

# **IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS IN WALES**

**Elizabeth Alice May**

**Draft: A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree, MSc in Ecology and Management of the Natural Environment, in the Faculty of Science**

**September 2002**

## **ABSTRACT**

Welsh commitment to biodiversity is chiefly delivered through the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) at the local planning authority (LPA) level.

In August 2002 two surveys investigated the progress of the LBAP implementation in Wales. Ninety-three per cent, 22 of 24 authorities returned the LBAP officer survey. Twenty-seven LBAP Forum members completed questionnaires. These conclusions are therefore based on a highly valid sample of the experts in the field.

LBAPs, Habitat and Species Action Plans are being developed and implemented. There is a high level of biodiversity promotion, which both officers and partners feel had increased biodiversity awareness. LBAP partnerships have been set up in all LPAs. The LBAP process has increased the cooperation of nature conservation groups. The overall view was that biodiversity had improved. Therefore, in Wales the LBAP process is progressing well.

Problems with staffing connected with funding have slowed LBAP progress. Local authorities give inadequate recognition to biodiversity. Insufficient biodiversity monitoring information and the lack of Welsh Local Biological Record Centres are other negative factors.

LBAP partners provide the main support to LBAP progression.

The LBAP is affecting planning policy in many authorities chiefly through Unitary Development Plans. In a few cases planning decisions are being influenced by the LBAP, and are considered by ecologists. Other local authority policies are being affected.

*LBAP officers' managerial and personal skills were valued highly by LBAP partners.*