



Briefing Note 1 – Regional Delivery Plan for Biodiversity in the SW - A note for LBAPs, AONBs, National Parks, and delivery organisations in the SW on the Regional Delivery Plan for Biodiversity in the South West and next steps.

Dear Biodiversity South West Partners,

This note has been put together to bring you up to speed on progress towards producing a Regional Delivery Plan for Biodiversity in the South West (RDP) and to **describe the next steps and timeline for this process and your possible role in this.**

As 2010 approaches there has been a collective understanding that we are failing even to halt biodiversity loss and that we will fail the biodiversity targets we have set ourselves. The predicted impacts of climate change will add significantly to pressures on the natural environment that are already beyond our ability to mitigate. All delivery is local.

This is the context for a **fifty year Regional Delivery Plan for Biodiversity** in the South West. We are drafting the first of 10 x five-year biodiversity delivery plans that should result in achieving our **Nature Map vision**, and securing biodiversity into the future by meeting our targets.

The SW Biodiversity Regional Delivery Plan should link with all relevant regional efforts to reduce pressure on the natural environment and join up with all relevant Defra family initiatives to make best use of Environmental Stewardship and other RDPE schemes, Wetland Vision, ecosystem restoration projects, coastal erosion, flood risk management, marine programmes, Water Framework Directive, climate change adapted landscapes, Wood and Forestry Framework, spatial planning etc.

In **June we met as a partnership** to outline the New Framework for Delivering the England Biodiversity Strategy (http://www.biodiversitysouthwest.org.uk/lib_oth_biod.html#n007). Over the course of the day we worked together to explore current delivery and what needs to change to improve on this, the challenges to doing this and to set criteria for selection of projects. The outputs from the day and a summary of findings can be found here

http://www.biodiversitysouthwest.org.uk/grp_part.html. The criteria agreed by us all at this meeting will be used in helping to define the priority landscapes we select. **The criteria selected are:**

- 1. How does the proposed initiative contribute to / fit in with delivery of other social and economic 'public goods' in the landscape?**
- 2. Does the project deliver a priority BAP habitat that the SW is best placed to deliver nationally (is it a SW responsibility)?**
- 3. How does the proposed initiative address and put into practice climate change adaptation principles?**

Prior to any exercise to select priority areas for delivery action we felt it was important to get a snap shot of where we are now in the region. **Phase 1** of the RDP process has focused on gathering evidence about where to date we have maintained, restored or re-created BAP priority habitat in the region. The outputs from this project will be available at the end of October and will be disseminated to all LBAP partnerships and their partners to aid with evidencing decisions in selecting priority areas for the RDP. This data will be provided to you at a county scale, and will allow you to analyse where there are any gaps in delivery or potential work areas.

The South West supports a high proportion of some of the UK's rarest and most endangered habitats and species. Nearly a tenth of the region's land area is designated as nationally and internationally important wildlife sites. It has the highest ratio of coastline to land area of any region making the maritime environment particularly significant.

The South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership aims to promote and enable the delivery of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan through regional and local biodiversity action in line with the England Biodiversity Strategy. The South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership includes Association of Local Government Ecologists, Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Government Office for the South West, Local BAPs, Local Record Centres, National Trust, RSPB, South West Protected Landscapes Forum, South West Water, South West Wildlife Trusts, Wessex Water and Woodland Trust

It must be noted that Phase 1 was only as good as the data supplied - if there are glaring omissions this will also be your opportunity to rectify this. Please note these and let me know where any such omissions are and we can discuss updating the data.

Phase 2, being launched now, is your chance to work as a County BAP partnership with delivery partners to propose your priorities for delivery action at a landscape / catchment / ecosystem scale (a note outlining thoughts on this is provided with this note). You are asked to provide your priority landscape scale 'projects'/areas to BioSW. Which areas do you think are a priority for delivery for the next 5 years and as such should be an inclusion within the RDP. Nature Map should form the basis of this process, although there will be areas that may fall out of this. Each partnership is asked to submit between 3 and 8 new or enhanced priority areas that deliver at a landscape scale across multiple BAP habitats (where appropriate) and should be broadly based on Nature Map. A fuller note outlining this stage is provided alongside this briefing note. The Plan will not contain all BAP delivery in the region, but should capture the priority landscapes where we can meet the majority of our BAP habitat targets. **We would want these priority landscapes submitted to us by 30th November. A form is provided.**

If you are a delivery organisation that does not work directly with an LBAP but want to submit projects this can be completed in two ways:

1. We can put you in touch with your most relevant LBAP to participate in discussions. A list of LBAP contacts can be found here http://www.biodiversitysouthwest.org.uk/lbaps_cont.html
2. Submit your projects as outlined to BioSW. We will then work with you to link with relevant LBAP or other existing projects in the same area that could be used to develop a project which meets multiple aims. These synergies are being encouraged as no one organisation can hope to deliver a landscape scale project as described. By working in collaboration the parts will achieve more over the life of the project. It may be that your project does not neatly fit with the criteria outlined – submit to us anyway as it may fall into an area and we will try to 'match' organisations as outlined above.

These submissions will then be overviewed by BioSW, to ensure they meet the criteria set or to identify any further gaps/synergies. This work will then be collated by BioSW and a workshop will be held with representatives from LBAPs, AONBs/National Parks and delivery organisations to collectively agree the final list of priority landscapes - this aim is to hold this in the first two weeks of December.

It is agreed that the final product should highlight:

- 25 (approx) high priority landscape / catchment / ecosystem scale initiatives that restore, enlarge and link target habitats (with lead delivery / coordinating partner identified);
- List of existing landscape scale projects that need to be sustained;
- Delivery mechanisms but not actions and will highlight possible funding opportunities;
- Recognise existing delivery by LBAPs;
- Other barriers to achieving the Nature map vision.

Any queries about the work outlined and the next steps should be directed to Naomi Brookes, SW Biodiversity Co-ordinator on 0300 060 0095 or naomi.brookes@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Brookes
South West Regional Biodiversity Co-ordinator
16th October 2009

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