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Delivering Biodiversity through Community Strategies

BEST PRACTICE

Case Study 5 – Staffordshire

With thanks to Guy Corbett-Marshall, Director, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT)

Staffordshire LBAP Staffordshire County Community Strategy

1. Background

Staffordshire County Council is leading the process and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has 50 organisations as members.

2. Timetable

BAP

- Partnership formed in 1996
- Staffordshire BAP published 1998 (2nd Edition published in 2001)
- Implementation by over 60 partners, supported by a co-ordinator, with annual progress reports produced.

Community Strategy

- Process initiated – September 2001
- Consultation with residents/MORI – 2001
- Key aims of the public consultation to be published – Oct 2002

3. The Process

- LSP Formed
- Working groups have met once but are now to reform to undertake monitoring

- Community consultation carried out several times at differing levels of input
- Draft plan written and consultation run
- Published and launched at the Staffs Conference on 30th October

4. Sustainability Appraisal

This appears worth investigating further. One LA was keen to run the plan via a Sustainability Checklist. Hopefully what didn't get in this time will be picked up in the April 2004 review.

5. Involvement Generally

- Invitation to key agencies to attend the Staffordshire Conference, which has met twice so far.
- Residents Panel and MORI research.
- Written consultation to key agencies and normal consultees, including opportunities to respond to questionnaires.

6. Involvement with LBAP

- LBAP engagement with Community Strategy via SWT Director.
- SWT Director wrote highlighting that there was no environmental representative on the LSP.
- LSP asked SWT Director to join LSP.
- SWT Director Chair of the environmental theme group (to be set up) and chaired the writing of the environmental theme targets for the first edition of the Community Strategy.
- Staffordshire LBAP and a basket of representative targets written into the strategy.
- Environmental theme group soon to be re-established and will enable more LBAP partners to take part. (The reality is that only Staffs WT can handle the workload).

The involvement of SWT Director has ensured that the Staffordshire LBAP is fully integrated into the Community Strategy. Organisations such as EN and the EA support the contribution of the SWT Director through their consultations on the resume.

7. Contribution of LBAP

- Action plan objectives and targets
- Actions
- Indicators

8. Recognition by Community Strategy of social and economic benefits of biodiversity

Yes – All actions have to be proofed against cross-cutting themes of social inclusion and rural issues. The Staffs LBAP passed well on both.

9. Anticipated benefits to biodiversity of involvement in Community Strategy

- £5,000 grant aid for new WT HQ was probably assisted by the Trust's heightened profile.
- Profile boost for Staffs WT as **THE** environmental group for the county.
- Staffs LBAP enshrined in a statutory document, agreed by the community, which adds kudos to funding bids for LBAP work.
- SWT believe that Staffs County Council officers could now have added weight to bid internally for additional grant support for LBAP.
- Wildlife now written in as equal in importance to crime and other issues often perceived to be more important to the public.
- LBAP in County Strategy helps cascade its targets into Community Strategies at District and Borough levels.

10. Benefits to Social and economic agenda of LBAP input

Please come back on this in due course, once some of the work has been achieved and outcomes assessed.

11. Benefits LBAP groups offer Community Strategy process

- Partnership
- Driven by Staffs Wildlife Trust, biodiversity agenda and priorities agreed through consensus through the LBAP.

12. Barriers Experienced to Involvement in Community Strategy

Staff resources of environmental charities and Government Agencies to get involved (10 LSPs in the county). Only SWT seem to have the resources to get involved in approx 80 meetings a year and this is only possible through the involvement of five people (a mix of staff and trustees).

13. Lessons Learnt

- ✓ Get in early

- ✓ Be confident and proud of your cause.
- ✓ Be prepared to go it alone (so long as you have a feeling for what's going on).
- ✓ Be prepared to make some great links with other agendas and organisations.
- ✓ Be patient and be prepared to attend every meeting. As the others die away, keep plugging away at what you want and it'll get through.
- ✓ Think about putting in projects that need funding, which will be helped by being included in the Strategy.
- ✓ Send representatives at the highest level so that they are credible amongst very high ranking officials sent by other organisations.
- ✓ And now think about how to implement all the fine words, monitor whether it's being done and whether it's making a difference.