

Abridged Minute
Local and Regional Strategy Implementation Group
GOWM Chamberlain House, 1100 Wednesday 4 June 2003

<p>Present David Miller (Chair) - Durham County Council Alison Miller - LGA David Pape - ALGE and Hampshire County Council Ian Smith - EN (Regional rep) Chris Mahon - Wildlife Trusts (Vice Chair) Alison Barnes (Secretariat) – Defra Lyn Jenkins – EA/Regional Chairs Group Valerie Hastie – Improvement and Development Agency Charlotte Gault - Wildlife Trusts (England Local Biodiversity Action Facilitator) Paul Cobbing – Government Office West Midlands Deryck Edwards - Government Office West Midlands (for Item 6)</p>	<p>Apologies Wendy Brooks - EA Anne Brenchley - EN (Local rep) Hilary Neal - Defra Paul Whittlesea – ODPM</p>
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Item 2 Minutes and Matters Arising

19 March Minutes agreed as accurate record.

Group agreed Chris Mahon to take up position as Vice Chair.

Action Point:

- **LGA/I&DeA to look into possibilities for linking group to local government member networks**

Item 3 Terms of Reference

Revised Terms of Reference circulated and agreed.

Item 4 Work Programme

Action Point:

- **Secretariat to complete work programme in consultation with the group and submit to England Biodiversity Group by end of June.**

Item 5 Biodiversity delivery in the Regions

The Regional Biodiversity partnership Chairs reported from their meeting on 8 May:

1. The most useful part of the meeting was the opportunity to meet other chairs and to exchange information on best practice.
2. Approaches vary between regions, and there is scope to build on best practice rather than reinventing the wheel.
3. Agreed that the meeting on 7th March was helpful in defining the role and scope of regional fora, and has encouraged chairs to review the position in their region. It provided a sense of direction for the regional fora in relation to EBS.
4. Several important topics emerged during discussions and we agreed to exchange information by e-mail. Some examples:
 - Relationships with the regional assembly
 - Good projects that combine social, economic and environmental drivers.
 - Landscape scale projects

- Biodiversity indicators
5. Wish to continue with these meetings, but with a main topic for each. In particular reporting and monitoring, business and implementation plans (for regional fora links to EBS)
 6. There were 3 key feedback points:
 - It is difficult for regional fora to review LBAP progress and identify key issues arising unless there is a regional co-ordinator in place. In view of this the regions cannot play a major role in reviewing LBAP
 - The biggest issue is security of funding for LBAP officers. Chairs are very concerned that LBAP's are spending too much time on fund raising and not enough time on outreach and project work.
 - It was recognised that the regional fora should provide support for LBAP's e.g. by organising training and workshops, some regions have been more pro active than others.
 7. Regional Chairs fed-back on interaction with community strategies and LSPs, message was that there were 'too many' and therefore there had been little interaction.

Item 6 Community Strategies

Production of guidance/checklist aimed at decision makers in Local Government was discussed. The group suggested the following headings for the 'guidance':

- Importance of biodiversity (the why?)
- Links to other themes (socio-economic/quality of life)
- Where imperative comes from
- Key issues, process and action needed for biodiversity
- Benefits (funding, social, health, tourism, innovation, enhanced LA performance)
- Vision (what this might look like – route-map/milestones what should have been done by now)
- Challenge – where are 'you' up to?
- Measuring performance (PIs, checklist)

Action Points:

- **Secretariat to prepare draft document and circulate to group to add to/refine**
- **LGA to circulate Climate Change document as an example**
- **LGA/I&DeA to forward ideas about main 'elements/themes/component parts' of LSP/CS emerging across the country**
- **Secretariat to work with I&DeA to ensure 'product' can be made available on I&DeA Knowledge website**

There was some discussion about the need for guidance at the regional level, particularly in view of SEA Directive and possibility of 'Regional Biodiversity Strategies' as part of the legislation for regional governance.

I&DeA is working on a 'mainstreaming pack' and 'map of local sustainability' for their Knowledge website. The map is being built around generic themes from Community Strategies.

Action Points:

- **IS/Regional Chairs Group to scope 'elements' of a 'generic biodiversity strategy'**

- **I&DeA to ensure access to ‘mainstreaming pack’ and L&RSIG to contribute to development of ‘map of local sustainability’ as appropriate.**

Item 7 Development of performance indicators for biodiversity

Group endorsed need for digest of biodiversity indicators and short guidance on their use.

Action Points:

- **Group to share examples of use of indicators by e-mail**
- **Secretariat to begin drafting fact sheet**

Item 8 Communication and Networking

Several areas were highlighted as needing particular attention:

1. Communication of activities best undertaken at each level (local-regional)
2. Recognition of need to secure LBAP co-ordination and continuity
3. Demonstrating delivery by:
 - Reporting using BARS (relies heavily upon continuity of co-ordination, above)
 - 'mainstreaming' through work on LSPs/community strategies
 - Highlighting essential role of LBAP partnerships in delivery of large area schemes
 - Maximising communication through other networks/networks already serving target audiences

Action Points:

- **CG to draft generic job description for LBAP Co-ordinator to assist clarification of roles at different levels.**
- **Secretariat to begin drafting of communications strategy with assistance of LJ. Secretariat to approach regional chairs for their advice on communication needs for the regional agenda.**
- **Secretariat to seek a statement on the England Biodiversity Group/UK Partnership's expectations for LBAP reporting as part of the 2005 reporting round. (An expectation that LBAP partnerships will report relies upon secure co-ordination and resourcing).**
- **Secretariat to raise question of generic communications across England Strategy implementation mechanisms, i.e. –what are the other SIGs doing and how can we link up our needs?**
- **Secretariat to ensure Economics and Funding SIG has papers on LBAP funding 2000-02 and to suggest investigation of LBAP funding by Defra agencies/bodies as part of preparation for forthcoming Funding Strategy.**

Item 9 AOB

No other business raised