

Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership – Preparation of funding strategy

1) Why / background

This paper proposes a funding strategy for Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership to satisfy the current Memorandum of Agreement 2008 – 2011 (MoA) between Natural England and Herefordshire Council (the two funding partners of the Partnership). The funding strategy will benefit partners in assisting in the delivery of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) by offering just stops here????

The document is aimed at members of the Partnership and proposes a framework for funding the delivery of projects to enable implementation of the Herefordshire LBAP. It will also

- Identify delivery mechanisms for actions or action plans within the LBAP
- Identify barriers to funding and delivery of LBAP objectives
- Set a framework for fundraising efforts
- Aim to suggest mechanisms to ensure that the funding to support the co-ordination is sustained
- Inform ongoing review of the Herefordshire LBAP to ensure the plan is SMART and in-line with UK BAP terminology[m1]

Since January 2006, Herefordshire Council has employed a Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator and this has been part funded by Natural England through a contractual Service Level Agreement (SLA). The MoA within the SLA runs until March 2011 and will provide an income of £16k per year until then. Funding from Herefordshire Council is also in principle secure until that date. No other partners within the County are currently funding the post although the Project Management Group (PMG) consists of representatives from these funding organisations as well as from Forestry Commission, Herefordshire Nature Trust and Herefordshire Biological Records Centre

A training day was held in Birmingham in Jan 2009 and county LBAP co-ordinators from East and West Midlands attended, with the common aim to showcase a good example of a working funding strategy and also to find out what is expected of them from NE to create a funding strategy in order to satisfy the MoA requirements. Heather Webb (Beds & Luton LBAP) ran the workshop and based it upon the work she has been doing with her local partnership, highlighting the benefits for partners in having a funding strategy.

Creating a comprehensive Partnership funding strategy will enable action plans within the LBAP to become fully SMART and costed, and identifies non-quantitative actions within the LBAP. By having a financial strategy supported and prepared by the LBAP Partnership, this will show that partners are committed to the long-term delivery of the LBAP.

2) What are the benefits of having a funding strategy?

- **Eliminate zero-cost actions** These can be removed from the strategy so that we can concentrate on actions that need money to form funding bids.
There will of course be actions within the LBAP that cannot be costed yet are still deemed necessary to maintain to reflect the local nature of the plan as a complementary level of implementation by partners.
- **Gives quick access to figures when funding opportunities arise** You may discover a new grant fund but the deadline is very short. The funding strategy gives you quick access to figures when an opportunity arises. Also, budgets may need to be spent quickly and the early bird catches the worm. Some bodies are impressed that applications come in early.

- **Determines most appropriate funders for action delivery & eliminates time wasting**
Finding out what funding opportunities exist and who is best placed to fund specific projects. This saves time by groups / partners only applying to those whose criteria are actually met. This is especially important to smaller groups and can avoid disappointment and an excessive amount of knock-backs from inappropriate funding organisations. Some opportunities can be missed if deadlines are tight and efforts are wasted by applying to the wrong funders.
- **Smartens up LBAP (Avoids duplication of actions across HAPs & SAPs)** Allows to check the LBAP for duplicate, irrelevant and ambiguous actions, as well as checking to see if achieving actions are realistic. If not, they should be deleted.
- **Allows co-ordinator & partners involved to familiarise them with the LBAP more fully** Some actions may require several delivery mechanisms and these can be worked out. Also identifies the wording within the LBAP such as “Promote, support, encourage”. These may need to be defined in more detail, i.e. how are you going to promote? Example may be “*produce 10 leaflets by 2020 on grouse friendly heathland management, aimed at farmers to achieve target number LHE T01 in Black Mountains BEA and circulate based upon contact information held by FWAG*”.
- **Assists in constant LBAP review** by removing inappropriate and unachievable actions / targets. Issues change over time and this may include financial and political climate, previous targets being achieved,
- **Allows you to get to know funders better, e.g. Tubney is now closed for applications and only work on an invitation basis** Spreadsheets can be developed to incorporate basic information including - size of grants, who can apply, is match funding needed, evidence needed to apply (amount of paperwork), type of projects involved, i.e. capital costs, research, innovation, education, access, etc and other idiosyncrasies that applicants need to know before applying.

3) How?

- **By producing cost tables with the assistance from partners and already published costing tables**
Cost actions using tables to determine how much each delivery mechanism will take. Best done on a regional “joined-up” basis (where appropriate) to avoid unnecessary duplication of work. Sources of info can be taken from the following
 - UK BAP website
 - HLS
 - UK Biodiversity Group
 - National statistics
 - Per diem rates (FWAG)
 - Experience from other projects, e.g. HNT, NT
 - Partners should be able to help out with this if they have been successful in applying for grants previously
- **By identifying a comprehensive range of funders and the criteria that they use to ensure targeted and appropriate applications**
 - Locate funders – without limiting to the usual suspects
 - Match funders to activities, e.g. capital costs, research, less attractive species, ongoing maintenance, staff time issues, community & awareness

4) Who will be involved in developing the funding strategy?

All partners involved in the LBAP process within Herefordshire. The strategy will be created by the LBAP Co-ordinator, with input from the PMG.

5) Who will take ownership of the funding strategy?

The PMG will take ownership of the strategy and it will be placed on the LBAP website in pdf format for all partners to have access to. The funding strategy will work in synergy with the communication plan produced in 2007.

6) Who will benefit from having the funding strategy in place?

All groups and partners will benefit from having the strategy in place, especially smaller organisations and local groups as they may not necessarily have the skills and expertise to apply for external funding to support their work

7) When will work commence on the preparation of the funding strategy and what time period will it cover?

Work preparing the funding strategy will commence in April, 2009 by the Partnership Co-ordinator and aims to be complete by April 2010[m2]. It will inform the long-term sustainability of biodiversity conservation within Herefordshire and be responsive to partners when they are preparing project bids. Inflation fluctuations will be factored in based upon previous trends. Preparation of the costed funding strategy will require input from all partners involved in the wider biodiversity partnership.

Guidance available

<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/library/BRIG/TargetsReview06/HAPCostingsAnnexes.pdf>

<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/library/BRIG/TargetsReview06/CostingHabitatAction.pdf>

<http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/content/uploads/documents/Get%20Involved/FundingLinksNov08.pdf>

<http://www.bedslife.org.uk/>

Produced by Nicky Davies, Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator. March 2009.

[m1]I do not understand this – is to to have costed action plans?

[m2]Should aim to have a list of say 5 or 6 priority projects prepared before this, say by June. All that is required is an agreement on priority (perhaps landscape scale) projects that require funding and deci de how we are going to go about raising funds for these