

Structure and Operation of Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership – October 2007



Overview

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership was established in 1997 to develop a biodiversity action plan for Hampshire. This was in response to the developing UK biodiversity programme and the increasing awareness that local partnerships were an essential cornerstone in delivering both county and national goals.

The Partnership published the *Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire* in 1998 and subsequently produced detailed action plans for specific habitats, species and a number of important topics such as water, education and awareness, and urban areas. The Plan sets out strategic direction and specific targets, and provides a key framework for individual partner's own action plans for biodiversity.

The Partnership now oversees the ongoing development, implementation and monitoring of Hampshire's biodiversity action plan. To do this, the Partnership brings together representatives from a wide range of organisations that are committed to conserving and enhancing the natural environment of Hampshire. Some partners are involved directly in the Partnership's steering group or topic groups, others contribute to associated networks and events.

In the 10 years since its inception, the work of the Partnership has evolved and adapted in response to changing circumstances in policy and practice at both national and local level. This report sets out the aims and objectives of the Partnership and its operational structure. The purpose is to assist communication between partners and others, and ensure maximum opportunities for organisations to contribute to the shared goal of conserving and enhancing nature in Hampshire.

Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership

Overall Aim

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership aims to raise awareness of Hampshire's natural environment and increase commitment to its conservation. The Partnership includes local authorities, Government agencies and voluntary bodies working together to conserve and enhance nature in Hampshire.

Terms of Reference

1. To establish and maintain an effective partnership to produce and implement the *Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire*.
2. To encourage and support district and corporate biodiversity action plans in Hampshire by providing guidance, advice and a strategic framework.
3. To maintain an audit of Hampshire's priority species and habitats.
4. To monitor and keep under review the *Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire*.
5. To identify and guide action needed for Hampshire's priority habitats, species and generic issues that affect Hampshire's biodiversity.
6. To promote widespread awareness and interest in Hampshire's biodiversity.
7. To act as a forum for sharing expertise and information connected to conserving Hampshire's biodiversity.
8. To act as a link between national, regional and local biodiversity programmes and ensure local participation in national biodiversity objectives.

Objectives

During 2005/06 the Partnership, through its Steering Group, established a set of 21 key objectives under 4 themes – land management; planning, plans and strategies; data, information and survey; education, awareness and communication.

Progress in the delivery of the 21 key objectives and associated headline indicators is currently monitored every 2 years.

Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership: 21 Key Objectives

1 Land Management - Aim: to ensure favourable condition of priority habitats and species in Hampshire		2 Planning, Plans and Strategies - Aim: seek to ensure no net loss of biodiversity through the planning process, and establish commitment and implementation programmes for biodiversity through plans and strategies	
1a	Maximise the extent of land covered by incentive schemes and land management projects	2a	Ensure appropriate consideration of biodiversity in development plans and the development control process, and promote good practice by developers
1b	Ensure favourable condition of Hampshire's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	2b	Ensure all priority habitat and species assemblages that meets SINC or SSSI criteria are designated
1c	Ensure favourable management of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)	2c	Ensure Community Strategies in Hampshire include biodiversity policies and plans
1d	Ensure favourable management of local authority land	2d	Establish biodiversity as a key element of all relevant plans and strategies and promote appropriate changes in regulations and legislation
1e	Promote management of land at 'landscape scale'	2e	Produce and implement local biodiversity action plans
1f	Ensure appropriate action for priority species		
1g	Restore / recreate priority habitats or create new habitats		
3 Data, Information and Survey - Aim: to ensure availability of appropriate data and information on Hampshire's habitats and species		4 Education, Awareness and Communication - Aim: to broaden awareness of biodiversity and involvement in its conservation	
3a	Develop the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre to share data and make more widely available	4a	Promote the aims and work of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership
3b	Encourage and support a voluntary network of recorders and recording groups	4b	Promote biodiversity as beneficial to quality of life (health, wellbeing etc) and key to sustainable development
3c	Survey / monitor extent and condition of key habitats and species	4c	Raise general awareness and commitment to biodiversity in the following 6 sectors: public sector; farmers, landowners and other land managers; business and industry; education; community / user groups; general public
3d	Encourage partners to monitor the implementation of their organisation's/ group's action for biodiversity		
3e	Monitor 'external' influences on biodiversity		
3f	Pro-actively encourage research and ensure that research is disseminated		

Organisational Structure

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership includes 32 partner organisations as shown in Appx 1. Partners are kept in touch with developments in the Hampshire biodiversity programme primarily through email networks and the Partnership's website.

The Partnership meets collectively on an ad hoc basis and does not have a formal schedule of meetings. During 2006 the Partnership and many associated organisations met at a Hampshire Biodiversity conference to review changes in biodiversity policy and practice and agree the strategic direction for the Partnership.

The work of the Partnership is overseen by a **Steering Group**. A number of **Topic Groups** develop particular aspects of this work. A part-time **Biodiversity Coordinator** is employed by Hampshire County Council to support the Partnership.

The Steering Group

The Steering Group is comprised of representatives from partner organisations (see table below). The main aim of the Steering Group is to direct and oversee the collective work of the Partnership.

The Group meets 2x per year to discuss strategic issues. The Chair (or a representative) of each Topic Group provides a report on their area of responsibility to each meeting of the Steering Group.

Membership of Steering Group		
Chair		1
Biodiversity Coordinator		1
Statutory	Environment Agency	1
	Natural England	1
Local Government	Hampshire County Council	1
	District/Unitary Council – rural	1
	District/Unitary Council – urban	1
	National Parks	1
Local Record Centre	Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre	1
Conservation NGOs	Hampshire Wildlife Trust	1
	RSPB/Butterfly Conservation or other	1
Landowners / Business	National Farmers Union	1

Topic Groups	Local Authority Biodiversity Forum
	Data and Information Group
	Land Management Forum
	Biodiversity Research Group
	Monitoring and Reporting Group
	Communication Group

Topic Groups

The Partnership currently has 6 Topic Groups that oversee progress in specific areas of work. Members of Topic Groups share expertise and progress initiatives to help achieve the Partnership's key objectives.

Each Topic Group is chaired by a member of the Steering Group to provide continuity and facilitate communication. Topic Groups have the opportunity to raise strategic issues with the Steering Group for discussion and decision.

Local Authority Biodiversity Forum

The Forum is particularly concerned with strategic matters involving development control and forward planning. It was established in 2003 and has overseen the production of several pieces of guidance on biodiversity and development on behalf of the Partnership e.g. *Biodiversity and Development Guidance for Hampshire*.

Data and Information Group

The data and information needs of the Partnership are provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre established in 2002. The data group does not exist independently but relevant work is overseen by the HBIC Strategic Management Group. HBIC produced *The State of Hampshire's Biodiversity* on behalf of the Partnership in 2006.

Land Management Forum

Established in 2004 this Forum initially focussed on issues such as coordination of advice and promotion of support schemes and projects. The Forum is reviewing its priorities for re-establishment in 2007.

Monitoring and Reporting Group

The Monitoring and Reporting Group oversees links with national biodiversity reporting, progress with projects that have county-wide significance for monitoring changes in biodiversity, and tracking and reporting progress with delivery of the *Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire*. The Group was established in 2004 and was responsible for reviewing all actions in the BAP to identify the Partnership's key priorities.

Biodiversity Research Forum

The Forum was launched in 2005 with the objectives of implementing research needs identified in the *Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire* and

coordinating research in conjunction with educational and research institutions. The Forum currently operates as a virtual group.

Communication Group

Communication and raising awareness within the Partnership and externally has been identified as a priority issue for effective delivery of the Partnership's overall aim and objectives. The Communications Group was established in 2007 to recommend improvements to communications and identify priority actions.

Biodiversity Co-ordinator

The Partnership's part-time Co-ordinator is employed by Hampshire County Council to:

- provide support and assist the development of the Partnership
- maintain links with national and regional biodiversity fora
- oversee monitoring and reporting
- facilitate Partnership communication and liaison

Further Information

The Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership maintains a comprehensive website at www.hampshirebiodiversity.org.uk. The website gives an overview of Hampshire's biodiversity, the work of the Partnership and its constituent organisations and suggestions for getting involved. Progress reports and all publications of the Partnership are available electronically.

Contact:

Jacklyn Johnston
Biodiversity Coordinator
Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership
jacklyn.johnston@hants.gov.uk
tel: 02380 383461