
UK Biodiversity Partnership Standing Committee
22nd September 2005
Minutes

Present

Brian Harding	Defra (chair)	Julian Hughes	RSPB
Hilary Allison	WCL	Steve Lee-Bapty	Defra
John Baxter	SNH	David Parker	CCW
Pete Brotherton	EN	Paul Rose	JNCC
Bob Brown	NIBG	Andy Stott	Defra
Ian Clayton	Defra	Ronnie Tosh	DOENI
Peter Costigan	NRRA SU	Sarah Webster	Defra
Jane Dalglish	SE	Paula Hendy	Defra
Michael Dunn	NAWAD		

Apologies

Mark Avery	RSPB represented by Julian Hughes
Keith Duff	EN represented by Pete Brotherton
Martin Harper	WCL represented by Hilary Allison
Jeff Watson	SNH represented by John Baxter
Ken Bradley	DOENI represented by Ronnie Tosh
Hilary Thompson	Defra
Deryck Steer	JNCC represented by Paul Rose

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The chair welcomed all present, and introduced Ronnie Tosh (DOENI), Michael Dunn (Welsh Assembly), Julian Hughes (RSPB) and Peter Costigan (NRRA).

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. The action points had been completed or were on the agenda.

3. UK Biodiversity Indicators for the 2010 Target

- 3.1 Andy Stott introduced paper UKBSC05-08, which reviewed and recommended candidate indicators to be used in association with the UK BAP.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 9th March 2005, the UK Standing Committee had endorsed a proposal to develop a small 'basket' of headline indicators at UK level to enable reporting progress towards 2010 target.

3.3 Following a meeting of the UK Biodiversity Indicators Working Group on 4th May, candidate indicators had been selected for inclusion in the list of UK headline indicators.

3.4 The working group had four proposals for the Standing Committee. Firstly, the provisional adoption of 18 headline indicators, 12 of which are currently ready for application and 6 of which will require further development and testing.

Following discussion, the UK Standing Committee confirmed they were content with the completed 12; that development and testing should continue for the remaining 6; and that the access and benefit indicator should be 'parked' at this stage.

3.5 Secondly, the working group recommended the first set of UK headline indicators should be collated and published towards the end of 2006, keeping timetable in line with that of the EU and CBD.

On hearing from Andy Stott that this was a realistic timescale, the Standing Committee agreed that first set should be published by the end of 2006.

3.6 Thirdly, working group recommended that further work development and testing of headline indicators should be undertaken on a UK basis, including breakdowns for country level application where necessary.

The Standing Committee agreed with this proposal.

3.7 Finally, the working group recommended active UK participation in the European and CBD indicator initiatives, to share experience, and promote solutions that work in the UK. They stressed that the proposed headline indicators should be kept under review to take into consideration these ongoing developments and to seek to maintain alignment with international efforts.

The Standing Committee agreed with the recommendations.

3.8 The working group raised concerns as to whether resources (mainly in the form of staff time, but also some programme spend) were to be made available in order for them to complete their work.

3.9 Brian Harding felt that the Standing Committee should commit resources in light of expected publication date of 2006. Jane Dalglish felt that the SNH would be willing to offer assistance and asked Andy Stott to confirm just what resources would be required. She also recommended that AS should take on a Project Manager role, which was agreed by BH.

3.10 The Standing Committee confirmed that resources should be committed to the working group to enable completion of this work.

Action: Andy Stott to provide Standing Committee with estimate of costs relating to resources needed in order to complete publication of headline indicators by end of 2006.

4. Report from Climate Change Sub-Group

- 4.1 Hilary Allison presented paper UKBPSC05-09, scoping the contents, style and production of a non-technical guide outlining principles of climate change, which had previously been circulated to the group electronically in June.
- 4.2 Hilary explained that although the document is being primarily designed for the web, it was felt that those who required hard copy should also be catered for.
- 4.3 Jane Dagleish complimented the sub-group on an excellent idea and presentation, although felt that the title a little could be improved upon, as this guide should not only be aimed at Biodiversity Action Plan practitioners and, if given a different title, it may attract a wider audience.
- 4.4 Julian Hughes felt that the human response to climate change needed to be factored in i.e. increased water usage. Peter Costigan added that popular perceptions of climate change were different from what the science might be telling us at strategic level.
- 4.5 Hilary explained that the guide will not come down to this level of advice. It is designed to encourage site/regionally placed decision - makers, to take climate change into consideration and apply them to their own situation.
- 4.6 Summing up, Brian Harding applauded the sub-group for an excellent, exciting piece of work that holds enormous potential. The Standing Committee approved the production of the guide and agreed that it should be labelled as a UK Biodiversity Partnership publication. Further attention should be given to the title of the document and consideration should to be given to preparing a sister publication covering the marine situation. He suggested working to a target for publication of end 2005. We should consider a suitable launch event involving Ministers. Standing Committee should have the chance to comment again electronically when the publication reached an appropriate point.

Action: Standing Committee to be sent electronic copy of document before publication in order to feed in their comments via email.

5. Report from BRIG

- 5.1 Paul Rose presented paper UKBPSC05-10, an update on work carried out by the various BRIG sub-groups.

5.2 2005 Reporting Group

Good progress had been made on 2005 milestones. No issues to refer to the Standing Committee. Brian Harding asked that it be recorded that the Standing Committee are content with report from 2005 Reporting Sub-group.

5.3 **Targets Review Group**

The Targets Review Group have been experiencing difficulties in completing work by given target date. They asked the Standing Committee to extend consultation period to October 2005 to March 2006.

- 5.4 Brian Harding confirmed that the Standing Committee agreed to the revised consultation period.
- 5.5 The group asked to Standing Committee to note that, perhaps due to heavy workloads, some Lead Partners had not responded to the Targets Review despite repeated requests. JNCC is assessing if a pattern is emerging, with some Leads consistently not responding to consultations and reporting rounds. There was a particular problem with marine, resulting from the particular burdens on the marine biodiversity community at the present time.
- 5.6 Brian Harding asked Paul Rose to let the Standing Committee know the emerging picture. It was felt that the Standing Committee should be supporting individuals within the agencies for which they were responsible, to respond to the review and members agreed to do what they could to help.

Action: Targets Review Group to inform Standing Committee of lead partners who were experiencing difficulty responding to the Targets Review. Committee members best placed to contact Lead Partner to see what could be done to support them.

5.7 **Priority Species and Habitats Review Group**

Paul explained that the Chair, Joanna Drewitt, had reluctantly stepped down from the Priority Species and Habitats Review Group. There was therefore an urgent need to appoint a new chair at a rather difficult stage of proceedings, and therefore asked for support from the Standing Committee in finding a chair as soon as possible.

- 5.8 Brian Harding acknowledged the work that Joanna had overseen, and wished to thank her, on behalf of the Standing Committee, for an excellent performance as chair in what was an extremely time-consuming role.
- 5.9 Paul explained that difficulties had arisen in trying to go from a three stage process to a two stage process. There were also problems arising from the current process surrounding working group decisions. Currently decisions needed to pass through both BRIG and the Standing Committee before implementation, with delays occurring due to timing of meetings, etc. There was also the suggestion that the group's membership may need to be revised in light of work being carried out at the merged stage 2/3.
- 5.10 Julian Hughes felt that this was the most difficult of the review processes being undertaken by the sub-groups of BRIG, and confirmed that there

was indeed frustration amongst group members with regards to the time it was taking to get a confirmed decision. He suggested the need for a clear decision making process so the group could project manage through to the final product.

- 5.11 JD stressed it was essential that not to allow bureaucracy to get in the way of an extremely important piece of work. However, she was now unclear as to the purpose of the list.
- 5.12 Brian Harding asked Paul Rose to prepare a paper for the next Standing Committee that crystallised and captured the process, explaining exactly what the list was for, who needed to make decisions on it, when, and what was the involvement of Ministers, and giving the overall trajectory for the process. Paul Rose was also asked to circulate Terms of Reference for the Chair of the Priority Species and Habitats group, bearing in mind the focus of the thinking and skills set needed between now and the completion of the review.
- 5.13 JH mentioned that the Link groups held a workshop in the Summer. He was happy to share their results if the group felt it would be beneficial to get an NGO perspective on things.

Action: Paul Rose to produce remit for Priority Species and Habitats Review Group chair for circulation to Standing Committee members.

Action: Paul Rose to prepare a paper for next meeting of Standing Committee clarifying the purpose of, and process for the UK Species and Habitats list, explaining who needed to make decisions on it, the involvement of Ministers, and the overall trajectory for the process.

Action: Julian Hughes to pass documentation from Link Workshop to Paul Rose

Information Gap Sub-group

- 5.18 Given that we were only a month away from having 2005 data, it had not been felt a good use of time to explore further the gaps revealed by the 2002 reporting round. The group was confident that many of the gaps apparent in 2002 had now been filled.
- 5.19 Brian confirmed on behalf of Standing Committee that he was content, but we the Committee would need to see a revised timetable to provide reassurance that this would be expedited once the 2005 reporting round was complete.

Action: Information gap subgroup to prepare a revised timetable for analysis and advice on the information gap based on 2005 reporting round results.

6. Report from BRAG

- 6.1 Peter Costigan presented an update on the work currently undertaken by BRAG.
- 6.2 The group is currently gearing up for a workshop in October on Conservation of Genetic Biodiversity. Peter invited the Standing Committee members to attend the workshop in Derbyshire as it would prove beneficial to receive external views.
- 6.3 BRAG had originally set up for a period of three years and would be producing a final report next year. This will include an evaluation of BRAG's activities, how they have performed and recommendations for their future. It is hoped this would be produced in time for the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

7. UK Biodiversity Conference 2006

- 7.1 Sarah Webster presented paper UKBPSC 05-11, detailing proposals for forthcoming UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference to be held in Northern Ireland in 2006.
- 7.2 This would take place in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast in the week beginning 19th June, either on Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th June, or Tuesday 20th and Wednesday 21st June.
- 7.2 Following a lively debate regarding the theme of the conference, the standing committee decided that it should focus on maritime issues.
- 7.3 BH felt it was important to flag up the there will be very limited availability of the European Wildlife Division's Marine Team as they would be busy working on the Marine Bill, and unable to spare time to spend on conference issues.
- 7.4 The Committee were asked for volunteers to join a steering group with names submitted to Ronnie. Any members wishing to add their names should contact Ronnie Tosh or Ian Clayton.
- 7.4 BH brought up a general point regarding the future of the UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference. Following Belfast, there would have been four country based conferences and therefore felt that it would be a good time to review their effectiveness. He went on to suggest that maybe the country groups would like to chair the conference.

Action: Sarah Webster to set up meeting to be chaired by Steve Lee-Bapty (Defra), to draw up a draft programme.

8. Beyond the UK BAP Reviews – Future of UK BAP

- 8.1 Paul Rose presented paper UKBPSC05-12.

- 8.2 The paper had been circulated to promote stimulate thinking on the future of the UK Biodiversity Action Plans would be, in light of devolution, etc.
- 8.3 BH pointed out that the committee did not need to reach any firm conclusions or decisions at this meeting, and posed the question how (or would) we take this forward?
- 8.4 JD was keen to highlight the benefits of the UK Sustainable Development Framework, stating that this was a framework that is usable and used, and that we needed something along these lines for Biodiversity. She felt that we mustn't lose the benefits of what we already have in existence suggesting that we have more of a review of how we go about delivering biodiversity rather than a UK BAP review.
- 8.5 HA added that Link try to stress that while BAPs are an important suite, but equally important is integration with the various policy sectors. It would help to tackle a range of issues more clearly if BAP could be streamlined.
- 8.6 BH sensed the time was right to think about where we go from here. It should be done in such a way that won't be seen from outside as us disengaging ourselves from all those who have contributed so much to the BAP process to date. JD suggested a scoping paper which BH agreed would be beneficial. Stressed that above all else, we do not want to give out the wrong signals and undo all the good work that has been done.
- 8.7 BH asked that Paul pass on the thanks of the Standing Committee members to Ant Maddock for producing the paper.

Action: Sarah Webster to produce scoping paper in collaboration with JNCC, taking forward ideas suggested in paper UKBPSC 05-12. Standing Committee members were invited to contribute their thoughts.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 5th April 2005 in Conference Room 5, Temple Quay House, Temple Quay, Bristol.

10. Any Other Urgent Business

- 10.1 Bob Brown presented short update on Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy. The strategy would be dovetailed into the strategies of other areas such as sustainable development.