

## **A Report from the Steering Group for the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership**

**22<sup>nd</sup> June 2006 10 – 12.30pm Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire**

### **Present:**

Adele Rhodes (Bolsover District Council)  
Annie Cooper (Derbyshire County Council)  
Charlotte Winnert (Chesterfield Borough Council)  
Dan Abrahams (English Nature)  
Dave Slinger (Derby City Council)  
David Arnold (Derbyshire Dales District Council)  
Debbie Court (Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership)  
Emma Broad (Environment Agency - Upper Trent)  
Jo Brown (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust)  
Kevin Exley (South Derbyshire District Council)  
Tristan Galletly (Forestry Commission)  
Yvonne Wright (Erewash Borough Council)

### **Apologies received from:**

National Farmers Union, National Forest, National Trust, Woodland Trust, North East Derbyshire District Council, Amber Valley Borough Council, Groundwork Erewash Valley, BTCV, FWAG, Derbyshire Ornithological Society, and Environment Agency (Lower Trent)

Annie welcomed everyone to the second Steering Group meeting. The Exec Group had not be able to meet since January some issues from the last steering Group meeting had not been resolved:

- The Exec will discuss the need for a Chairman for the Partnership and report back at the next meeting In January.
- The current funding from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for the Project Officer's post runs out at the end of March 2007. There is currently enough in the reserve pot to extend the contract for a few more months. English Nature has informally offered funding, up to 50% of the cost of the post. As in previous years, Annie will be send a request for funding letter to partners in the next few months.

### **2. Project Officers Report**

Debbie she will be compiling a quarterly report for the period to the end June for the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) and will circulate this to LBAP steering group members with the notes (Report is attached to this report).

**Action: DC**

Debbie circulated a report on the training sessions that she had run for planning officers over the last 6 months. The session had been given to all 9 local authorities in the LBAP area, 121 officers attended. The report highlighted the additional information/resources the planners requested to enable them to fulfill their commitments under PPS9. These requirements will be discussed at the next Exec Group. Debbie will circulate this report to all planning officers who took part in the sessions. (Report also attached to this report)

**Action: DC**

In addition, a one hour version of the session was given Members in Bolsover and an amended version was given to Rangers etc in Chesterfield.

Information on LBAP progress has continued to be added to BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System).

Debbie had worked on revision of some of the Habitat Action Plans (HAPS) including Ancient and or species-rich hedgerows, field margins and the revised mixed broadleaved woodland.

The website has been maintained and enhanced with some additional documents.

A bumper-edition newsletter was produced in April. The next is due out mid July.

Debbie reported that the UK BAP is being reviewed; it is likely that a number of HAPs will change their names:

- Cereal Field margins may become Arable Field Margins
- Ancient and or species-rich hedgerows may become Hedgerows
- Lowland Wood pasture and Parkland may become Wood pasture and Parkland
- Lowland heathland may become heathland

There is also likely to be a new HAP for Ponds (of high ecological value) and possibly one for Post-industrial habitats.

The highlights of the UK 2005 Reporting round are available to download from the UK BAP website <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/library/Reporting2005/UKBAPReport05.pdf>.

### **3. Updates from HAP Groups**

#### **a) Woodland HAP Group:**

Tristan gave an update from the Woodland HAP Group.

The Forestry Commission has had the following applications for the England Woodland Grant Scheme:

- Woodland Creation Grant in 2005 for 47ha in the LBAP area
- Woodland Management Grant for 111ha in the LBAP area (including 16ha in the National Forest area)
- Woodland Improvement Grant (Biodiversity) for 54ha in the LBAP area (including 16ha in the National Forest)
- Woodland Planning Grant for 15ha on Chesterfield Borough Council land
- Woodland Regeneration Grant (converting Plantations on Ancient Woodland sites back to Semi-natural woodland) for 6ha

The Forestry Commission was not aware of any major work for woodland under the Environment Stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS)

The HAP group held a very successful Ancient Woodland Management seminar for woodland owners on 6<sup>th</sup> May. It was attended by 45 people with workshops and site visits on woodland management, woodland archaeology, surveying and restoration.

The Forestry Commission held a regional seminar on 23rd May at Calke Abbey on woodland management for birds to mark the launch of the 'Woodland management for birds' handbook published jointly with the RSPB.

A revised 'Lowland mixed broadleaved woodland' HAP has now been produced. It includes maps providing guidance where woodland creation is appropriate and priorities for woodland management. This can be downloaded from <http://www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk/lbaps/lowland-derbyshire.php>.

#### **b) Wetland HAP Group:**

The Wetland Group met for the first time for over a year on 16<sup>th</sup> February. A common methodology for pond surveying was agreed. There were discussions on wetland data available amongst the LBAP partners and how it could be shared. Derby City has finished the Derby City Pond survey and the report is available on the Derby City website at [http://www.derby.gov.uk/Environment/WildDerby/015Derby\\_Ponds.htm](http://www.derby.gov.uk/Environment/WildDerby/015Derby_Ponds.htm).

Emma reported that the EAs River Habitat Surveys for the whole of the Upper Trent are now complete, although some of the data was a little old now.

Dave Slinger reported that River Basin Management Plans were now being developed as a requirement under the Water Framework Directive. There will be one plan for the whole of the Trent catchment.

### **c) Grassland HAP Group:**

Dan reported that the grassland group had met in March for the first time in 18 months. The Grassland HAP was completed in 2005 and contains actions and targets for neutral, acid and calcareous grasslands. There is currently no update on progress towards targets as information is awaited from DEFRA (RDS). The register/GIS layer for semi-natural grassland sites contains approximately 750 sites. Information on their condition is available for a third of the sites of which 40% are considered to be in good condition. Approximately 70% of the grassland within SSSIs in the LBAP area is in favourable condition and English Nature will be working with owners to get them into HLS.

Two major projects have received funding in the last few months.

1. Value in Meadows – Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
2. Wild about Grasslands – Groundwork Erewash Valley and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Together, these two projects will make major contributions towards the LBAP actions and targets.

Debbie had facilitated discussions between the Peak District National Park, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and the Highways management section of Derbyshire County Council on sympathetic management of a number of specified road verges. The sites have been identified and discussions are still ongoing over management prescriptions.

### **d) Farmland Group**

The Farmland Group met in April. The HAP for Ancient and or species-rich hedgerows has now been completed and work is underway to carry out the actions. Building on the hedgerow survey carried out in Derby by the Derby Hedgerow Project, investigations have been made for funding more surveys. Two Derby University students will be undertaking their Independent Study projects on hedgerow in South Derbyshire. This will involve surveying all hedgerows within a parish. As part of the Chesterfield Greenprint funding has been found to survey hedgerows in the Borough. The Field Margins HAP is still in draft and is waiting input from DEFRA (RDS) before it undergoes a final consultation.

Work is still ongoing on the Farmland Birds SAP. It was agreed to add yellowhammer to list of birds included within the HAP.

## **4. Species update**

### **a) Water voles:**

The Water Vole SAP was finalised in January. DWT's priority for surveying for water voles this year include the River Amber, Hooborough Brook, Moss Valley and Erewash Canal.

Mink raft scheme on River Dove.

DWT now employs a contractor to dispatch mink in the lowland part of Derbyshire. This has opened up new avenues of communication with game keepers

### **b) Crayfish:**

The Environment Agency have been surveying for Crayfish on the River Dove catchment, following an outbreak of crayfish plague.

### **c) Otters:**

DWT is surveying the River Amber for otters this year. They have just received the 500<sup>th</sup> positive record for otters.

### **d) Oak Polypore:**

This fungus has now been found by Tony Lyon on 3 trees in the LBAP area (1 at Calke Abbey and 2 trees at Kedleston Hall)

## **5. Greenprint update**

**Bolsover:**

The Greenprint is now finished and a launch event is being arranged on the back of the BBC Springwatch programme. It is now available in all Bolsover libraries and on the Bolsover District Council website at <http://www.bolsover.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=7921>. Adele has delivered a presentation on the Greenprint to the Heads of Service and planning officers at Bolsover District Council.

Action on the Greenprint is co-ordinated through the Bolsover Biodiversity Network. This group has now met twice and includes representatives from the local natural history groups, Bolsover District Council, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Bolsover Countryside Partnership and other organisations. Debbie currently chairs the group. A meeting to discuss funding the actions in the Greenprint is planned for July.

**Chesterfield:**

Progress on carrying out actions has continued. Money has been sourced from Awards For All and DEFRA and internal budgets to fund a full hedgerow survey of the Borough over the next two years. This project will also deliver wider benefits for the LBAP Ancient and or species-rich hedgerow HAP such as holding an awareness raising event and producing guidance notes for landowners. Money has also been sourced to fund a crayfish survey for the River Rother catchment. Training on biodiversity issues had been given to the Rangers and Leisure Service staff. An annual report for the Greenprint will be available in the next month.

**Derby:**

The Derby Greenprint will be used as a starting point for the action plan to accompany the Derby City nature Conservation Strategy.

**Erewash:**

Erewash Borough Council has agreed to fund the production of a Greenprint for Erewash this financial year. DWT will start work on it in August/September.

**North East Derbyshire:**

A consultation draft of the Greenprint for North East Derbyshire had been produced by DWT and the end of the consultation period had been extended to the end of June.

## **6. Funding and awareness raising issues**

Each of the partners were asked to report on any awareness raising and funding issues/successes they had in the last 6 months:

**Forestry Commission:**

It has been confirmed that there is money for the EWGS up to and including 2007. Beyond that date it is unknown whether it will be combined with other funding sources.

**Environment Agency (Upper Trent):**

Have put in bids for the national funding of two fish passes on the River Dove.

**Derby CC:**

Two further Friends Of Groups have been set up with help from the BTCV Wildspace officer. WildDerby has an impressive list of events and walks throughout the year including the large event at Derby Arboretum and a LNR Celebration day for Friends of Groups planned at 'Darley Tip'.

Funding for the BTCV Wildspace officers post runs out during the summer. The City is exploring the possibility of putting in a Lottery bid under the Green Exercise programme associated with the Breathing Places campaign.

**Chesterfield BC:**

Funding of projects already mentioned under Greenprint update. The £5,000 from DEFRA to support the hedgerow survey project was one of only a few projects selected nationally to receive money from a total fund of £30,000.

**Derbyshire Wildlife Trust:**

The Value In Meadows Project has finally (after 5 years!) received funding from the Esmee Fairburn Foundation and Countdown 2010 which will together support the project for 18 months or so. The Trust has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Great Trees of Derbyshire Project. The project will work with volunteers and community groups to record Veteran Trees in Derbyshire and raise awareness on the importance and future management of Veteran Trees. Funding for the Water for Wildlife Project, runs out at the end of March 2007 and

is a priority to find funding for. The Trust will be looking to the LBAP partnership to help identify the key issues for the project to concentrate on.

The Wildlife Trust is involved in a pilot community project in Norbriggs in Chesterfield to encourage community groups to become involved in BAP activities. They have also sent questionnaires to community groups, scouts, WIs etc in the coalfield and have so far received over 90 replies, many showing expressions of interest to get involved. This will form the basis of a database of groups to work with in the future on wildlife related projects.

The partnership taking forward the Local Record Centre had tried, unsuccessfully, to recruit a Development Officer and has now employed Derek Lott as a consultant to begin the process of discussing data exchange issues with organisations and groups.

**Derbyshire Dales DC:**

Work on Phase II of the Matlock Park Project started on 19<sup>th</sup> June. The performance indicators for the rangers work has now been altered to be more biodiversity focused. There are plans to designate 30ha of the Parks as Local Nature Reserves before the end of the year.

**South Derbyshire DC:**

As part of the South Derbyshire LSP, DWT are undertaking an environmental audit of South Derbyshire.

**English Nature:**

DEFRA has funded several Sensitive Catchment Officers covering the White Peak area who will be based at the Bakewell office. Funding may be available for a number of associated projects. The Markeaton and Mercaston Brook Project will be put forward as a potential project.

English Nature is working with the Countryside Agency and has £10,000 to spend this year in North East Derbyshire, Bolsover and Chesterfield on biodiversity work on local nature reserves or sites of good wildlife value. If anyone has a potential project they should contact Dan as soon as possible.

**Groundwork Erewash Valley:**

Groundwork has had an on-going series of events and training events on Local Nature Reserves. The Wild About Grassland Project, in partnership with DWT has successfully received funding from the Countdown 2010 programme and they are still to hear the outcome of a SITA bid to double the capacity for the project.

**Erewash BC:**

The Council is working on a Heritage Vision Strategy and the Heritage Lottery Fund is keen to fund a Heritage Officer. Yvonne is keen to include natural heritage in their remit.

**Derbyshire CC:**

The County Council now employs a Forest Schools leader to liaise between schools, the education dept and the countryside service. The Greenwatch Action Grants fund has supported a number of small biodiversity focused initiatives over the last 6 months such as a tree sparrow project on a farm near Belper.

**BTCV:**

BTCV has had encouraging discussions with the County Council to form an Service Level Agreement. This may cover working with their volunteer teams and utilising their training facilities for countryside service staff. They have extended their current SLA with the Forestry Commission following successful completion of work this year. They have also been working with Derby City Council on events such as the "Spring into Action" event at Osmaston which attracted 45 volunteers.

BTCV have also nationally produced a schools activity pack based on woodlands. It has well publicised in Derby and was demonstrated to local teachers through running sessions for 70 school children.

## **7. Planning and Biodiversity issues**

**Erewash BC:**

Produced a SPD for Biodiversity which was formally adopted in May. Now the focus is on training staff to implement it.

**South Derbyshire DC:**

About to undertake consultation on an Area Action Plan for 70ha of land between Woodville Woodlands and Swadlincote. They are due to receive a phase I habitat survey of the area in the next few weeks.

**Derbyshire Dales DC:**

The Council has adopted a SPD on the Conversion of Farm Buildings Design Guidance. This includes a sustainability checklist at the back and applicants will have to go through the checklist before the application is registered.

**Chesterfield BC:**

Very few changes have had to be made as a result of the Inspectors Report for the Local Plan. The planning department has yet to do the 'Developers Pack' as agreed in the Greenprint.

**Derby CC:**

The revised Derby Nature Conservation Strategy was formally adopted in April. This document is regarded as Supplementary Planning Guidance and contains triggers for planners to follow specified procedures regarding protected species and Wildlife Sites. Dave is now following this up with a meeting with planning officers. The Council is to start on an Area Action Plan for the City Centre Eastern Fringe. This area includes the River Derwent corridor.

A number of biodiversity related items were discussed at a recent head of planning officers meeting. The Derbyshire Wildlife Trust will be monitoring habitat loss through their SLA with the Councils. This information will be used as part of the required Annual Monitoring Reports. The issue of monitoring species is more difficult to track. This should be achieved for protected species through the licensing procedures. They also discussed the requirement under PPS9 to carry out some opportunity mapping. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has been asked to come up with some costings. The ideal situation would be if this exercise could be carried out across the whole county. A key question, though, is at what scale this exercise should be mapped at?

**Regional:** Dave Slinger has been working on the policies for the revised RSS. They are currently looking to include the enhancement/conservation areas that are identified in the Regional Biodiversity Strategy.

**English Nature:**

The recent ruling on Appropriate Assessment relating to European designation has led to national confusion. English Nature will be providing training to Local Authorities on a national basis.

**8. Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreements**

Debbie asked about the level of inclusion of biodiversity issues in Community Strategies.

**South Derbyshire:** Included a greater emphasis on open space

**Erewash:** Nothing specific currently but it is still in draft and Debbie and others are trying to get biodiversity included.

**Derbyshire Dales and High Peak:** Includes LNR targets

**9. Implementation Strategy- brainstorming**

Debbie explained that one of the conditions of the ALSF funding was the production of an 'implementation' strategy/plan for the LBAP. Before starting on a draft she wanted some feedback from the partnership as to what it should include. She distributed a rough draft outline and asked for comments (attached to this report).

It was felt that the document should be 'live' and updated when new HAPs and SAPs are completed or revised. It was felt important to provide the document with some context, but it was suggested that the background info is kept to a minimum.

**Other points raised were:**

- The document should add value to the existing HAPs and SAPs not just repeat actions!
- The document could be seen as a Business Plan and used as a tool for seeking funding for the LBAP.
- There should be mention of some overarching issues/action such as the need for a Local Record Centre
- The document should include timescales which should be categorised into short, medium and long

If anyone else has any other suggestions please pass them to Debbie as soon as possible.

**Action: ALL**

## **10. Annual Forum**

Debbie has booked the Genesis Centre in Alfreton on 14<sup>th</sup> September for the LBAP Annual Forum. The theme of the Forum will be grasslands; a draft agenda was explained. The day will double up as a grassland seminar which will help achieve targets for the Grassland HAP and actions in the Wild About Grassland and Value In Meadows Project.

The Steering Group agreed the theme and programme. Debbie will finalise arrangements with Tim Brooks from Groundwork Erewash Valley and Nick Smith from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

The accommodation holds a maximum of 100 people. This year invitations will be sent to local natural history groups.

## **11. Annual Report**

Debbie had contacted most of the LBAP partners to report on their BAP activities over the last financial year. The report, which will be of similar style to the previous one, will be ready to distribute at the Annual Forum in Sept. This year she had also sent questionnaires to the local groups to ask them to report on their activities.

Dave Slinger suggested having an executive summary of approximately 10 main achievements.

Debbie requested that LBAP partners should send back their information by mid July to ensure its inclusion in the report.

**Action: ALL**

**Date of next meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2007 at Cromford Mill**



# **Derbyshire LBAPs Phase II (ALSF SJA/TAL 003)**

## **Progress Report April 2006 – June 2006**



**By Debbie Court  
Biodiversity Project Officer**

**July 2006**

## **1. Linkages to national and local BAPs.**

### **1.1 UK BAP.**

The UK LBAP conference in March has resulted in improved communication between the UK BAP and the LBAPs and frequent e-mails and communication have been sent from the UK BAP officer to the LBAPs. This quarter has also seen the release of the results from the 2005 UK BAP reporting round and further consultation on UK BAP review.

### **1.2 Regional**

The regional LBAP officers, with other members of the Regional Biodiversity Forum, took part in a workshop to discuss the UK BAP targets review. The Regional LBAP officers met in June to discuss various regional issues including BARS and progress towards LBAP targets.

### **1.3 Links with neighbouring LBAPs**

Close contact and liaison has been maintained with the Peak District and National Forest LBAPs.

### **1.4 Greenprints**

A consultation draft of the North East Derbyshire Greenprint has been circulated for comment from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. The Project Officer made comments on its compatibility with the LBAP and opportunities for projects with neighbouring Greenprints.

There has not been a Chesterfield Greenprint meeting this quarter but the Project Officer has provided input into Greenprint actions through a successful funding application for hedgerow surveys and the delivery of a wildlife themed evening course.

The Bolsover Greenprint Steering Group met in May. The meeting was well attended and included representatives from the local wildlife groups. The Project Officer chairs the meetings as Bolsover District Council do not have a dedicated officer to take the Greenprint forward. As with the Chesterfield Greenprint meetings this ensures that partners are engaged and holistic opportunities to take forward projects are maximised.

## **2. Local Feedback**

### **2.1 Annual Forum**

Preparation has taken place for the Annual Forum in September. The theme will be grasslands and the workshops will be focussed on practical grassland management issues.

### **2.2 LBAP Steering Group**

The Steering Group of the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership met in June. Various partners gave updates on BAP projects and recent funding successes. The Project Officer presented a paper on the feedback from the training sessions for planners and asked for feedback on the format the implementation strategy/ business plan.

## **3. Making the LBAP accessible.**

### **3.1 Website**

In previous quarters there was some difficulty with the statistics package attached to the Derbyshire Biodiversity website, so in late March the website was moved to a different hosting company with a better support package. The accompanying statistics package is much better and more reliable. The table below has been compiled from the package.

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Average number of visits per day	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Apr 2006	731	1307	44	3976	27892	617.17 MB
May 2006	603	1063	34	3807	27621	349.64 MB
<b>Jun 2006</b>	461	797	29	1986	18633	168.36 MB
Total	1795	3167	Average 36	9769	74146	1.13 GB

These figures show that the average number of visits per day has increased slightly on previous quarters and most visitors are returning at least once during the month. The bandwidth refers to the amount of information looked at and downloaded. The peak in April corresponds with the release of the newsletter. The website is now receiving visits from abroad including the USA, Germany and Guyana. There has also been an increase in website usage at weekends and in the evenings. Apart from the homepage the most visited part of the website appears to be the local groups section, which is surprising. Hopefully this has meant an increased level of interest in local group activities.

### 3.2. Newsletter

The first issue of Derbyshire Biodiversity News for 2006 was published on 6<sup>th</sup> April. This was put on the website on 7<sup>th</sup> April and an e-mail with a link was sent round to LBAP partners.

The website statistics package showed that during the quarter almost 550 copies of the newsletter were downloaded. In addition a further 700 copies were sent out by post and distributed at events. A copy of the newsletter is attached to this report.

### 3.3 Talks

The Project Officer has not delivered any talks to local groups this quarter but spoke to countryside students at Broomfield College about biodiversity issues.

The Project Officer delivered a 14 hour evening class entitled “Wildlife on your Doorstep!” through the Workers Educational Association in Chesterfield. The course was attended by 13 people all of whom considered themselves to be wildlife ‘beginners’. Chesterfield Borough Council subsidised places for 9 local residents. The course covered the main habitats and species highlighted within the Chesterfield Greenprint. It also encouraged participants to take part in various surveys and projects undertaken by various LBAP partners.

### 3.4 Annual Report

Copies of the 2001-2004 Lowland Derbyshire BAP Progress report are still being downloaded from the website. Work has now begun on pulling together information from the LBAP partners for the 2005/6 Annual Report which is hoped to be ready in time for the Annual Forum in September.

## 4. Implement Habitat Action Plans

### 4.1 Woodland

In April the Woodland HAP group publicised the completed revision of the ‘Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woodland’ HAP. This HAP takes into account recommendations from the Landscape Character of Derbyshire and provides guidance on priority areas for woodland creation and management.

The Project Officer took the lead on organising a seminar focussing on ancient woodland management. The successful seminar was held on 6<sup>th</sup> May at Cromford Mill and had 45 attendees. Themes discussed included woodland surveying, management, grant aid and restoration. The

seminar also included three site visits and gave woodland managers an opportunity to discuss best practice and network. It was suggested that another seminar is arranged for next year.

For the seminar, and for general distribution by LBAP partners, the Project Officer has put together a list of woodland leaflets, booklets etc already available. This has been a useful exercise in gathering information together in one place and highlighting any gaps.

The “Great Trees of Derbyshire Project” has recently gained funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This project will help deliver a large number of the actions within the Wood Pasture and Parkland HAP. Project Officer attended an initial meeting with the lead officer work to help the project gain the most from the LBAP partnership.

#### **4.2 Grassland**

The Project Officer has met with the Project Officer for Derbyshire Wildlife Trust’s ‘Value In Meadows Project’ to discuss the BAP contributions the project will make and how it is best reported. The project has also received additional funding from the Countdown 2010 grant enabling the project to be funded for 18 months.

Work has continued on the Road Verge Project and it hoped that the verges will be marked and managed according to their prescribed management this summer.

#### **4.3 Wetland**

No progress has been made with the wetland habitat group this quarter.

#### **4.4 Farmland**

The Farmland Group met in April and discussed progress towards the actions and the draft field margins HAP. The Project Officer has worked with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on a bid to DEFRA to fund a hedgerow survey for Chesterfield. The bid was successful and the Wildlife Trust was awarded £5,000 which represented 17% of the national grant available. The project will take place over 2 years and will involve volunteers, contractors and community groups. As well as surveying hedgerows the project will also deliver some wider benefits including some of the awareness raising actions in the ancient and or species-rich hedgerow HAP. The Project Officer has also been working with students at Derby University to aid them in their Independent Studies which will also deliver work towards the hedgerow HAP.

### **5. Implement Species Action Plans**

#### **5.1 Mammals**

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust’s Water Vole Recovery Project has continued to build relationships with water bailiffs and game keepers in Lowland Derbyshire to continue the mink control programme.

#### **5.2 Crayfish**

Discussions at the Peak District and Lowland Derbyshire Crayfish group led to the conclusion that there was sufficient interest and need to produce a Species Action Plan for white-clawed crayfish in Lowland Derbyshire. All relevant partners have been contacted and a date in September has been set to hold a workshop to write the plan.

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

#### **6.1 BAP Audits**

Following a successful training event for rangers in February further work has been carried out on the BAP audit of Derbyshire County Council’s countryside sites.

## **7. Increasing contribution to biodiversity targets of aggregates industry.**

### **7.1 Aggregate industry contacts**

The Project Officer attended a meeting hosted by OnTrent to discuss issues relating to mineral restoration, BAP habitats and the restrictions associated with East Midlands Airport. Contact has been maintained with the RSPB mineral restoration project and attendance has been booked on a seminar in July to discuss the next phase of the RSPB's proposed toolkit for mineral restoration.

## **8. Monitoring and Reporting.**

### **8.1 BARS**

The Project Officer has attended an advanced training session on BARS. Following the training various links have been put in between the LBAP and the Chesterfield Greenprint to aid reporting and prevent double counting.

## **9. Community Strategies, Development Plans and similar strategic partnerships.**

### **9.1 Local Strategic Partnerships**

The Project Officer has attended an initial meeting of the appropriate a sub-group for the Erewash LSP and made comments on the action plan to include biodiversity issues. Comments have been made on the biodiversity element of the County Council Local Area Agreement.

### **9.2 Planning documents**

No consultation drafts have been received this quarter. The Derby City Nature Conservation Strategy and the Erewash SPD for Biodiversity have both been formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

### **9.3 Training for Planners**

The two hour training session 'Biodiversity – the Basics for Planners' was delivered during this quarter to the two remaining local authorities in the LBAP area. In total this session has been delivered to 121 planning officers in 9 different local authorities. A report was written detailing the sessions and includes feedback from the exercise regarding additional information and resources required by the authorities to carry out their function under PPS9. A copy of the report is attached to this report.

## **10. Engaging local business**

The Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership had a display at a local business and the environment event. Copies of the Business and Biodiversity booklets were given away and discussions have taken place with Groundwork to include biodiversity information in their packs for small businesses.

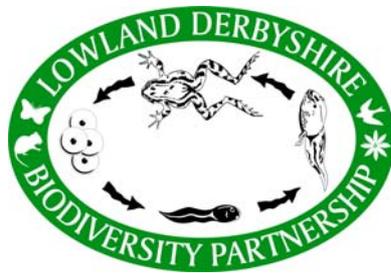
## **11. Raise Funding for LBAP initiatives**

### **11.1 Funding information.**

Information has been circulated to LBAP partners on new funding schemes with the appropriate deadlines and criteria.

### **11.2 Support of Funding bids**

The Project Officer has continued to discuss funding for biodiversity projects with LBAP partners. During this quarter the Project Officer has written five support letters for funding bids by various LBAP partners. Since the beginning of 2006, the partnership has heard about at least ten BAP projects which have received funding this quarter. This grant funding amounts to more than £500,000!



## Biodiversity training for local authority planners

Derbyshire County Council is the only local authority within the Lowland Derbyshire BAP area to have an in-house dedicated ecologist. All of the local authorities have a Service Level Agreement with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to provide ecological advice on specified planning matters. The local authorities also consult with other organisations such as English Nature, Environment Agency, Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group and the badger groups on nature conservation issues.

Part of the 2005/6 work programme for the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership was to deliver training on biodiversity issues to planners.

The aims for the training sessions were:

- To gauge the current knowledge of biodiversity issues amongst planning officers
- To provide information on biodiversity and the habitats and species planning officers should be concerned with in planning matters
- To allow local authorities to think about the opportunities there are for improvements in their working practices to accommodate or improve the situation for biodiversity
- To list additional information and or resources the local authorities need to be able to perform their statutory planning function under PPS9

An interactive standard training session was delivered to nine local authority planning departments between November 2005 and June 2006. In all a total of 121 planning officers received this training. A session was delivered for each local authority in their own offices.

The session consisted of the following exercises:

1. Introductions – participants were asked to say who they were, their role in the planning department and a phrase / organisation / word they associated with biodiversity.
2. Participants were divided into groups and asked to come up with a species or habitat beginning with each letter of the word biodiversity.
3. A short powerpoint presentation on biodiversity, including where the term came from, what it means, what are biodiversity action plans and which are the priority habitats.
4. In groups, participants were asked to complete an exercise related to species. From a given number of cards they had to match the species with their usual habitat, say whether it had legal protection and whether it was a priority species.
5. A group discussion listing documents, policies and laws planning officers have to take into consideration when dealing with planning matters.
6. Participants were divided into Development Control, Forward Planning and Enforcement and asked to consider 3 questions:
  - a. Where do they come into contact with biodiversity issues?
  - b. How could they alter/improve working practices to accommodate biodiversity issues?
  - c. What additional information/resources do they need to carry out improvements/alterations mentioned in b?
7. Evaluation and summarising session.

Participants were provided with handouts covering the main points of the session and a copy of the discussions and information on the flip chart sheets.

On the whole the sessions were very well received. Some of the departments had ensured that all planning officers could attend while others disseminated information to those officers who were unable to attend.

The knowledge of biodiversity issues and the contents of PPS9 varied wildly across the authorities. All authorities were happy to recognise that they could do more to take account of the issues raised in PPS9. Most authorities were currently working on their Local Development Framework and welcomed

the opportunity to see how other authorities had dealt with biodiversity in the policies and main documents.

The group exercise asking the different teams to consider what they could do to alter/improve their current working practices produced some interesting results. There were some common themes across the authorities with some innovative ideas coming from one or two teams.

The main points from the discussions are summarised below:

### **1. What could be altered/improved in current working practices to accommodate biodiversity:**

Policy and site allocation:

- Issue Supplementary Planning Documents on biodiversity
- Recognition that 'brownfield' land may have biodiversity value too
- Improved use of GIS resources to inform decisions
- Plan positively for biodiversity
- Include site specific 'enhancement strategies' in development briefs for sites

Validation and application stage:

- Have a checklist for biodiversity (and other issues) during the application and validation process
- Require biodiversity impact assessments on major /sensitive sites and refuse to validate applications which are clearly on sensitive sites without the necessary ecological surveys and assessments
- Have a change to the application forms to accommodate biodiversity issues
- Request more information from applicant up front on biodiversity issues

Consultation (application and policy etc):

- Ask Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to check weekly lists of applications
- Have an improved system for consulting with external organisations on biodiversity issues
- Have an updated list of appropriate contacts for specialist issues
- Improve internal communication relating to information on sites between forward planning, development control and enforcement
- Request prompt replies from specialists to specific consultations

Conditions

- Consider using conditions to enhance biodiversity eg bat/bird boxes and landscaping
- Take a stronger line through condition and advice on the timing of works
- Have up to date information on appropriate use of conditions for biodiversity issues
- Ensure landscape schemes include reference to biodiversity
- Have model/adaptable conditions for biodiversity issues

Monitoring and enforcement:

- Improve monitoring procedures dealing with biodiversity conditions
- Monitor the impact of policies/development using indicators (for the Annual Monitoring Reports)

Information and miscellaneous:

- Gain information and advice from specialists on the scoping of applications and guidance on the types of surveys that are needed to be submitted with applications
- Have an internal biodiversity champion

For developers:

- Produce guidance notes for developers detailing what is expected on them during the application and after application process.
- Improve general awareness raising of biodiversity issues amongst developers
- Host seminars on biodiversity issues

### **2. Additional information/resources etc needed:**

Information:

- Better GIS information available on the locations of known protected species and BAP habitats
- A baseline of biodiversity information to monitor against for AMR

- Dissemination of relevant up-to-date biodiversity information and good practice.
- Information on appropriate planning case law / appeals etc
- Have a contact list of appropriate personnel (which is kept up to date)
- Information on process and protection for habitats and species
- Keep a record of nature conservation issues which have gone to appeal (from 'Planning' magazine)
- Access to a Local Records Centre
- Have a check list for biodiversity issues as part of validation process

#### Training and awareness raising:

- Additional training / seminars for officers (not just planners) eg prosecution procedures, use of and interpretation of appropriate GIS layers, protected species, PPS9, monitoring biodiversity, invasive species issues
- Awareness raising of biodiversity amongst members and officers

#### Guidance/advice:

- Guidance on the hierarchy of importance of protected species in relation to issues on site
- Guidance notes on dealing with biodiversity issues
- Guidance notes for developers
- Guidance on links between ecology and landscape character.
- Advice on conditions and assistance in discharge of conditions
- Guidance on how and what to monitor for the biodiversity part of the Annual Monitoring Report

#### Additional resources:

- Employ a biodiversity officer
- Additional support/advice from DWT
- Increased budgets to pay for specialist advice eg DWT etc.
- Employ an in-house specialist to help with pre-application discussions etc.
- Increase the profile of planning enforcement officers with Police and other enforcement agencies

#### Communication:

- Have a web-based discussion forum to share ideas/queries
- Have greater contact with 'wildlife' organisations eg meet DWT and EN staff.

The points raised during the training sessions now provide a focus for the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership to help local authority planning officers improve the protection, enhancement and monitoring of biodiversity through planning issues.

In addition to the sessions described above a programme of two further sessions were devised and delivered for Derby City Council officers. The first session was delivered by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and explained the scope and function of the Derby City Wildlife Alert maps for planners. The second of the sessions looked in more depth at protected species, PPS9 and gave officers and opportunity to work through planning case studies with specific biodiversity issues.

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# Draft outline for LBAP Implementation plan

## 1. Background info:

- What is biodiversity etc
- UK BAP
- Regional BAP
- Lowland Derbyshire LBAP

## 2. Current situation:

- structure of LBAP,
- HAPs and SAPs
- resources (website, newsletter, co-ordinator)
- partnership
- successes
- problems

## 3. LBAP Work (including current projects):

- Defining and monitoring the resource – data collation
- Protecting the resource – policy
- Managing the resource – site management
- Restoring the resource – restoration
- Expanding the resource – creation
- Awareness raising and education
- Partners main roles and functions in the LBAP (spreadsheet)
- Co-ordination of the LBAP

## 4. Taking it forward:

- Role of the co-ordinator and associated costs
- Costing the achievements of the LBAP targets

## 5. Funding the LBAP (action and co-ordination)

## 6. Reviewing the LBAP

### **Questions to think about:**

- a. Should the document be a working document and updated with new HAPs and SAPS?
- b. Should the document include the Greenprints? If so how?

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