

England Biodiversity Group
11.00 am – 2.00 pm, Tuesday 21st June 2005

**Room 207, Regus Building, 1 Northumberland Avenue,
Trafalgar Square, London**

Minutes

Present

Brian Harding (chair)	Defra(WCLU)	Fiona Howie	NFU
Pete Brotherton	EN	Chris Mahon	CWT
Ian Clayton	Defra (EWD)	David Miller	DCC
Ann Davies	Defra (CURE)	Fiona Mettam	Defra (EWD)
Ruth Davis	RSPB	Patrice Mongelard	Defra (WQ)
Helen Dunn	Defra (REU)	Diane O'Leary	MoD
Sandra Fale	Defra (EWD)	Simon Pryor	FC
David Goode	UCL	Paul Raven	EA
John Harvey	NT	Alex Tait	LGA
David Henshilwood	EN	Sarah Webster	Defra (EWD)
Paula Hendy	Defra (EWD)	Pam Whaley	Defra (MW)

Apologies

Mark Avery	RSPB	Shaun Mowatt	Defra (REU)
Mike Barry	Marks & Spencer	David Pape	HCC
Colin Hedley	CLA	Miles Sibley	BTCV
		Andy Stott	Defra (NRRASD)
Doug Hulyer	WWT	Hilary Thompson	Defra (EWD)
John Everitt	WT	being represented by Chris Mahon	
Martin Harper	WCL	being represented by Ruth Davis	
Pippa Morrison	MoD	being represented by Diane O'Leary	
John Roberts	Defra (MW)]	being represented by Pam Whaley	
Dornford Rugg	Defra (MW)]		

1.0 Welcome and Introduction

1.1 Brian Harding welcomed Group to their second meeting of 2005, and extended a special welcome to Ruth Davis, and Fiona Howie who were new to the group, as well as Patrice Mongelard, attending for item 3.

2.0 Minutes of Meeting dated 17 March and Matters Arising

2.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, with amendment of Alex Tait's details.

- 2.2 Action 3.5 – Completed. Document entitled ‘Update on progress of EBG Climate Change Subgroup’ circulated on 16th June 2005.
- 2.3 Action 4.3 – Completed. Workstream Quarterly Progress Report matrix has been revised as agreed at the last meeting.
- 2.4 Action 4.5 – The meeting between Agriculture and Water & Wetlands Strategy Implementation Groups has been postponed.
- 2.5 Action 4.6 – Completed. Dornford Rugg provided briefing to Brian Harding for his meeting with the European Commission meeting in April.
- 2.6 Action 4.15 – Completed. Secretariat has spoken with David Goode and English Nature.
- 2.7 Action 5.3 – Completed; following Shaun Mowatt’s meeting with HLF, fed Brian Harding had written to HLF and received an encouraging response.
- 2.8 Action 6.3 – Completed; Andy Stott’s presentation circulated to the group.
- 2.9 Action 8.2 – Completed; comments on 2006 report had been received by Secretariat and incorporated into paper EBG 05/09.

Action:

- **Chris Mahon requested further information regarding HLF response to BH letter. Copy of response to be sent out to group.**

3.0 Catchment-Sensitive Farming

- 3.1 Patrice Mongelard of the Catchment-Sensitive Farming Delivery Team gave an overview of the work currently being carried out on catchment-sensitive farming. Particular emphasis was placed on the work to resolve the issue of diffuse water pollution.
- 3.2 In conjunction with the Treasury, June 2004 saw the launch of a publication (consultation document) entitled “Developing Measures to Promote Catchment-Sensitive Farming”. Further consultation is due to take place in 2006.
- 3.3 In December 2004, the Government announced its continued support in raising awareness and promoting early voluntary action. The CSFD team hope that by adopting a supportive approach, farmers will be more inclined to tackle the issues of water pollution and take on board the problems caused by agricultural run off, erosion, nutrient reduction, etc.
- 3.4 2005 saw the launch of a comprehensive £2.5m contract to deal with pollution minimisation over the next three years, through the positive management of pollutants. A website (www.environmentssensitivefarming.co.uk) was launched

offering free practical advice, access to seminars and workshops, self help groups, etc.

- 3.5 2005 also saw the launch of Environmental Stewardship – a new agri-environment scheme that provides funding to land managers/farmers in England who deliver effective environmental management on their land.
- 3.6 The issue of Cross-Compliance would need to be tackled with a view to risks such as overgrazing, and post harvest management of land. In April 2006 a joint venture with EN, RDS and CEFAS would be set up to prioritise catchments. Although not all are in difficulty, there is a need to look at individual sensitivities.
- 3.7 £25m has been pledged to help tackle the problem of diffuse pollution (£10m 06/07 and £15k 07/08). It has been proposed that some of the funding will go into supporting Catchment-Sensitive Farming Officers (CSFO) with three CSFO's based in 11 river basin districts. These would be pivotal in developing key delivery partnerships with groups such as the Wildlife Trusts, FWAG, RSPB, NT, LEAF, etc. They would be responsible for co-ordinating activity and the provision of one to one farm visits. Funding would also enable specialist advice buy in and local catchment appraisal and monitoring.
- 3.8 In discussion, Ann Davies was concerned with the idea of one-to-one farm visits. Experience in other areas suggested that expensive to run and were not necessarily always cost-effective; an alternative could be to run workshops. These could be especially beneficial they encouraged a flow of information between farmers/land managers. Patrice responded that CSFO's would need to have an intimate knowledge of their catchment area in respect of who was doing what, what additional assistance/guidance was needed, etc.
- 3.9 John Harvey questioned the ease of which these CSFO's could be recruited. Patrice responded that he felt that the expertise currently lay with local groups such as the Wildlife Trusts, etc. There was a concern that smaller organisations might loose out if their experienced staff were to migrate to become CSFOs.
- 3.10 Ruth Davis raised the point that incentives could only go so far in tackling the problem and that regulations through revised legislation were needed. She was also concerned that the timescale for the next round of consultation had slipped from first half of 2006 to the latter half. She also drew attention to the many species and habitats that were being impacted by diffuse water pollution but fell out of the protected/sensitive areas.
- 3.11 Alex Tait felt that there was a need to educate those that were currently giving out advice e.g. land agents. Especially keen to get message across via professional development programme through agricultural colleges, etc.
- 3.12 David Goode asked whether there had been an assessment carried out to ascertain the amount of funding needed for capital programme works. Patrice responded that English Nature had an estimated figure of £½ billion –

although this estimate was pre-environmental stewardship and pre-cross compliance; there was a need for a fresh assessment to see exactly what difference ELS/HLS and cross-compliance actually make.

- 3.13 Brian Harding was pleased that the CFSO's were being included in 'Natural England', but this raised the question as to what benchmarks were in place to measure success. Patrice explained that success would be measured through changes in behaviour demonstrated by farmers and what alterations had been made to their farming practices.
- 3.14 Patrice explained that current monitoring was not in place with regards to measuring water quality. However, discussions are taking place with water companies who have the infrastructure in place to carry out this type of monitoring. Climate Change would also need to be factored in.

4.0 UK BAP Review

- 4.1 Sarah Webster introduced the paper on UK BAP Review that had been circulated.
- 4.2 The reporting round is due to begin in October, ending in December 2005, to be followed by analysis and report production using the BARS system. It will generate data on species and habitats trends, trends by sector, and emerging threats. Working Group still considering how the results will be presented with initial output being a full web-based report and hard copy publication. The 2002 reporting round highlighted difficulties in interpreting resulting data therefore target audiences will need to be carefully considered in order for resulting data to be tailored to fit specific sectors.
- 4.3 In the discussion that followed, audiences such as Department of Transport, Regional Development Agency, and Treasury were suggested. It was felt that workstreams could offer invaluable information concerning their specific sector. It was agreed that workstreams would produce lists of suggested stakeholders in their area over the next quarter.

Action:

- **Each workstream to produce target audience list to include any known pressure points. To be sent to Sarah Webster by Friday, 9 September.**
 - **Pete Brotherton to provide web address to be circulated with minutes**
- 4.4 Sarah explained that the priority species and habitats review process would take place in three stages – firstly, the scientific assessment of conservation status; secondly, the determination of priority species and habitats for conservation action; and finally, establishing the best way of delivering conservation objectives.

- 4.5 Pete Brotherton asked EBG how members would like to be involved in the shaping of the Stage 2 list and Stage 3 delivery mechanisms. It was agreed that we should nominate “English” taxonomic experts to augment the nine coordination groups contributing to the Priority Species and Habitats Review on the consideration of Stage 2, but it was not the role of the England Biodiversity Group to consider the Stage 2 list in detail, as EBG was set up to consider the strategic issues by sector.
- 4.6 In the discussion that followed, concerns was expressed that if the list became too long, it would undermine the credibility of the Section 74 list as representing the real priorities. However, in terms of management of the action plans lead partners tended to amalgamate HAPs and SAPs to produce a more manageable plan of action. It was felt that many solutions could be achieved through Habitat Actions Plans rather than a multiplicity of plans for individual species.
- 4.7 In conclusion, BH suggested that UK BAP Review subgroup of EBG should outline the strategic issues that need to be factored into Stage 2, with a suggested way forward, on the presumption of using the workstream group structure to deliver habitat and species priorities at the England level. These would be circulated by email to the group, in preparation of a strategic discussion at the next EBG meeting on 19th September.

Action

- **UK BAP Review Group to circulate outline of strategic issues and way forward for Stage 2, including how the workstream structure could be used to help in this work, to be discussed at EBG Meeting on 19th September 2005**
- 4.8 The current review of BAP Species and Habitats recommends making targets SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-specific). It is important that lead partners add figures and dates to their current plans in order to make them more measurable. This was a challenging exercise as it was often difficult to know what the extent of the resource was, outside designated sites – the biggest gap was for marine habitats. A commitment had been made to consult the LBAPs and the regions. The EBG was asked what sign-off procedures for targets were required.
- 4.9 Brian Harding said there was no need for a decision to be made immediately regarding sign off, but EBG still needed to agree revised set of targets for 2006. As there would be additional information available by the next EBG meeting in September, it was thought prudent to wait and discuss the topic then.
- 4.10 Simon Pryor felt that it would be useful to set woodland targets against related habitats such as heathland, and then consider the feasibility of achieving them in the light of the institutional framework of delivery; there was also a need for read across from the national to regional and local levels. Paul Raven suggested that it would be useful for workstreams to be able to scrutinise the revised targets, with an outline of what was different from the previous targets,

and an indication of costs. It was important to avoid a mis-match of aspirations as between habitats.

- 4.11 Pete Brotherton agreed that the sub-group would produce a table of targets relevant to each workstream.

Action:

- **UK BAP Review Sub-group to report latest position regarding proposed habitats targets, with a table setting out previous and proposed targets relevant to each workstream.**

5.0 Full Report on England Biodiversity Strategy

- 5.1 Sarah Webster introduced the paper on Taking Forward the EBS – 2006 report that had been circulated.
- 5.2 In October 2002, when the current strategy was launched, the Secretary of State asked for a full report in 2006. Indicators would need to be published alongside the full report. In addition to reporting on successes and lessons learnt over the last four years, work-programmes needed to be refreshed, as key deliverables had been specified for 2006 and new top deliverables for 2008 and 2010 needed to be identified. The work-programmes published in the original strategy were felt by many to be too detailed and prescriptive and needed to be made simpler, more streamlined and flexible. There also needed to be a closer integration between the objectives of the work-programmes and the indicators.
- 5.3 Two new work programme templates were shown to the group for comments. These are designed to carry forward the work programme of the workstreams from 2006 through to 2010.
- 5.4 Brian Harding emphasised that the review of EBS was designed to identify successes, lessons learnt strengths and a forward programme of work and not to unpick the current system of delivery. The general idea was to improve things by making a few changes but not restructuring the whole delivery mechanism.
- 5.5 Simon Pryor felt it was important to separate the report on what had been achieved under the strategy from the forward work-programmes – [perhaps by publishing a full report including new work programmes, but also a “pull-out” which would include just the new work programmes- ed].
- 5.6 David Miller commented that he felt that greater communication and wider engagement were imperative and the greatest challenge the workstreams face. He drew attention to the meeting of workstream chairs in May, the note of which is appended to these minutes. These stress the need for workstreams to start developing the bones of a communications strategy in collaboration with EPU, setting out who they need to communicate with, what messages they need to get across and how. Fiona Mettam agreed that

perhaps the template could accommodate a communication section.

- 5.7 Alex Tait welcomed the simpler work programmes but felt that something had been lost by not including the section on “Priority policy issues”, as there was much work being taken forward by the workstreams that was not captured by the key deliverables. It was agreed that this could be accommodated by including a narrative section in the new work-programmes to set a flexible framework of the direction workstreams would be taking, which would also provide hooks to report on for future annual stocktakes. Brian Harding emphasised the need for the new work-programmes to capture linkages with other policy areas – this was broader (if that was possible) than communication –as it was about what we wanted to deliver jointly.

6.0 Date of next two meetings

The next meeting of EBG would be on 19th September at Defra, 1 Page Street, London, and 5th December at Defra, Nobel House, London.

Note that meeting on 5th December will be run as a workshop

7.0 AOB

Unbeknown to the Secretariat, it was the last EBG meeting to be attended by John Harvey. The chair would like to take this belated opportunity to thank John for his outstanding contributions to the group, and wish him well for the future.

Feedback from EBG Chairs Meeting on Communication

Attendees: Doug Hulyer (EPU), Keith Kirby (Woodland and Forestry), Jonathan Hughes (Woodlands and Forestry), Shaun Mowatt (Economics), David Miller (Local and Regional), Mike Barry (Business) (Emma Clare(Agriculture), Phil Lewis (Secretariat, Defra), Kathrina Mannion (Secretariat, Defra), Fiona Mettam (Secretariat, Defra)

This meeting covered an overview of the “Breathing Space” campaign and then looked in more detail at various public awareness and education issues in the different sectors. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- identify how Communication Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) issues were relevant to delivering the workstream programmes; and
- address wider issues around public awareness of biodiversity and EBS

Doug Hulyer outlined the principle activities that the EPU group was currently engaged with, namely:

1. Capacity building and provision of communication tools;
2. Breathing Space – a mass communication and participation campaign;
3. Working with sectors to help deliver specific targets and develop understanding more broadly.

Key Messages on Breathing Space

- This was a huge opportunity to make a real difference in public attitudes and behaviour. A true partnership approach would be needed and getting the administrative structure was crucial to success.
- Full endorsement by Chairs of the initiative;
- Business would be likely to want to engage in this initiative, viewing it as a key driver of public perception and behaviour;
- Essential to find co-ordinated mechanism for each workstream and EBG more generally to tie into the Breathing Space campaign to ensure that the communication needs of each workstream were built into the campaign comprehensively;
- Campaign to act as “gateway” or portal to joined-up sector;
- Appropriate and easily accessible funding would be key to success.
- Campaign could be seen as “glue” bringing sector and unengaged public, businesses etc together;
- EBG had an important role in the delivery of the campaign.

Key Messages on the role of communication in the EBS and individual workstreams, and impact on the report of the strategy

- Given the focus of Breathing Space, which is likely to play a major role in the next few years, communication issues need to play a far greater role throughout the delivery of the EBS;
- One possibility would be to “frame” the EBS in terms of communication and catalysing behaviour change to support the delivery of sectoral work programmes;

- There was some debate about what would drive behaviour change e.g. fear, reward etc. It was agreed that “threat” rather than fear was a more effective driver.
- Chairs agreed that in general, there had been insufficient focus to date on communications issues, which in fact, were crucial to driving success through driving pressure – for example on business by customers, and on government by electorate. Effectively, biodiversity was competing against crime, health, education etc for “air time” – it therefore needed to present a compelling case.
- Several Chairs expressed the wish to have a good look at the objectives of their individual workstreams and more corporately at the general direction and presentation of the EBS

Key messages on EBG

- Chairs would prefer to spend more time in EBG meetings looking at cross-cutting issues and exploring the “bigger picture” role of the EBS (which was thought to be currently under-developed). They felt that there was too much focus on administrative and processy issues e.g. quarterly reports; and
- Unanimous support for well focused and potentially themed ad-hoc meetings of Chairs (as today's was).

Actions

- EPU to develop a questionnaire or “process model” for other workstreams to “communication proof” their work;
- Other workstreams to arrange an individual CEPA focused workshop/meeting and invite at least one member of the EPU to attend in support. A key output of this would be the bones of communications strategies identifying who the group wanted to communicate with, the messages they wanted to communicate and how.
- EPU group to identify synergies between groups in terms of key message and audiences etc. (or this process could be done at an EBG meeting).