

NOTES OF THE BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY STEERING GROUP MEETING - 4 AUGUST 2009

Present:-

Bill Waller
Karen Davies
Kathryn Edwards
Ali Glaisher
Naomi Perry

1 **APOLOGIES**

Paul Candlin and Dave Cadman.

2 **NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

A 'Biodiversity Change Reporting Form' has been created by Ali and a student because we are not strong on monitoring changes caused by new development.

The form will record what is there and what changes after development. This could be attached to the Biodiversity Validation Checklist. It will ensure quantifiable info is given and recorded on SER. It will help with BARS reporting too. Ali hopes to pilot it shortly and will keep the group informed (**Ali G**).

RTPI / Green Building Council are piloting a monitoring form too and Ali is feeding into this and will report back (**Ali G**).

LDF: Naomi reported that 'preferred options' for biodiversity and other topics are coming out later this year, with policy adoption in two years.

It will tie in with Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) phase II which is out for consultation and will be out in perhaps two years.

Lichfield BAP group are also looking to collect biodiversity evidence and data because their Core Strategy was thrown out due to lack of evidence.

PPS 12 has helped because it emphasises the requirement for evidence.

We have compiled a report/case for further survey work required for SBI's in Stafford Borough. This was originally prepared some time ago by Karen (2005) and has more recently been updated by Naomi (May 2009). **Naomi** to forward most recent report, to be circulated with minutes (**Bill**).

The Group formally requested that Leadership Team review this report and make a decision on this (**Bill/Karen to liaise with Tracy Redpath**).

Bill / Karen to revisit discussions with John Holmes re Biodiversity Validation Checklist - maybe Ali can then help us progress this, as many Local Authorities have adopted this. A mini “household” validation would be good.

Bill to check with John H that the Biodiversity and Planning leaflet is still prominent on the planning webpages.

The new SD/CC Strategy is in draft and biodiversity principles are contained therein – detailed actions now need to be firmed up, with input from this Group (**Karen/Bill/Tracy**).

Naomi - not much to report on Community Infrastructure Levy), which is not yet making any progress.

SBC - Section 106 will be within new LDF, there will be an emphasis on deliverability. Karen, supported by this Group has always been keen to seek contributions for biodiversity conservation/enhancement but this has only been potentially forthcoming for the St George’s proposal.

Dudley SPD planning obligations are strong on biodiversity mitigation/enhancement now in place. Money for biodiversity enhancements on or off site are being allocated.

Karen put forward the proposal that we should re-establish better county-wide links, to see what other Local Authorities are doing in relation to biodiversity policy and practice, including NI 197.

There could be a seminar possibly at SBC as part of a Biodiversity Steering Group meeting.

Action:

Set up Working Group to organise

Put together an invitation list

Prepare biodiversity audit/questions for Local Authorities

Arrange Working Group meeting

Kate - county contracts / + NI 197 people.
- send audit form to **Bill** to circulate .

Bill - email Jeff Edwards to ask if there is any follow up activity re checking up on activities resulting from signing the West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge.

Working Group:

Claire Waterson Bill and Karen

Dave C County Invite

Kate D Ali G

Possible Speakers and Topics:

Alan Prees	SPD
Paul Cobbing	NI 197
RIEP rep	CAA and biodiversity
?	BARS

May need some advance Market Research – carry out as part of the Audit.

Green Force may be able to help - details from **Karen**.

BARS – we all seem to find it a struggle to input and feed into this.
How can we make better use of this system?

3 BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME

Bill updated the group on activities on LNR's. A six monthly report had been attached with the agenda and this has recently been submitted to the Members' Digest.

Several events are in the pipeline. Up to date information is on the website.

An area at Ferndown has been fumed over and some brilliant old species have cropped up inc: Corn Cockle, Cornflower, Corn Spurrey, Corn Marigold.

Have a look at the web pages for:

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sd

- 6 monthly reports
- Steering Group minutes/agendas
- events/walks on the LNR's
- Photo Galleries

Bill updated the group on works on Ferndown, Barlaston and Rough Close Common, Crown Meadow and Kingsmead.

4 National Indicator 197

Hough Drain	}	useful sites that we had thought might become LNR's, but current lack of budget is constraining the declaration of new sites. However have been put in stewardship with small income for low key management and were submitted as part of the NI 197 submission for 2008/09.
Tittensor		

Trent Wood, SCC owned, may be a candidate for this year's NI 197 submission. Bill will be visiting the site with Andy Leek.

Useful contacts include: SWT Woodlands Officer James Cartwright, the Environment Agency or the local Stone SWT group, SCC Forestry Officer Stephanie Wickison.

Karen informed the group that there is a small area of SCC owned land/wet woodland adjacent to the Greenway that may be of interest.

An 'On Trent' footpath route is proposed. Karen wondered whether 'Southern Meadow' will be part of this as Southern Meadow LNR received funding from the On Trent Partnership as a demonstration site back in 2002. Karen also suggested that this Route should be included in the Stafford Borough Walking Guide that she has initiated and is due to be published later this year. Ruth Needham is still the contact – **Karen** to follow up.

Bill will be meeting Dave C / Paul C on HLS to see if these could be candidates for NI 197.

New SBI's do not count against the baseline, but can count as a managed site.

5 **DATES AND EVENTS**

- See www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sd for LNR events inc celebration event at Ferndown on 12 September.
- Derrington Low Carbon Community Food Event 12 September.
- SWT 40th birthday and Green Festival - 11-4 on 5th Aug.
- Heather Hike - 13 September.
- Are you compliant with NERC Training Event - 15 September - Derbyshire.
- Stafford College new Foundation Degree Course on Sustainable Development - starting Jan 2010. The College will be/are liaising with large/any organisations to recruit employees as part of their training/staff development.

6 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Waterscape Path

Kate expressed concerns about biodiversity management/habitat

management along the path, as an area of planted wildflower bed had been strimmed and destroyed by Stafford Borough Council.

We as a Council are still lacking a coherent and well co-ordinated and delivered system for managing our sites with wildlife interest or wildlife potential.

For Waterscape specifically, we need to bring together representatives from: SCC (Sean Gerarhty/Andy Leek)

SWT

Friends of Riverway

SBC Regen/Streetscene/Climate Change and Sustainable Development

Aston Hall Farm proposed Wind Farm

Kate raised this issue. SBC has received a Scoping Report (on weekly list last week). The site is being assessed against SBI criteria for wet grassland quality, bird assemblage also significant.

See Severn Trent website for further information on the application.

Bill - KPC ladderboard needs fixing again

Victoria Park

An interim report will be ready by Friday for a Biodiversity Assessment of Victoria Park. This will be forwarded to the Friends Group.

Flood Defence

Kathryn is expecting some flood defence works from EA to come through. Of relevance to Stafford. Chris Farmer will be getting in touch with Bill.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 10 November 2009.