

Biodiversity South West
Planning and Development Sector Group Meeting
South West Observatory Offices, Taunton, 20 February 2008

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION POINT
Attendees	
Imogen Davenport (Chair), Colin Hawke, Matt Low, Gavin Bloomfield, Bill Broadbend, Kathryn Deeley, Alison Slade, Neil Sherwood, Naomi Brookes, Ray Perrins, Basil Greenwood, Nick Hudson, Lucy Rogers, Charles Routh, Charlotte Rose.	
Apologies	
Louisa Kilgallen, Tim Quinton	
Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	
Naomi Brookes has yet to receive the website link to biodiversity information presented by Mike Oxford at the last meeting. Naomi Brookes to contact Mike Oxford for this information.	NB
Regional Spatial Strategy update	
<p>Basil Greenwood gave an update on the RSS. The panel report (available on the web) gives recommendations to the Secretary of State to inform planned changes to the RSS. The recommendations should be published in June 2008 with a 12 week consultation period. The approach was broadly accepted and the four sustainable development policies were supported. Some of the recommendations were more of a concern:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Poole area has had 'within environmental limits' removed from the text. 2) The panel put weight on household projections (predict and provide). Initially the South West needed to find 23k more homes per annum, the panel suggested 28k more homes to annum. 3) The panel's interpretation of green infrastructure is different to ours. They consider green infrastructure to be large scale projects like country parks rather than what is happening with the growth points. 4) Natural England will be sending comments for the consultation stage and it would be useful for other partners to start engaging. <p>Land Use Consultants (LUC) will be completing the appropriate assessment. Natural England and the Environment Agency will be on the group, but can't influence only advise on the process. The consultation will be taking place in May/June 2008.</p> <p>Sub-national review was mentioned; by 2010 planning responsibilities will transfer from the Regional Assembly to the RDA.</p>	

<p>It was agreed that the Planning and Development group should meet when the consultation period is open. It would be desirable to get more Local Authority ecologists along to this meeting.</p>	<p>ID</p>
<p>Standard planning application form</p>	
<p>The standard planning application form (1app) will be used from April 2008 onwards. A copy of the Dorset biodiversity checklist was circulated; this will be used at pre-application stage and is two A4 pages in length. ALGE have produced guidance on where surveys are needed etc. Applications can be refused if insufficient information is provided.</p>	
<p>Green Infrastructure</p>	
<p>There should be a green infrastructure strategy for each LDF. The Growth Points work has embraced green infrastructure with money being put aside and being bid for.</p> <p>BG mentioned work going on around “green space”. There is a Sustainability South West campaign relating to this called Planting Places. The Green Spaces Forum (lead by Naomi Wright and Amanda Grundy, Natural England) is having an event about improving green space through development (the community infrastructure levy). This event will be taking place on 13th March 2008 at Exeter Livestock Centre. If you wish to attend this event please contact Jude Luckett on email (judel@green-space.org.uk or call 0118 9469063.</p> <p>It was suggested that we have an joint event between green infrastructure and green space.</p> <p>Natural England are commenting on green infrastructure strategies. It was suggested that Natural England send a letter to head planners/heads of growth points team asking how the projects are progressing (it should be noted that the money was not ring-fenced).</p> <p>BG mentioned that Government wanted more clarity on how funding is gained to pay for community infrastructure. This is part of the LDF process, money is needed for PPS9 and green infrastructure (incl. biodiversity interest). CR suggested a tangible monetary figure per new house, although evidence would be needed for why the funds are required.</p> <p>There is confusion on the definition of green infrastructure. BG referred the group to the Town and Country Planning definition. It is important that Local Authorities know exactly what green infrastructure means, although it was pointed out that some Local Authorities are implementing it without realising.</p> <p>KD mentioned that at Sherford they used the terms dark green</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>BG</p>

<p>infrastructure (not lit) and light green infrastructure (lit). BG said that it was important to understand that not all examples of green infrastructure have the same uses and that not every area can hit all the buttons.</p> <p>NB mentioned the Natural England connectivity work and how it can be interpreted at a regional level.</p> <p>LC mentioned that Anne Wyatt at Avon Wildlife Trust is running a green infrastructure project in Avon and would be keen to provide a presentation on this work at the next Planning and Development meeting, ID to invite Anne to the next meeting.</p>	<p>ID</p>
<p>LRCs / monitoring systems for LDF update</p>	
<p>A Local Development Framework biodiversity monitoring workshop took place in December. Attendance was good with 35 attendees, split evenly between Local Authority employees and biodiversity colleagues. The workshop looked at how to use current data in annual monitoring reports, what the problems were and future data needs. After the workshop the COI changed, taking out habitats and species, but potentially keeping them as an ‘add on’ option.</p> <p>The main outputs of the workshop were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) issues around funding; 2) a lack of leadership and guidance (for example on funding); 3) a need for planning and research; 4) the potential for a regional project; 5) information to an agreed standard that LRCs could use 6) There was a preference to monitor habitats and a need to assess the condition of sites (e.g. local wildlife sites area and condition); 7) Establishing what habitats and where are they 8) In some cases annual monitoring is not possible 9) There was a lack of reference to Nature Map <p>RP said that there were two ways forward, firstly to assume that the COI stays the same or secondly to give local authorities guidance (for example to contact their LRC rather than putting ‘no data’).</p> <p>Information collected from the completed 1app could be gathered. The COI refers to sites designated for their environmental importance, this includes Nature Map SNAs.</p> <p>We need to establish what the indicators are trying to measure, overall impacts or impacts from planning.</p> <p>It was agreed that there is a role for providing regional guidance. Planners should be approached to ensure that the</p>	

<p>lapp is successful. Plymouth agreed to trial the form to establish how effective it is and how much extra work is involved.</p>	
<p>NERC Biodiversity Duty update</p>	
<p>Mike Oxford has been contracted to lead workshops in each county, aimed at CEO and member level. The aim is to give a positive message about the NERC duty. Unfortunately timescales are tight, with the workshops needing to have been completed by the end of April 2008.</p> <p>Consultants have been commissioned to produce marine NERC guidance, that will include a workshop.</p> <p>If you know of any marine/estuarine contacts please could you send contact details to NB.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Any other business</p>	
<p>It was suggested that the group should have greater engagement with county ecologists, this could be achieved by having specific planning issues on the agenda. Representation from Gloucestershire and Somerset should also be encouraged.</p>	
<p>Date of next meeting</p>	
<p>Some time in May, to be confirmed. 24th July 2008, focussed on the RSS.</p>	