

Biodiversity South West Steering Group
Renslade House, 21st February 2008

| AGENDA ITEM | ACTION |
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| Attendees | |
| Naomi Brookes, Emma-Rose Herrera, Basil Greenwood, Mark Robins, Neil Sherwood, Ray Perrins, Imogen Davenport, Simon Brenman | |
| Apologies | |
| Justin Milward, Helen Thompson, Phil Tolerton, Mark Durk, Richard Ormerod, Roger Covey, | |
| Minutes of last meeting and matters arising | |
| <p>MR and SB have yet to contact the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol, this will be picked up in the workshop session about raising the profile of biodiversity across the region.</p> <p>The position statement on Nature Map will be ready for the Partnership meeting on 12th March 2008. Please send any thoughts on the current draft to NB by 27th February 2008.</p> <p>SITA have requested that we send a letter to Government supporting their request for an increase in the amount of money that are able to give to good causes (the landfill tax has increased, but the money for good causes has not). It was agreed that a letter would be sent on behalf of Biodiversity South West.</p> | <p>NB</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>NB</p> |
| Work Programme | |
| <p>BG has stepped down as co-chair of Biodiversity South West. The South West Wildlife Trusts volunteered to provide a co-chair to work alongside E-RH in order to re-balance the governance of the partnership in the light of NB's role being taken into Natural England. The group agreed this proposal. BG to provide information on what the role involved in terms of time commitment.</p> <p>E-RH suggested that the change over in chairs would be a good opportunity to re-engage with steering group members and potentially invite additional members. It was agreed that we should have a 12 month programme of meetings set out in advance.</p> <p>NB's post will be taken into Natural England. SB raised the issue about the remit of this post and the TUPE process. SB said that he had not heard back from Natural England. BG to call Christine Wallace (Natural England) to establish the situation. NB said that she needed the opportunity to have any questions answered.</p> <p>NB's role will be to focus on the partnership's targets, with Matt Low being employed to look at the biodiversity targets which Natural England leads on.</p> | <p>BG</p> <p>BG</p> |

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| <p>The core services document for Biodiversity South West runs out at the end of March 2008. It was agreed that another core services document should be produced, this will have some overlap with NB's Natural England work plan.</p> <p>NS will be leaving the partnership at the end of March 2008, the Biodiversity South West work plan needs to reflect that there will be one coordinator rather than two. NB to propose a new work plan at the next steering group.</p> <p>Other regional biodiversity partnerships have communications and funding strategies. The funding strategy could include tactics for targeting funds such as HLF and influencing European funding and key partners (such as the RDA). NB to establish what is happening in other regions to discuss at the next steering group meeting.</p> | <p>NB</p> <p>NB</p> |
| <p>Funding</p> | |
| <p>Defra, via Natural England, have given Biodiversity South West funding to raise awareness about the NERC duty. Part of this money is going towards workshops in each county, to be organised and facilitated by Mike Oxford. These workshops will be aimed at local authorities (head planner and CEO level). The remainder of the funds will be used to produce Marine NERC guidance which will be completed by the end of May 2008.</p> <p>NB circulated the Biodiversity South West budget. NB to contact Kate Cox at Somerset Wildlife Trust to collate figures. SB pointed out that there is no contingency for a deficit from the SWWT.</p> <p>It is important that members signed up to the MOA pay their subscriptions to Biodiversity South West.</p> <p>Once NB's post has transferred across to Natural England all her T&S and other such costs will be paid by Natural England. However meals for meetings, meeting room hire and large mail outs/printing jobs will have to be paid for through the Biodiversity South West.</p> <p>MR said that there was opportunities to provide advice and engage with the South West Rural Enterprise Gateway (REG).</p> <p>The SWWT produced a proposal for providing a banking facility for Biodiversity South West. This was at a reduced fee if the funds remain less than £30k pa. This proposal was supported by the group.</p> | |
| <p>South West Nature Map</p> | |
| <p>NB circulated a paper giving an update on the visioning workshops that are taking place throughout the region. Wiltshire will be having their workshop on 5th March 2008. John Waldon will give feedback at the partnership event on 12th March 2008 and a report will be produced after this date.</p> | |

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| <p>A meeting will be held with the South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SWCCIP) on 12th March 2008 to discuss climate change proofing Nature Map. MR said that we needed key messages in relation to climate change and identify which habitats will be effected soonest.</p> <p>The NE climate change project workshop is taking place on 29th February 2008. NB will be attending and will circulate information when it is available.</p> <p>NB mentioned that she had a meeting with Roger Catchpole from Natural England about a regional connectivity map.</p> | NB |
| Regional Monitoring and Reporting | |
| <p>The drivers work is being progressed by RP who is looking at what data is needed and where it is needed. Craig Dixon (Devon Country Council) gave an update of the Devon Monitoring Framework at the latest BIRG meeting. The East of England monitoring report, produced by SERC, is also being used.</p> <p>Regionally we need to know where we are with nature conservation and projections of how habitats and species are changing. We should know how the BIP is being implemented, the effectiveness of LDFs and how the RSS is doing.</p> | |
| Communications and advocacy | |
| <p>The new Biodiversity South West website is nearly complete. The 'map' within the Nature Map section is complete, but the database behind it is still work in progress. We have told the website developer to prioritise the Nature Map section first, then the other content of the website and finally the content management system. The website will go live by 31st March 2008, with a two week consultation period prior to launch. We have negotiated three months of the website developers time post launch for changes to be made if necessary. NS to circulate a link to the map in the Nature Map section.</p> <p>NS asked for help/advice from the steering group about publicising the new website on its launch. SB suggested an email, with a PDF of Nature Map, an introduction and a link to the website. RP said that he would publicise it via his email group and/or website. NS to speak to Paul Wynne (Communications Team, Natural England) for advice. It was suggested that we attempt to get a mention in Biodiversity News.</p> | NS NS |
| LBAP work update | |
| <p>NS gave an update on the results from the LBAP questionnaire that was sent out before Christmas. There was a good response to the questionnaire with over half LBAPs returning a completed/partly completed form. Of these responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 71% felt that Biodiversity South West supported their work adequately (the middle option on the form).- 57% said that they would like more feedback about our work. This | |

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| <p>seems low but later in the questionnaire they say that they are interested in specific pieces of information e.g. the NERC duty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The questionnaires gave us useful information about the LBAPs that responded, for example how they are funded. - When asked about their thoughts on a regional approach to support monitoring of biodiversity indicators over two thirds were supported. - Overall communications was seen as the main issue. All of those who answered the questionnaire were supportive of the aims of the new website, an associated newsletter and the twice yearly regional LBAP meetings. <p>A regional LBAP meeting took place on 12th February 2008. There was a good turn out, but as the group is new (only our second meeting, with limited overlap of attendees) it needs time to develop. The meeting was welcomed and all attendees were keen to attend the next meeting.</p> | |
| National update | |
| <p>The new framework for the England Biodiversity Strategy and BAP delivery was discussed (a paper was circulated by NB). The suggestion was that HAP and SAP groups would be brought together for example in a combined ‘grasslands’ group and that species would be aligned to habitats where this was possible. The timetable for implementation is after 2010. Comments need to be sent to Natural England by 29th February 2008.</p> <p>Comments to date (from regional LBAP coordinators) concern linking targets locally, regionally and nationally – especially breaking targets down to a local level.</p> <p>MR said that a missing strand was protected landscapes, which seem to have been missed. This is especially important as AONB action plans are currently being rewritten. It was suggested that we have a joint workshop with Dave Dixon, from the Protected Landscapes Forum to discuss Nature Map and Protected Landscapes. MR to send NB thoughts on this a.s.a.p.</p> | <p>ALL</p> <p>NB</p> <p>MR</p> |
| Partnership working | |
| <p>The partnership workshop will be taking place on 12th March 2008 and will be focused on Nature Map. Over forty people have expressed an interested in attending. NB said that we should look at the ‘local’ story to see how Nature Map is being used. MR said the we needed to mention climate change.</p> <p>ERH mentioned that a small working group was being set up to look at invasive non-native species and wondered if Biodiversity South West could be a starting point for the group. This work is associated with the South West River Management Plan and was an action from the river basin management plan. It was decided that non-invasive species is a broader remit than biodiversity. There is no funding associated with this work and it only relates to aquatic non-invasive species. ERH will go back and ask the originators to develop the</p> | <p>ERH</p> |

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| <p>work further.</p> <p>BG mentioned the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and our role in responding to proposed changes. REN will hold a session on the RSS looking at staying ‘within environmental limits’. Carol Somper (Defra) will host the event.</p> <p>There seems to be confusion around the Green Infrastructure policy within the RSS with the terms Green Space and Green Infrastructure apparently being misunderstood.</p> <p>ID gave an update from the Planning and Development Sector Group concerning the single planning form (the 1app) and the example two page checklist produced in Dorset. The ALGE guidance is 300 pages long.</p> <p>RP spoke about the BIRG meeting, with the emphasis on keeping the enthusiasm going and highlighting achievements over the last year. The group is a good networking opportunity for its members, for example at the last meeting the Devon Monitoring Framework was introduced by Craig Dixon. Issues for the coming year could include marine and coastal issues.</p> | |
| <p>Workshop session</p> | |
| <p>A workshop was held with the aim of raising the profile of biodiversity in the region.</p> | |
| <p>AOB and DONB</p> | |
| <p>Dates for future steering group meetings – 8th May 2008, 10th September 2008 and 3rd December 2008 (all 10:30 to 15:30).</p> <p>The next partnership meetings – 12th March 2008 and 3rd December 2008.</p> | |