Stewardship and England Woodland Grant Scheme agreements signed, the following has been now achieved across Lowland Derbyshire since Jan 2011:

- 20.5 hectares of additional Lowland Meadow is now in management
- 14.75 hectares of additional Lowland Dry Acid Grassland is now in management
- 2.32 hectares of additional Lowland Calcareous grassland is now in management

- 72 hectares of Lowland Meadow is now under restorative management
- 3.63 hectares of Lowland Dry Acid Grassland in now under restorative management
- 2 hectares of Lowland calcareous grassland in now under restorative management

- 13 hectares of Lowland Meadow will be created

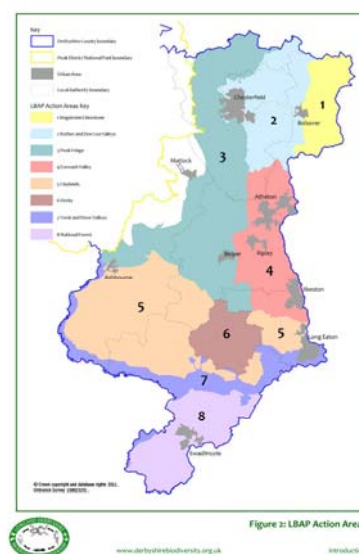
- 13.25 hectares of additional Woodland is now under management
- 31 hectares of Woodland will be created

- 20 hectares of Wood Pasture/Parkland will be created
- 45 hectares of additional Wood Pasture/parkland will be managed

- 2 orchards are now under management
- 1 orchard is under restorative management
- 1 orchard has been created

- 22 ponds have been created
- 2 additional ponds are under management

- 2km of hedgerow has been planted.



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

The Project Officers have commented on a number of documents, trying to get appropriate mention of biodiversity and the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan in them. Examples include Derby City Council's Green policies and the Culture Derbyshire Board, who recently requested simple, measurable environmental performance indicators relevant to people's access and appreciation of the countryside. Having provided a provisional figure, we have recommended this is an issue likely to be relevant to the developing Local Nature Partnership across both counties.

9. Raise Funding for LBAP initiatives

9.1 Information

Information has continued to be circulated to LBAP partners on new funding schemes with the appropriate deadlines and criteria. Due to the number of requests for community groups for help on funding it has been decided to direct as many of these enquiries as possible to the local Community Voluntary Service who are better equipped to deal with such issues.

9.2 Support of Funding bids

The Project Officers have continued to work with various LBAP partners and local groups on developing funding bids for specific biodiversity projects. Support letters have been written and sent to accompany at least twenty LBAP grant applications in the reporting period. Many of these projects have been successful. We do know that in 2012 our support for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust projects alone helped leverage some £25k of external funding towards biodiversity projects.

9.3 Funding for Project Officer co-ordination

Contributions towards the Project Officer's post for 2011/12 were received from all but one local authority in the LBAP area, with a second dropping out in 2012/13. Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire now both feel unable to contribute at the moment.

See next page for a breakdown of Income and Expenditure.

Funding: 2011/12

Income

Derbyshire County Council	10,000
Derbyshire Dales District Council	2,000
Derby City Council	2,000
Bolsover District Council	1,300
Amber Valley Borough Council	1,000
Erewash Borough Council	1,000
South Derbyshire District Council	1,000
Chesterfield Borough Council	1,500

Spend

Staff costs*	32,404
Recruitment	380
Conference	1,600
IT, stationary and phones	359
Printing	93
Website hosting	30

* includes salary and on costs,
travel and training

Project funding:

East Midlands Regional Biodiversity	5,220
Local Nature Partnership	2,100
Stanley and Stanley Common Wildlife Group	900
Talks and miscellaneous	60

In kind: Derby University (2011 Forum) 1,600

Total Income	29,680
Drawn from reserve to balance	5,186

Total expenditure 34,866

Funding 2012/13

Income

Derbyshire County Council	10,000
Derbyshire Dales District Council	2,000
Derby City Council	2,000
Bolsover District Council	1,500
Amber Valley Borough Council	1,000
Erewash Borough Council	1,000
South Derbyshire District Council	1,000

Spend (predicted to end of March 2013)

Staff costs*	35,173
Conference	675
IT, stationery and phones	460
Printing	80
Website hosting	30

* includes salary, on-costs, travel,
and training

Project funding:

Environment Agency	2,500
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Total Income 21,000

Total expenditure 36,418