



Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership

Funding Strategy

Explanation of work towards a funding strategy

It is a requirement of the Memorandum of Agreement between Natural England and the Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership's key funding organisations that the Shropshire BAP should produce a 'funding strategy' which establishes a mechanism for costing actions within the Shropshire BAP and for fund raising to ensure their delivery.

Bedfordshire LBAP has found that their detailed funding strategy has considerably assisted LBAP partners and the Biodiversity Coordinator in securing funding for BAP delivery.

This strategy uses guidance produced by the Bedfordshire BAP and spells out the next steps the Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership should like to take to produce a similar strategy tailored to Shropshire.

Core Costs

Core funding for the LBAP coordinator post still presents difficulties for many LBAP partnerships including Shropshire. In Shropshire the post is currently covered with half the Biodiversity Officer and half by the Biodiversity Support Officer, Typically the main partners meet the costs with occasional supplements from specific projects such as the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund projects of the last four years.

The funding required to maintain an LBAP co-ordinator in post will not be included in the break down of costs for habitat or species action plans but is clearly a vital factor in being able to achieve BAP delivery in Shropshire.

The Memorandum of Agreement signed in 2008 by the key funding partners in the Shropshire BAP commits Natural England, Shropshire County Council, Shropshire

Wildlife Trust and Telford and Wrekin Council to the current level of funding until 2011. It will be a vital part of the work of the Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership in 2010 to ensure that the current funding level is maintained or improved to allow continued delivery of BAP targets in Shropshire.

These 'Core Costs' will be included in the full funding strategy but will be kept separate from costs associated with specific HAPs or SAPs. This will give a clear basis on which to approach other potential funding organisations.

Actions attributed to the Biodiversity Officer or Biodiversity Support Officer will be considered 'no cost' within individual HAPs and SAPs since maintenance of these posts will be costed separately.

Land Purchase Costs

Where land purchase is necessary to achieve an action it may be very difficult to establish an accurate estimate of cost unless the land in question has been recently valued. In many cases land purchase will be achieved through specific funding bids or through the fund raising and land agency departments of the larger partner organisations in which case it can be considered 'no cost' in terms the need for the LBAP to seek additional funding.

Volunteer Contributions and Costing of Volunteer hours

It is very important to recognise and account for the huge contribution that volunteer organisations and individual volunteers make to the Shropshire Biodiversity Action Plan through their involvement with the Shropshire Biodiversity Partnership.

Actions which are delivered through volunteers should not be considered 'no cost' since this would suggest that the plan could be delivered without volunteers. The Shropshire BAP could not be delivered without the effort and involvement of volunteers across the county.

Although the funds do not need to be raised to pay for the work of volunteers it is common to attribute a value to their time as follows:

£50 per day for unskilled work

£150 per day for skilled work

£250 per day for highly skilled and specialist work

Actions in the Shropshire BAP which rely on volunteer contributions will use the costing above to attribute a value to their time. These values are appropriate for using as match funding when putting together funding bids for many of the major funding organisations.

Delivery of Costed Actions

Partner organisations can not deliver the LBAP in full without extra external funding. The rationalisation behind costing actions in the BAP is that it becomes easier to fund raise for them. It is difficult and time consuming to bid for funding so having pre-costed actions speeds up this process and allows for larger bids covering several actions. As well as making planned funding applications easier to manage having a costed BAP also means it is easier to take advantage of one off and last minute funding opportunities, such as underspend from the key agencies or short application windows from sources like the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

Mechanism for attributing costs to actions within the Shropshire BAP

1. The first step will be to identify any actions which can be considered 'no cost.' These actions will include:
 - A. Any actions which are funded through the normal work programs of partners.
 - B. Any actions for which funding has already been secured.
 - C. Any actions which are being 100% funded through schemes e.g. HLS, Woodland Grant Scheme.
 - D. Any actions which can be achieved by using the resources of the partners e.g. meetings where room hire is not charged for, press releases which will be incorporated into an organisation's promotional work.
 - E. Actions attributed to the LBAP coordinator will be considered 'no cost' since funding for these posts will be considered separately and maintained as a top priority.
2. 'No cost' actions will be agreed by the plan lead partner, the action lead partner and the LBAP coordinator. They will then be removed from consideration for the purposes of the funding strategy.
3. Actions which have costs associated with them will be broken down into stages e.g. restoration of 1ha of grassland may have an initial cost in fencing the site and then annual costs of grazing or mowing.
4. Cost estimates will then be established for remaining actions using UK Biodiversity Group cost estimates for habitats and species (with inflation added), day costs for members of staff, known room hire costs, estimates from contractors etc.
5. Once a cost has been estimated appropriate funding bodies will be identified for each action, group of actions or action plan with a view to making applications.

Any actions which clearly have a cost but cannot be specifically given a monetary value will need to be reviewed. This will mean identifying a means of delivery for actions such

as 'promote' or 'encourage' by making actions SMART. For example promotion could be via a workshop or producing a leaflet so that specific costs can be attributed.

The process of producing a full funding strategy for the Shropshire BAP will run alongside the rolling program of review of the BAP. At the start of this process the LBAP coordinator (with the support of the Shropshire BAP Steering Group) will:

1. Agree with the Shropshire BAP Steering Group a proposed method of costing the Shropshire BAP.
2. Begin to identify 'no cost' actions from within species and habitat action plans. It is likely that priority will be given to those plans which have been most recently reviewed as these are likely to SMART and to be most easily costed.
3. Produce a timetable for fully costing all 'no cost' actions for each habitat, species or area level action plan.
4. Review this strategy towards the end of each financial year. This document supersedes the brief funding strategy already included in the Shropshire BAP Delivery Plan.

The long term aim of producing a full funding strategy for the Shropshire BAP will facilitate funding applications by providing easily accessible estimates of costs for specific actions and identifying suitable funding sources. This will assist the development of single funding bids covering several complimentary actions. The funding strategy will also assist smaller partnership groups and volunteer groups in approaching appropriate funding bodies, getting assistance with putting together bids and getting their actions included in applications made by large organisations with more experience of fund raising.

Dan Wrench (Biodiversity Officer) & Fran Lancaster (Biodiversity Support Officer)

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