

Biodiversity South West
Towns Cities & Development Working Group
Minutes of the meeting Friday 15th June 2007

Chair: Imogen Davenport (SWWT)

Attendees:

Imogen Davenport (SWWT)

Naomi Brookes (SWRBP)

Bill Broadbent (Devon WT)

Matt Low (NE)

Catherine Turtle (Cornwall County Council)

Charles Routh (NE)

Matt Hamilton (Avon Biodiversity Co-ordinator)

Lucy Rogers (Avon WT)

Kathryn Deeley (Plymouth City Council)

1. Welcome and Apologies:

Apologies received from Fiona Elphick, Jonathan Wilshaw, Gavin Bloomfield, Cheryl Marriot and Helen Hall.

2. Minutes and matters arising of the meeting on 7th February 2007

RSS – the EiP report is due in about 6 months. There were no specific discussions on BAP targets, Nature Map and Green Infrastructure (other than in relation to each sub-region). SWRA have suggested changes to take better account of the Habitats Regulations. At the next stage any changes will again require sustainability appraisal and Appropriate Assessment.

3. Draft Work programme and update

ID had circulated a draft revision of the work programme for the planning and development sector – some actions will be picked up by the partnership as a whole and others by this group or BIRG. BIRG had met in March and discussed biodiversity data needs.

The focus of discussion was on data and monitoring systems. It was agreed that a standard monitoring system across the region would be desirable if LRCs can formulate one that works. Issues which were raised included:

- Ensuring consistency – **Are there any IEEM standards?**
- Need for a baseline as part of the LDF evidence base
- Not losing species information if just habitats are monitored
- Some good practice developing eg Bristol City setting up condition monitoring for Wildlife Sites, Plymouth City looking at no net loss
- Need to influence budget holders at LAs to get the resources committed to this work – it is not the job of LRCs to do this but LAs as part of development control monitoring

NB to discuss and clarify with BIRG

It was felt that a workshop to bottom out and discuss these issues would be extremely useful – NB to take forward

ID to update the draft plan

4. Nature Map and LDFs

The report is now complete **NB to email a further version in which the diagrams come out better.** Hard copies will be sent to all heads of planning, NB is drafting a flier to be sent more widely with a web link. Decided to combine this with a summary leaflet. **NB to circulate with a short deadline for comments.**

A press release (for planning press) will also be used as the basis for the cover letter – **All to provide comments to NB by 22nd June.**

NB has approached GOSW for funding for workshops but drawn a blank so far.

It was asked at what stage LDFs have to take the NMap on board – it depends at which stage their Core Strategy is at compared to the RSS – this will influence timing on when it is most effective to push this issue.

5. Green Infrastructure and Greenspace

LR gave an update and handout on the project in Avon. A project officer (Ann Wyatt) is starting in July; it is aimed to finish the work by March 08 and it was suggested the project officer could update this group at some point. It is hoped the methodology would be useable elsewhere. **LR to provide an electronic version of the handout.**

Other case studies include work in Plymouth to map nature conservation features and compare with greenspace/accessibility work to look for gaps. **All to provide details of any case studies to NB for the website.** Agreed that important to look outside of biodiversity and involve the social and economic sectors.

NB to ask Basil Greenwood to re-convene the GI group - to include ML, KD and Ann Wyatt

6. Local Area Agreements

NB to set up a workshop to raise awareness amongst the biodiversity sector

7. NERC Biodiversity Duty

Natural England have funds to promote the duty (as do Defra); yet to be decided how to split this around the region. **NB to liaise with BG to try to join forces.** The Coastal & Marine group want to produce guidance and each of the regional BAP co-ordinators have been asked to lead on 1 sector – NB suggested the SW lead on marine. ID explained that the WTs are producing a leaflet on the NERC duty which she thought could be adapted and jointly badged if wanted. In Wiltshire there is a workshop soon – feedback would be helpful. There is also an issue of where LA ecologists sit (if there is one) as to how different LA departments will take on the duty.

8. Updates/AOB

- ML suggested a seminar/conference covering all these related issues – to better get the overall picture and termed more broadly than just biodiversity. **NB to raise with REN (Regional Env Network).**
- Should there be better links with the BBC/Springwatch? There are issues with funding for what the BBC is promoting (ie they will publicise but not fund).
- Do ALGE members/LA ecologists ever meet regionally? There was a useful regional forum in S.Wales. **NB to feed back to AS as ALGE rep.**

6. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 3rd October 10.30 at the South West Observatory, Taunton