



## Steering Group for the Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership

24th January 2008 10-12.30pm Committee Room 3, County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire

### Present:

Adele Rhodes (Bolsover District Council)  
Annie Cooper (Derbyshire County Council)  
Beverley Rhodes (Derby City Council)  
Carl Hawke (National Trust)  
Dan Abrahams (Natural England) **Chair**  
Dave Slinger (Derby City Council)  
David Arnold (Derbyshire Dales)

Debbie Court (Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership)  
Kevin Exley (South Derbyshire District Council)  
Rachael Coates (Amber Valley Borough Council)  
Rebecca Brunt (Environment Agency)  
Sam Ulyatt (North East Derbyshire District Council)

### 1. Apologies received from:

Jo Brown (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust), Nichola Baker (Chesterfield Borough Council) and Tristan Galletly (Forestry Commission)

### 2. Project Officer's verbal report

Debbie gave a quick update on progress since June 2007:

- Collation of information and publication of the 2006/7 Annual Report
- Organising and running the Annual Forum (joint with Peak District BAP) in Oct 2007
- July, September and January issues of Derbyshire Biodiversity News
- Completion of the Derbyshire Countryside Service Biodiversity Audit.
- Working with partners and local groups to develop projects and funding bids
- Completion of the Delivery Plan
- Trying to engage with the Green Infrastructure agenda
- Expanding the BAP partnership – 13 local groups have now joined
- Provided BARS training for 2 LBAP partners
- Undertaken NERC Biodiversity Duty audit reports for NEDDC, Derbyshire County Council (Env Services Dept only) and Derbyshire Constabulary

### 3. Delivery Plan

Following the last meeting Debbie had received some comments on the draft Delivery Plan. A final version had been produced and circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that this was a very useful document and should be adopted. It should be used to identify LBAP projects and as a supporting document for funding bids.

#### **ACTION: Debbie**

- It will be put on the Derbyshire Biodiversity website with explanation as to what the document is and what it can be used for as well as encouragement of people to send feedback regarding further progress.
- The numerical reports towards the LBAP targets will be updated on an annual basis.

#### **4. LBAP Partnership Terms of Reference**

Prior to the meeting a draft paper setting out draft terms of reference had been circulated; this would fulfil a requirement of the Natural England's Memorandum of Agreement with the LBAPs to clarify the different roles within the partnership.

**ACTION:**       **Agreed to adopt terms of ref without alteration.**

#### **5. Feedback from East Midlands Regional Biodiversity Forum**

Annie gave a quick update from the Regional Forum:

- The last meeting of the Full Partnership was in December, the next will be in April.
- A priority was identified to ensure that the NFU and CLA were aware of and signed up to the Local Wildlife Sites Systems. Annie was working on this for the region.
- The Forum will be holding their Annual Conference on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb at Nottingham Cricket Ground. The theme will be looking at Climate Change adaptation.
- The Regional Spatial Strategy had been through an examination in public and the Inspector had accepted the concept of Biodiversity Enhancement Areas and Biodiversity Conservation Areas (BEAs and BCAs). There were currently two pilot schemes working on their role out. Reports of these will be brought to the Forum. This will link in with work on the 6C's Green Infrastructure work.
- The Forum had finished a funding and delivery strategy with costing for habitat creation etc (**Debbie to circulate a copy**)
- The Forum were also in the process of finishing the Climate Change paper (**Debbie to circulate a copy**)

#### **6. Report from HAP groups**

##### **Woodland**

The Great Trees of Derbyshire Project was continuing to achieve fantastic results with over 3,000 records submitted so far. A very successful seminar on veteran tree management was held in South Derbyshire in November 2007. HLF money for the project runs out in March 2008 and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is currently looking to apply for additional funding. The Forestry Commission is currently in discussion with various partners regarding Woodland Management Grants for their estates. The Woodland HAP Group is planning a Woodland Surveying course in May 2008 and will be discussing at the next meeting the scope for an Ancient Woodland Project to help achieve the woodland targets. Debbie will be revising the Wood Pasture, Parkland and Veteran Tree HAP.

##### **Wetland**

The Water for Wildlife project had been successful in applying for continuation funding. Ponds are now on the UK priority habitat list and a target of restoration of 30 ponds and creation of 30 ponds has been added to the Lowland Derbyshire Standing Open Water HAP.

##### **Riparian Species**

The Water Vole Group and Crayfish Groups have now combined into a Riparian Species group which will co-ordinate the work for all key riparian species eg otter, water vole, crayfish, fish, harvest mice and polecat. Chesterfield BC had introduced white-clawed crayfish into Holmebrook Valley Country Park. The Water for Wildlife Project had been successful in gaining funding from SITA landfill tax for water vole work.

##### **Grassland**

Good progress was continuing under both the Value in Meadows project and the Wild About Grassland projects. Natural England had been in discussion with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust about potential sites suitable for HLS agreements and were targeting some for HLS. Three projects had been successful in obtaining SITA landfill tax money Ashover Heathlands Project (D County Council) , Bolsover Grassland Project (D County Council) and Norbriggs Flash (Chesterfield BC) Debbie reported that the Road Verge Reserves Scheme had been launched in July. There were still some ongoing discussions about management on sites.

##### **Farmland**

Hedgerow surveys were being carried out in Chesterfield and Glapwell in Bolsover. A bid for 2008 DEFRA money for hedgerows surveys will be submitted for the Moss valley area. Debbie has a meeting with Derbyshire FWAG to discuss future projects eg farmland birds.

#### **7. Biodiversity Indicator and the Local Area Agreement**

A biodiversity indicator has been developed and has been included within the 198 local authority indicators. *To measure the performance of Local Authorities for biodiversity by assessing the implementation of active conservation management of Local Sites.*

Debbie had attended a national workshop on the indicator; she reported that the finer details had not been finalised yet. The Derbyshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) was not currently considering the biodiversity indicator as one of its top priorities, despite lobbying by various partner organisations. Irrespective of whether the indicator is included within the LAA, all Local Authorities will have to report against all 198 indicators. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust had indicated that it was possible to report against this for all local

authorities. Debbie reported the biodiversity indicator had been included within the draft review of the South Derbyshire Community Strategy.

## **8. Higher Level Stewardship targeting consultation**

Dan presented information on the current consultation on the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme targeting:

- by October 2008 the targeting for HLS will have changed and will be spatially targeted;
- advisers will be actively targeting potential schemes;
- Natural England is embarking on a consultation process with other bodies on the targeted areas. Through internal discussions environmental data has been gathered.
- There will be a series of regional workshops to test the validity of the information layers, one of which is biodiversity.

There are currently 9 active HLS schemes within Lowland Derbyshire.

## **9. Promotion of the Biodiversity Duty.**

Debbie reported that through the East Midlands Biodiversity Partnership, Natural England will be disseminating information to local authorities and public bodies about the NERC Biodiversity Duty. This will consist of seminars, the Derbyshire one for Local Authorities is on 5<sup>th</sup> Feb at Matlock Bath Hotel, a range of publications including a leaflet for parish councils and some money for each of the LBAPs to spend as they wish on local promotion.

In Derbyshire Debbie intends to distribute relevant information to parish councils in printed folders.

Debbie has also undertaken with colleagues a number of NERC Duty audits to show where authorities are compliant and where there are areas which need work. So far audits have been undertaken for North East Derbyshire District Council, Derbyshire County Council (Env Services dept only) and Derbyshire Constabulary. Bolsover District Council and South Derbyshire DC also expressed an interest. Rachael Coates and David Arnold they would suggest this to their LA colleagues.

**ACTION: Debbie offered to undertake biodiversity awareness training for Members.**

## **10. Local Wildlife Sites**

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting from the Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) Panel, proposing that the work of the LWS be taken under the umbrella of the LBAP partnership. This would fulfil an important requirement of the DEFRA Local Sites guidance that LWS systems should have a wide partnership and its activities be transparent. The paper proposes that the LWS partnership should report to the LBAP partnership on matters such as consultation on criteria (due in 2008) and the results of the latest LWS selection panel.

**ACTION: Agreed that this was sensible way forward and to adopt the recommendations in the paper.**

(Similar recommendations had been agreed by the Peak District LBAP Steering Group on 23 Feb).

## **11. Greenprints**

An update on Greenprint progress was provided in the latest Derbyshire Biodiversity Newsletter (Jan 2008 Vol4 Issue 1).

In addition the WildDerby project was undertaking some up and coming events including a Big Garden Birdwatch event in Derby Market Place and the launch of Derby's newest Local Nature Reserve (Darley and Nut Wood LNR) in May. They were also looking at their next LNR designation at Sinfin Moor. Beverley was also working with Groundwork on a schools ground project.

## **12. Local Record Centre**

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting from the steering group seeking to develop the Derbyshire Biodiversity Network(DBN), including a Local Records Centre. This recommends that the DBN partnership coming under the umbrella of the LBAP partnership.

**ACTION: Agreed that this was sensible way forward and to adopt the recommendations in the paper.**

Jo Brown was currently talking to Natural England, the Biological Records centre and the Peak District about taking the Local Record Centre project forward.

## **13. Funding**

- Annie summarised the funding situation for Debbie's post. As a result of partner contributions Debbie's post has been made permanent by Derbyshire County Council, subject to continued funding from LBAP

partners and DCC will continue to host the post. Annie thanked those organisations who had responded positively to the annual 'begging letter'. Each year the number of organisations offering support is increasing.

- Natural England is currently issuing revised Memorandum of Agreements with each LBAP partnership, aiming to provide £15k in the forthcoming year with the hope of repeating this for the next two years. This will provide a vital contribution towards Debbie's post.
- Debbie has undertaken contract work for several organisations such as Severn Trent Water, Aggregates Industries, and the National Forest which had supported various LBAP activities.
- Debbie circulated a paper listing recent funding for LBAP projects.  
This stood at 2006/7 - £816,383  
2007/8 - £383,783
- Derbyshire had secured a significant amount of money from the SITA landfill tax grant. In the last six months four projects (Ashover Heathlands, Bolsover Grassland, Norbriggs Flash and White Peak Water Vole project) had been successful.
- Debbie had organised a funding meeting in December to begin to co-ordinate funding efforts and share experiences and had since been working with partners to secure additional funding for projects.

## **14. Planning**

Dave Slinger highlighted the 1app process with standard planning application forms for all local authorities would start from 1<sup>st</sup> April. Annie said that she was working on a biodiversity validation checklist for all LAs in Derbyshire to use. Derby City Council is looking at holding an applicants seminar.

Kevin highlighted that in South Derbyshire two planning proposals were currently being considered which may have biodiversity gain.

David Arnold reported that Derbyshire Dales District Council had adopted an SPD for Landscape Character and Design.

## **15. AOB**

Debbie reported that six monthly Wildlife Liaison meetings were now occurring between the Derbyshire Constabulary (Wildlife Liaison Officers), Natural England, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and various local interest groups (bats, badgers, birds and newts). They are primarily to look at protected species issues.

## **16. Date of Next meeting**

2pm 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008 Committee Room 3, County Hall, Matlock.