

**England Biodiversity Group**  
**11.00 am – 2.45 pm, Wednesday 8 December 2004**

**Regus Building, Trafalgar Square, London**

**Minutes**

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**Present**

Brian Harding (chair)	Defra	Sarah Webster	Defra
Pippa Morrison	MoD	Tim Sands	WT
Andy Stott	Defra	David Henshilwood	EN
Shaun Mowat	Defra	David Goode	UCL
Martin Harper	WCL	Alex Tait	LGA
John Harvey	NT	John Roberts	Defra
Paul Raven	EA	Peter Brotherton	EN
Paula Hendy	Defra	Mike Barry	M & S
Sandra Fale	Defra	Fiona Mettam	Defra
Andrew Clarke	NFU	Mark Avery	RSPB
Simon Pryor	FC	David Webb	Defra
Hilary Allison	Woodland Trust	Mike Harley	EN
John Hopkins	EN	Lisa Horrocks	Defra
Emma Clare	Defra	Emily Funnell	ZSL

**Apologies**

Doug Hulyer	WWT	Simon Harding	Defra
John Osmond	Defra	Martin Capstick	Defra

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**1.0 Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 Brian Harding welcomed Mike Barry to the Group as the new Chair for the Business Group.

1.2 Brian Harding expressed EBG's thanks to Martin Capstick for his contribution to the Group and explained that he would now be leaving the Department for a new position in the Department of Transport

**2.0 Minutes of the previous meeting and Matters Arising**

2.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

2.2 Action 2.3 - Alison Barnes to take this forward in approaching the LGA and identifying possible speakers.

2.3 Action 3.21 – The detailed water and wetlands work programme had been circulated after the previous meeting. A meeting would be arranged

between the Agriculture and Water and Wetlands meeting as soon as was practicable for both groups.

2.4 Action 3.23 – Completed, although the Common Bill has had to be trimmed back and will not include fencing on common heathland.

2.5 Action 3.24 – Shaun Mowatt to contact Alison Barnes regarding possibility of working together to make progress on presenting research linkages between the environment and local growth.

2.6 Action 3.28 – Completed. Mark Barry from Marks and Spencer has agreed to Chair the Business Group and was welcomed into the EBG.

2.7 Action 4.1 – covered later on the agenda

2.8 Action 5.2 – Paul Raven reported that the information was held on a CD and requests should be made to him for a copy. The secretariat would give further thought to inviting OFWAT to a future meeting.

2.9 Action 6.4 – Funding would be discussed at the next EBG meeting on 17 March 2005.

2.10 Action 7.2 – Fiona Mettam would be attending a meeting on Friday 10 December and would update the group about progress on the BBC project following that. A meeting had been arranged with Ben Bradshaw on 26 January 2005 to discuss progress on the initiative.

### **3.0 Annual Stock take (paper EBG-04-11)**

3.1 The stocktake had been circulated prior to the meeting. Sarah Webster thanked the workstreams for their contributions which demonstrated the encouraging progress that had been made over the year.

3.2 A number of general points about the stocktake were discussed: there was a question-mark about how far the forthcoming Planning Policy Statement 9 would go in embedding biodiversity in planning policy; there was also a need to emphasize the regional aspect of biodiversity action and a greater clarity about which actions described in “setting the context” were those of the EBG and which were those of Government. It would be helpful to highlight and celebrate positive outcomes more, demonstrating what had actually been achieved for biodiversity. The question was also raised as to whether Ministers would respond to the stock-take. Members of the group were invited to send specific comments on the draft to the secretariat by Friday 10 December.

3.4 Following Ministerial approval, the stocktake would be placed on the Defra website, but would not be published in hard copy.

### **Actions:**

- **All to send detailed drafting comments to the secretariat by 10 December**
- **Secretariat to finalise drafting of stocktake, submit to Ministers and publish on the Defra website.**

#### **4.0 England dimension to UKBAP review process (paper EBG-04-12)**

4.1 Pete Brotherton gave a presentation about the BAP review process, highlighting where the EBG could be involved. It was agreed that the EBG must be involved in the review process as there was no other appropriate forum, and that it was important to take the opportunity to influence the process. Issues to focus on would include country and regional targets, gaps in action plans for some habitats, and the value that HAP/SAP Steering Groups add. However, it was also acknowledged that this would be time consuming.

4.2 It was agreed that a sub-group be convened to identify how EBG should engage and what its input should be. The next BRIG meeting, at which the UK Standing Committee would be presented with a dummy run of the review would be 9 March. The EBG input would have to be agreed by then.

4.3 Representation on the group would be LINK, NFU, EN, and Local Government.

#### **Actions:**

- **Secretariat to circulate Pete Brotherton's presentation**
- **Secretariat to draft ToR and set up sub group to have met by end January 05.**

#### **5. Date of the next 2 Meetings.**

5.1 The next meetings of EBG would be on Thursday 17 March and Tuesday 21 June in London

#### **6. Climate Change Workshop**

6.1 The aims of the workshop were to present the outcomes of research to EBG and for the group to take a view on what actions it should take to respond appropriately to the challenges that climate change will present to biodiversity and how it might promote effective action by others.

6.2 A number of presentations were given to the group:

- Andy Stott - 'What is Science telling us about climate change?'(paper EBG-04-14).
- Mike Harley (EN) – update on MONARCH, UK aspects of Interreg IIIB Branch project (ReGIS 2).
- David Webb – review of the impacts of Climate Change on Nature Conservation Policy (paper EBG 04-15)

- Hilary Allison – summary of LINK paper (papers EBG-4-16 and EBG-04-17)

6.3 Following the presentations there was discussion about the impact of climate change on biodiversity and the role the EBG should play.

6.4 It was recognised that whilst many of the research models could be helpful tools in hypothesising change and impact, they needed to be applied appropriately, and at the right spatial scale. However, they would be extremely useful as part of a toolkit for informing targets for review.

6.5 It was also acknowledged that existing research could help target habitats and prioritise action. It was also likely to inform resource allocation – through for example, questioning how much conservation effort should be allocated to a species that was likely to run out of climate space in, say, 30 years.

6.6 The links between climate change and the need for landscape scale action, and the importance of positive spatial planning were highlighted, as well as the role of linear habitats.

6.7 There was a clear need to think widely about the impacts of climate change, both direct and indirect impacts. The nature of impacts was also important – as well as general trends, the occurrence and frequency of one off events was also important. Social and economic impacts would also be important. For example, the market performance of agricultural competitors would affect land use in the UK and therefore biodiversity. Impacts would also occur from changes outside the UK. For example, an increase in civil conflicts globally would affect the land use of the MOD's training estate and therefore in turn, could affect biodiversity. There was a brief explanation about how impacts in the marine environment were likely to be more related to sea pH than to sea temperature.

6.9 The discussion then moved to the role that EBG should play. It was suggested that more effort and resource needed should be allocated to increase, rather than just maintain species and habitats. A more dynamic approach might also be helpful, especially for site specific conservation effort.

6.10 It might also be helpful to develop some kind of measure of habitat resilience – this could be a role for EBG. Whilst the impacts of climate change were inherently uncertain, in the medium term (30-40 years) it was likely that whatever the emissions trajectory, the impacts would be fairly similar. Also, climate change was not the only issue that was uncertain, and we managed to deal with uncertainty in other factors.

6.11 There was concern that the EBG needed to make a contribution to the scientific and policy debate as a matter of urgency. There was already a lot of discussion around the issue, and it was important that biodiversity did not get forgotten about, and that we articulated relevant issues appropriately. In considering the impacts of climate change, it would be important to identify

the cost of doing nothing in a period of rapid change, and how the value of biodiversity might change over time.

6.12 It was agreed that Climate Change was a big issue for the EBG and there was need to “climate change proof” biodiversity action. It would be important to include climate change in the review of the EBS in 2006, and a dialogue needed to start now.

6.13 It was agreed that a cross-cutting sub-group should be set up to report to the EBG. Its focus should remain broad, but the other EBG workstreams should also consider climate change and feed into the cross-cutting group. It would be important for a group not to duplicate the work of the BRIG subgroup on climate change. Suggestions for the role of the group included:

- To develop higher level guidance about the impact of climate change on biodiversity;
- To develop guidance literature for biodiversity practitioners;
- to identify research need and examine adaptation and resource protection strategies;

**Actions:**

- **Secretariat to circulate presentations**
- **Secretariat to draft ToR for the new climate change group and convene a first meeting.**

**Items for next meeting**

Long term funding options  
EBS indicators for 2010 targets  
Refreshing the strategy for 2006 and beyond  
Terms of Reference for workstreams