

Avon Biodiversity Partnership
 Steering Group Meeting
 26th August 2004 - BRERC
 Minutes



Present: Kate Jeffreys (English Nature: chair), Jenny Hayward (Avon Biodiversity Partnership), Tim Corner (BRERC), John Martin (DEFRA), Melissa Clarkson (Environment Agency), Allan Davies (North Somerset/JSPTU), Michael Legg (JSPTU), Alison Slade (B&NES), Sam Jarvis (North Somerset)

Apologies: Steve Grainger (Avon Wildlife Trust), James Byrne (BCC), Dave Willis (South Gloucestershire)

Partners' Activities relevant to BAP

Actions

Defra:

- ERDP Agreements offered by September (rather than November) this year now signed and returned. Concentrating on new high level schemes next year.

North Somerset:

- Action for Nature will be launched in the Autumn.
- Supplementary Planning Document on Biodiversity and Trees being progressed. This will provide a checklist and guidance for developers. There will be a six week consultation period after it receives approval from executive member in Late September early October. It will be published alongside the Landscape Character Assessment. Avon BP to provide supporting letter. AD to ensure Avon BP are consulted.
- Looking to strengthen links between Local Strategic Partnership and BAP.
- Hedgerow fortnight – supporting various activities including hedge laying competition.

AD/JH

ALL

B&NES:

- Work on Wildthings ongoing.
- Highlighted that a Consultation Draft of PPS 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation was published on 8th September. The consultation period finishes on 9th December 2004. Potential for joint response.

JH /KJ

Environment Agency:

- Re-introduction of Water Voles at Portbury project now finished. Area to be resurveyed every four months. Results to be circulated amongst partnership.
- Relocation of Crayfish from Wiltshire to Mendips need to liaise between AWT/EA/EN. Also to be discussed at water and wetlands focus group.

MC

Avon Wildlife Trust:

- A one off Focus Group Chairs Meeting on 26th August was held to initiate implementation phase of Avon BAP. Chairs chosen because their organisation acts as lead on the UK BAP. Neil Maddison, Steve Grainger and Tim Corner have also agreed to act as chairs for Communication, Funding and Monitoring Groups. Chairs will also now attend the Steering Group meeting. JH to attend all first tranche of meetings and take minutes.
- Water Vole brainstorming meeting – JH has written up notes and will circulate

JH

when she has incorporated comments from attendees.

BRERC:

- Great Crested Newt Surveys carried out supported by Environment Agency and volunteers. Approximately 50 sites surveyed with a high number of positives.
- Local Patch Initiative has been successful with a high level of take-up.
- Improvements have been made to the Species List to revise the species dictionary and introducing a number of separate categories. It was agreed that list should reflect the definition in the Avon BAP and not include other Notables at this stage. List definitions can be one of the topics for discussion at the Monitoring focus group. ML to put list on the website.

TC/ML

Focus groups – what we expect them to achieve

JH outlined need for groups to be flexible. Groups to identify what actions are needed which are not covered by people's jobs, which require support/funding and where joint action would be beneficial. Groups to also look at how monitoring actions can be achieved. It is anticipated groups will meet twice a year, but this will be down to the groups.

It was suggested that a form would be helpful for feeding back from groups. JH to look at producing form with cross references to actions in Avon BAP.

JH

The large size of groups maybe an issue. It would be for the groups to decide whether they would need to be split into separate subject areas if this would be more beneficial for implementation.

There is currently no Urban group as there is not yet a Urban section in the Avon BAP. To be discussed at future steering group meetings.

Steering group – what we expect to achieve

The roles of the steering group should include:

- trouble shooting;
- reviewing Avon BAP;
- identifying gaps in actions;
- balancing competing demands for resources/funding bids through JH's work programme;
- setting the national/regional context/overview for focus groups; and
- where appropriate commenting jointly on key documents.

Terms of Reference - KJ to look at previous discussion paper to see if this needs updating.

KJ

New members and membership in general

Focus group chairs to attend Steering Group.

JH to write to organisations who have requested membership asking what they can contribute to partnership.

JH

AOB

A text version of the Avon BAP is now available on the website: <http://www.avon-biodiversity.org.uk/publications/html/publications.htm>. ML to put price list of documents on website. Printed text version of the plan will be available for sale. **ML**

Partnership contact list for North Somerset to be changed to SJ and Susan Stangroom. **JH**

Date of next meeting

13th or 14th December. JH to check with focus group chairs. **JH**