

ISSUE	OBSERVATION
<p>KEY FACTS FROM STUDY (3 x LA areas in North Wales)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 jobs created directly through LBAP 🌱 key incentive for agriculture participation in LBAPs is financial Communication between biodiversity and agricultural sectors is essential Benefits to business in becoming an LBAP partner; 🌱 existing communication not extensive. Arena network could bridge gap. Local Authorities do NOT promote themselves well to business 🌱 Lack of communication/ cooperation between inter/neighbouring Council departments LBAP Officers must act as 'sales people' 🌱 Large proportion of tourism activity in North Wales linked to environment(recreation and heritage benefit mostly) Community biodiversity officer is a good move 🌱 Methods most successful in community engagement were community initiated Many different partners involved in establishing educational projects through the LBAP 🌱 LBAP projects contribute to sustainable thinking of participants`



Photo: Merthyr Tydfil LBAP Partnership



Photo: Julia Korn, WBP

Community Strategies

Interim advice for LBAP partnerships

Biodiversity should be raised as a key issue within Community Strategies - this note provides advice on how to do this

Bioamrywiaeth Cymru



Biodiversity Wales

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Developed from a professional training course run at Plas Tan y Bwlch, in April 2002.

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Survey findings: BUSINESS	Local consumer support is influential long term business benefit. Gap in communication and action links between biodiversity and business sectors (use Arena Network and Groundwork more). Actual annual value of investment needs calculating. SME start ups include local contractors. Biodiversity offers opportunities for competitive advantage and enhanced consumer reputation to increase profit margins, and encourage additional customers and clients!
Survey findings: TOURISM	Tourism especially recreation and heritage benefit from the positive contribution of LBAPs. Tourism created through LBAPs provides great potential in North Wales as the industry is dependent on the environment.
Survey findings: EDUCATION	Education should not just be addressed through academia. LBAP is an educational document with 16 educational projects arising out of the 3 LBAPs. LBAP Officer important for delivering education. Resources, educational, targeting early years children and cross curricular greening all important.
Survey findings: COMMUNITY	Wide range of projects with 20 – 50 people typically involved. Some EU and national money being accessed. Community Strategies would benefit from LBAPs. More involvement needed from national businesses, community councils, schools and tourism.



Photo: Julia Korn, WBP

ISSUE	OBSERVATION
LBAPS an integral part of Community Strategies	Help inform decisions which impact on biodiversity
Best Value requires that benefits of service delivery for local community is identified	How an LA takes action for biodiversity can make a significant contribution to quality of life for inhabitants, visitors and workforce
LBAP identified as Best Value Indicator by Welsh Assembly Government	2002 UKBAP reporting round will collect LBAP data for first time – refine indicator
BAP process still young	More general awareness raising needed Specific projects very useful to demonstrate value Find different ways of communicating with people Need to increase understanding of differing agenda, identify common concerns and agree how to measure benefits from biodiversity action
Questionnaire intended to identify the factors which have contributed to delivery of social and economic benefits through LBAPs	Researcher identified ‘measures’ which define economic and social attributes
Survey findings: AGRICULTURE	3 x case studies showed: 1. Strong relationship between LBAPs and agriculture , as in Biodiversity money equals key incentive for participation. LBAP has positive impact on development of new agricultural schemes. Communication essential. 2. Strong relationship established with landowners and tenants as in positive potential for future partnerships, key incentives for participation is TG support, LBAP implementation has influenced local land management.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES Introduction

“The Community Strategy will identify desired outcomes, some broad priorities and some key actions. This should set the context for activities undertaken by local authorities and their partners at the local level.”

“It [community strategy] should be central to an authority’s planning and resource decisions.”

“The key local priorities identified should in turn be reflected in the setting of the authority’s corporate objectives, and in the establishment of authority-wide objectives and performance measures.”

“Once a community strategy has been established, the unitary development plan will provide the means of taking forward those elements of its vision and priorities that concern the physical development and use of land in the authority’s area”.

All the above are taken from the National Assembly’s guidance on preparing community strategies⁽¹⁾.



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WHAT ARE COMMUNITY STRATEGIES?

Local Government Act (2000)

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced new legislation aimed at reforming the way local authorities operate throughout England and Wales. The programmes involved aim to ensure that services provided locally by the various bodies are:

- Better coordinated
- Responsive to the needs and concerns of local communities
- Delivered in ways that suit the people who depend on them
- Take account of the needs of future generations

The Act created a new power for local authorities to do anything that they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being (quality of life) of local communities. Local authorities must have regard to guidance issued by the Wales Assembly Government and their own Community Strategies when deciding how to exercise this power. The Assembly's guidance on this power states that it *"provides local authorities with the freedom to innovate and to work jointly with others to improve the quality of life of their communities.* The guidance highlights how local authorities are expected to do this *"In particular, local authorities will want to consider actions and improvements identified in their community strategies, which include cross cutting themes"* Specific reference is then made to *"improving local environmental quality."* It goes on to state that *"Authorities will wish also to consider how the new power can help them to contribute locally to shared national priorities, such as combating climate change and encouraging the conservation of biodiversity"*².

Section 4(1)

Sets out the mandatory duty to produce a community strategy with the local authority as community leader. It will be a multi-agency plan covering a local authority area identifying key actions, specific targets, outcomes and monitoring mechanisms.

ISSUE	OBSERVATION
Welsh environment critical to job creation and prosperity in economy	Benefits not realised as links to social and economic gains not transparent
More biodiversity action is taking place locally	LBAPs can provide benefits to local economy – jobs and income generation
Biodiversity provides indirect benefits	Hillside woods prevent erosion, wetlands provide flood control etc
Management for biodiversity can reduce costs	Sustainable Urban Drainage SUDS reduces long term costs of management of urban drainage schemes; reduction in frequency of grass cutting reduces costs
Quality of environment key to attracting visitors to Wales	National Trust survey 'Valuing our Environment' showed that over half of holiday trips to Wales motivated by high quality environment Tourist industry could promote biodiversity as a central theme in all it's initiatives as a contribution to biodiversity objectives
Involving people in practical activities has educational benefits	Centres and businesses provide these in return for cash and provide local employment opportunities Benefits of volunteers becoming involved in monitoring
Mental and physical health benefits of biodiversity	CCW/ British Heart Foundation – walking your way to health
1995 Arena Network established in Wales	To provide practical support to business and others on the environment
LBAP process IS different from previous approaches to nature conservation	Prepared by a wide partnership, follow a disciplined approach, based on premise that EVERYONE has a stake in their local environment, prioritise national AND local species and habitats
Biodiversity as a measure of sustainability and component of quality of life	LBAPs provide solid foundation on which focused action can occur through mainstream programmes and projects.

- ✓ Design targeted communication initiatives for different sectors.
- ✓ Establish a service to support community groups applying for the grant funding.
- ✓ Achieve improved communication between local and national levels of biodiversity action delivery.
- ✓ Widen and strengthen the funding base for LBAP posts.
- ✓ Promote the message that biodiversity action achieves sustainable development through integrating biodiversity conservation into all policy areas.
- ✓ Flag up opportunities for the integration of biodiversity into overarching strategies such as the National Economic Development Strategy.
- ✓ Develop a Best Value performance indicator to measure biodiversity delivery across all local authority services.
- ✓ LBAP Officers to advise on the revision of Welsh Assembly Government's Technical Advice Note 5.
- ✓ Money going to rural areas needs to consider the benefits to biodiversity, jobs and incomes even-handedly.

All recommendations edited and adapted from the original dissertation.



Photo: Joanna M Robertson

The process includes the development and maintenance of a **Community Strategy Partnership (CSP)** as the core group. These partnerships will be expected to make use of existing plans, partnerships and initiatives to develop a joint approach to meeting community needs and aspirations.

Timetable in Wales

10-15 years – expected vision of community strategies

April 2001 – process started

May 2003 (council elections) – key components in place

Every 4 years – review (allow partners to confirm/adjust priorities and goals)

Every year – Interim reviews (track progress and if necessary adjust goals)

Wales Assembly Government Guidance ¹

The aims and objectives of community strategies set out by the Assembly state that they will “**Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development**”. The Community strategy will provide an overarching strategic framework for all other plans and strategies, inform the development of corporate priorities, underpin funding applications and assess how service, policies and practices contribute to local well being. If biodiversity is a core issue within the strategy it will be in a stronger position of influence.

The guidance states that every strategy should be based on a sustainability appraisal. It states that community strategies are linked to wider changes in public services which aim to make sure services provided to the public are “*environmentally sustainable and take account of the needs of future generations.*”

It goes on to advise that they “*need not separate out the economic, social and environmental aspects as in practice people’s aspirations will be a combination of all three*” Biodiversity as a component of quality of life and a measure of sustainable development can and must be raised as a key issue across all aspects of the community strategy. Evidence to support these arguments is growing, (see *Appendix 1*).

LINKING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY STRATEGIES AND BIODIVERSITY

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000

At the report stage of this bill (14th June 2000) Chris Mullin MP, stated that *"The Government propose that local biodiversity action plans, incorporating local councils' work on wildlife sites, should be integrated within the wider strategies that are being put in place in the current Local Government Bill"* (now the Local Government Act 2000).

Report of the House of Common's Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into UK Biodiversity (November 2000)

Oral evidence from Michael Meacher (June 27, 2000) stated that *"What we are proposing is: under the Local Government Bill (now the Local Government Act 2000), there will be Community Strategies; there will be statutory guidance which will require local authorities to take full account of biodiversity in the preparation of all their activities within the Community Strategy."*

November 2001 the Wales Assembly Government published 'Learning to Live Differently: The Sustainable Development Scheme of the National Assembly for Wales' This sets out the Assembly's legal duty to promote sustainable development in the delivery of all of its functions. The scheme states that the Assembly intends to work with local government *"by encouraging local government to promote sustainable development through its corporate planning and strategic policies particularly in key areas such as community strategies, LA21 and Best Value, ensuring local services are delivered without jeopardising long term sustainability."*

Environment. Planning and Transport Review of LBAPs in Wales (draft report) Feb 2003 States in the introduction that *"In Wales, along with elsewhere in the UK, Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are used as a means of translating national targets for habitat and species conservation into local action, and also to provide the biodiversity element of local strategies for sustainable development,"³ and specific recommendations.*

- ✓ Promote the increasing importance of Environmental Management Systems incorporating biodiversity measures for meeting statutory responsibilities.
- ✓ Encourage businesses to manage their own land for biodiversity – providing pleasant surroundings and opportunities for staff development and team building.
- ✓ LBAPs can help companies identify 'green' credentials and encourage media interest.
- ✓ LBAPs can help draw down EU/UK money by identifying international and national priorities within a local area.
- ✓ LBAPs could develop a business and biodiversity logo/award to 'kitemark' business contribution to LBAP action and targets
- ✓ Support eco tourism/small scale rural tourism projects e.g. through continued development of the Rural Recovery Plan.
- ✓ Production of glossy/accessible versions of S/HAPs (Species and Habitat Action Plans) for educational use.
- ✓ Pursue recommendations for education by focusing on support offered through LBAP partnership to schools.
- ✓ As education providers, local authorities should take a proactive role in delivering biodiversity education e.g. employ an education officer through the LBAP partnership.
- ✓ Members of LBAP Team could run courses for educational establishments and other sectors, drawing on the expertise of partners in the LBAP Group.
- ✓ Appoint more Community Biodiversity Officers across Wales.
- ✓ Support further events such as the WBP Local Issues Advisory Group seminar and the Wales Biodiversity Week to raise awareness and share good and bad practice.

Appendix

CCW/SALFORD UNIVERSITY MASTERS PROJECT 2002 BIODIVERSITY, SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY

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KEY ISSUES AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PROJECT TITLE:

*HOW ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY DELIVERS SOCIAL AND
ECONOMIC BENEFITS: A STUDY OF GOOD AND BAD PRACTICE
FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL PARKS IN NORTH
WALES*

Key Recommendations (27)

- ✓ Use *Valuing the Environment: Economic Impact of the Environment of Wales*, when promoting the LBAP to different sectors.
- ✓ State the importance of biodiversity for delivering economic and social prosperity as part of the National Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme.
- ✓ Encourage business, landowners and the LBAP partnerships to work together, for example through competitions that aim to meet LBAP actions and targets.
- ✓ Encourage grant schemes for restoration as these support the small business sector.
- ✓ Research into the socio-economic benefits of agri-environment scheme would support development of more integrated rural policy.
- ✓ Encourage businesses to audit the impact of their operations on biodiversity; this can inform changes in operational practice that benefit biodiversity.

WHY LBAPS UNDERPIN THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PROCESS

- ✿ The EPT committee recommended that LBAPs should underpin community strategies
- ✿ LBAP partnerships can input into community strategies in a co-ordinated way ensuring that shared biodiversity conservation objectives are promoted and progress monitored and reported.
- ✿ The potential exists to deliver LBAP actions and achieve biodiversity targets through mainstream programmes and initiatives – we must grab this opportunity.
- ✿ LBAPs have taught us that process is important. Use the Community Planning process to feed in LBAP priorities and to increase understanding and awareness of why achieving LBAP targets will contribute to a better quality of life for local communities.



LBAPS AND COMMUNITY STRATEGIES - WHY BOTHER?

Practical guidance for LBAP Partnerships

*'Those organisations which are pro-active in bringing their existing strategies, priorities and initiatives firmly under the noses of the CSP's will be ahead of the game.'*⁴

As a core element of Community Strategies LBAPs can ensure that biodiversity considerations influence strategic decisions and policies. Involvement of the biodiversity community in setting action and targets should provide new opportunities to access small local funds and for the inclusion of biodiversity in large scale funding packages. LBAPs identify biodiversity priorities and clearly set out action partners will need to take to meet objectives and targets locally. Community Strategies can deliver biodiversity conservation as they provide a framework for integrated policy development and service delivery. Biodiversity is/will be an important measure of the sustainability component of the Community Strategy and a component of community well being.

- Be realistic from the outset and prioritise where input would be most useful. Be clear on how LBAPs can contribute to the work of the CSP and what input will best support the delivery of the LBAP.
- Use the LBAP Officer to initiate and co-ordinate input by ensuring that 'engagement in the Community Strategy process' is an output.
- Are wildlife interests already represented on the CSP and is this representation linked into the LBAP? If not linked, then invite this representative to an LBAP meeting to discuss a unified approach
- Use the partnership to share responsibility – agree that representatives will attend CSP meetings with their LBAP hat on. This focused, united approach simplifies the issues for those not involved in biodiversity conservation and demonstrates significant support for biodiversity conservation.
- To support above, produce a brief for LBAP members to build a broad consensus on LBAP in put.⁴
- Produce a Community Strategy Action Plan that has a local community or individual element eg recording local wildlife and encouraging wildlife friendly management of green areas used by people.⁴

REFERENCES

1. National Assembly for Wales (Aug 2001) **'Preparing Community Strategies: Guidance to Local Authorities from the National Assembly for Wales'** Published by the National Assembly for Wales
2. National Assembly for Wales (May 2001) **'Power to Promote or Improve Economic, Social or Environmental Well-Being' DRAFT**
3. Environmental, Planning and transport Committee of the Wales Assembly Government (Dec 2002) **'Review of Local Biodiversity Action'** National Assembly for Wales
4. Lynn Wetenhall Associates (Feb 2003) **'Community Strategies Guidance for Staff'** published by CCW
5. Mark Lang, Wiltshire WT (Feb 03) **'Delivering Biodiversity through Community Strategies: Case Study'** To view Community Strategy case studies on the Web, visit: www.ukbap.org.uk



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: My Community Strategy only talks about provision of parks and playing fields – what do I do?

A: Emphasise the benefits which come when these places are managed with biodiversity in mind: less windswept, more attractive, encourages public use, brings mental health benefits to people like stress reduction.

Q: In my area many people are unemployed, improving the economy is the number one priority. How can I persuade people to consider biodiversity conservation in the Community Strategy.

A: Highlight the employment/training opportunities provided through conserving biodiversity. Agriculture, forestry and tourism as well as many craft and other locally based industries depend directly on biodiversity.



Photo: Gaynor Ainscough, CCW

Find out which department is leading on Community Strategies in your area and write inviting yourself to a meeting. State clearly and concisely the benefits to the CSP of having LBAP as a partner:

- Negotiation skills
- Facilitation
- Capacity Building
- A vision
- Partnership experience
- Political awareness
- Local understanding (taken from John Everitt 11 April 2002)

Once invited increase awareness of the LBAP as a plan that through partnership building and consultation has already identified priorities for action, appropriate action, objectives and targets and steps required for monitoring and review. This can inform the Community Strategy process.

Be prepared to listen, new actions deliverable through new partners could be identified as part of the Community Strategy process.



Photo: Don Berwick, 2002

- ✿ Make information available such as indicators and mechanisms for reporting progress. Don't reinvent the wheel – make sure this information gets into the community strategy.
- ✿ Understand the agenda of partners on the CSP, and local people at community events. Use plain English/Welsh and try and identify common ground. If everyone wants more safe, green space to enjoy with their families try and get them thinking about how biodiversity supports this priority.
- ✿ Use members of groups represented on the LBAP partnership to feed into public forums and other consultations. People need encouragement to express their aspirations regarding biodiversity. We need people who can show the links between biodiversity and everyday concerns.
- ✿ Emphasize the role of the LBAP partnership eg information exchange, wildlife sites, involvement, awareness and education to demonstrate how they relate to local communities.



Be solution based – conserving our biodiversity contributes to efficient, effective delivery of services across all sectors.
 Push the **economic benefits** of biodiversity and why sustainable use is the only option to ensure quality of life, now and for future generations.
 Biodiversity is essential for:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Base materials
- Tourism
- Attracting new business
- Medical advancements
- Flood defence
- Soil Stability
- Drainage
- Water filtration

Push the **social benefits** of biodiversity:

- Educational resource
- Mental and physical health
- Enjoyment
- Culture/Art
- Training opportunities
- Youth projects