



Durham
Biodiversity
Partnership

Communication Strategy
and Action Plan
2009-2012

Durham Biodiversity Partnership
Action for Wildlife in Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Darlington and County Durham
Rainton Meadows
Chilton Moor
Houghton-le-Spring
DH4 6PU
0191 584 3112
www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk

Durham Biodiversity Partnership Communications Strategy and Action Plan 2009-2012

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Background.....	1
3. Aims and objectives	2
4. Audiences	3
5. Key messages	3
6. Delivery mechanisms.....	4
7. Communication Roles.....	4
8. Action Plan.....	5
9. Appendix 1	10

1. Introduction

This communications strategy and action plan outlines the key messages that will be communicated by Durham Biodiversity Partnership and the audiences that the partnership wishes to engage with. The action plan covers the period from 2009 to 2012. It is intended to guide the work of the DBAP Implementation Officer and Information Officer as well as Steering Group members and wider partners.

The communications strategy sits alongside the DBAP Delivery Plan 2009-2012, with some actions overarching both documents. It also links into the wider North East BAP Communications Plan.

2. Background

The revised Durham BAP (2nd edition) was launched in 2007. A summary document of the objectives, definitions and targets was produced and distributed to the wider partnership. Full versions of the habitat and species action plans are now only available to download from www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk. Each plan sets out the long term objectives and targeted actions that partners have agreed upon. By allowing the BAP to be treated as a living document the plans can be updated as actions are achieved and priorities change.

The challenge is now to successfully implement the plans, and this will require engagement with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. This communications strategy identifies the means and opportunities to encourage a range of organisations and individuals to buy into the delivery of the DBAP.

This document builds on previous communications strategies produced on behalf of the DBAP including the most recent version produced in October 2007. A great deal of communications activities has been carried out since the launch of the original DBAP “Action for Wildlife” in 1999. Achievements include:

- The development of a website for the DBAP, which holds information on the partnership’s projects and activities as well as all of the habitat and species action plans. This now receives between 25-30,000 hits per month.
- The production of a partnership newsletter ‘Fieldnotes’ which has had over 13,000 copies distributed.
- The production of a summary publication celebrating the achievements of DBAP over the first five years; “Action for Wildlife – Five years on” and an associated celebratory event
- The printing and distribution of leaflets and publications associated with projects run by the partnership, for example the magical meadows natural area publication, the River Derwent grass snakes leaflet and the farmers biodiversity pack
- The design and production of display boards which are used to promote the partnership at a wide range of events.

The present strategy builds on the achievements so far and provides an updated prioritised framework for communications action. This version has been drafted alongside a delivery plan for the partnership to ensure that these two documents provide the overall picture of what the partnership aims to achieve over the next three years.

3. Aims and objectives

The aim of this communications strategy to raise public awareness and support for the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan and to ensure that there is ongoing commitment to the delivery of the plan by the partnership.

Specific objectives:

- Raise awareness of the DBAP and build support for its implementation amongst identified target audiences.
- Ensure that partners are engaged and updated on projects/activities being undertaken by the partnership
- Broaden the different sectors represented on the partnership
- Engage a wide range of stakeholders in taking action for wildlife in the DBAP area.
- Promote understanding of the value and importance of biodiversity and the steps that need to be taken to conserve it.
- To encourage the incorporation of actions for biodiversity into strategies, policies and plans including Local Development Frameworks, Community Strategies and the newly developing Growth Point strategies

This strategy will provide the DBAP Steering Group and partnership staff with a framework for appropriately communicating with stakeholders and target audiences regarding the implementation of the plans.

4. Audiences

A wide range of audiences will need to be reached to deliver the objectives identified above. These include:

- Members of the Biodiversity Partnership
- Funding bodies
- Local government (including planners, community strategy officers, local strategic partnerships, elected members)
- Town and parish councils
- Local community groups
- Developers
- Farmers and Landowners
- Businesses
- Recorders
- Nature conservation specialists
- Schools and education
- General public
- Regional and national BAP partnerships

The different methods which will be used to communicate with these target audiences are set out in the action plan in section 7.

5. Key messages

The DBAP Steering group will aim to communicate the following key messages as part of the delivery of this strategy:

- The Durham Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the actions required to help protect and conserve the biodiversity value of Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Darlington and County Durham
- Everyone has a role to play in conserving and enhancing biodiversity
- A commitment is required by all to deliver the Durham BAP to ensure that biodiversity is safeguarded for future generations
- Biodiversity is not restricted to nature reserves and protected sites; the management of private land and the wider countryside has an impact on wildlife.
- Biodiversity can play a key role in achieving sustainable development, contributing to healthy lifestyles, and assisting in both adapting to and mitigating against climate change.

- Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC), Local and Public Authorities have a legal duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions.

6. Delivery Mechanisms

Several different delivery mechanisms have previously been used by DBAP to communicate on actions and activities with different levels of success. These have included: the DBAP website, regular newsletter, partnership events/training, public participation surveys, and the wider media. These methods will continue to be utilised alongside other communications tools that have not previously been used to the same extent: partner organisations websites, partner newsletters, bulletins and publications, training programmes and face to face talks and advice.

7. Communication Roles

The partnership currently employs two members of staff, an Implementation Officer and Information Officer. They are responsible for ensuring that the Communications Action Plan is delivered, taking a lead on the majority of communications activities.

The DBAP Steering Group, both as a collective and individually, has a wider role in communicating positive action for biodiversity and promoting the work of the partnership. This is both within their own organisations and to organisations outside of the Steering Group. Through effective communication the Steering Group can encourage a greater understanding of biodiversity conservation and involve a wider audience in the delivery of the action plans. The role of Steering Group members in delivering this plan includes:

- Helping to raise awareness of the importance and role of biodiversity at local, sub-regional, regional and national levels.
- Establishing close working relationships with and influencing key policy and decision-making organisations.
- Promoting best practice and providing support and advice to colleagues within their organisations to support the integration of BAP into local policies and strategies

8. Action Plan

Actions	Audiences	Lead	Timescale
Newsletter			
Produce an annual newsletter (Field notes) outlining achievements the partnership has made over the previous 12 months.	All audiences	Implementation Officer	May 2009, 2010, 2011
Develop and maintain comprehensive distribution list for newsletter	All audiences	Implementation Officer	Jan 2009
Develop and test an e-newsletter as a method of highlighting more regular achievements by the partnership	DBAP partnership	Implementation Officer	Jan 2010
Events			
Organise a celebration for the DBAP 10 year anniversary. Use as an opportunity to raise awareness of biodiversity with organisations outside the conservation community.	All audiences	Implementation and Information Officer and Steering Group	June 2009
Develop an annual forum for the whole partnership.	All audiences	Implementation and Information Officer and Steering Group	June 2010, 2011
Raise the profile of DBAP at public events	General public	Implementation and Information Officer and Steering Group	Ongoing
Display boards and associated literature to be taken to relevant events	Nature conservation specialists, Regional and national BAP partnerships, local government, funding bodies, local community groups	Implementation and Information Officer and Steering Group	Ongoing
Branding			

Encourage partners to use logo when delivering actions that contribute to the BAP.	All audiences	Implementation and Information Officer, Steering Group, DBAP partners	Ongoing
Consider developing a series of biodiversity postcards that can be given out at public events, highlighting BAP species and habitats, the work of the Partnership, and the biodiversity website.	All audiences	Implementation Officer	September 2009
Website			
Regularly review website to ensure that the information it contains is relevant.	All audiences	Implementation and Information Officer	Bi-monthly
Ensure website contains news updates from DBAP and partners	All audiences	Implementation and Information Officer	Bi-monthly
Encourage partners to add a link to the DBAP website from their own websites.	All audiences	Implementation Officer	Ongoing
Ensure all HAPs, SAPs and generic plans (including the delivery plan) are updated as required and available to download	All audiences	Implementation and Information Officer, Steering Group and Sub-groups	Ongoing
Highlight seasonal events/promotions (see Appendix 1)	General public	Implementation and Information Officer	See timetable in Appendix 1
Make meeting papers and minutes available to download	All audiences	Implementation and Information Officer	Back dated papers by March 2009 then ongoing
Ensure that details on BAP projects and the communication tools that are created as part of any project are available on the website.	All audiences	Implementation and Information Officer	Ongoing
Ensure that information on developing	Schools, general public	Implementation and	2009

wildlife areas in schools grounds, and links to teaching resources for biodiversity are available on the website		Information Officer	
Press articles			
Submit article for the County Durham Association of Local Councils newsletter/email communication	Town and parish councils	Implementation Officer	
Submit articles to regional and national publications (e.g. UK BAP or IEEM) on DBAP achievements	Nature conservation specialists, Regional and national BAP partnerships	Implementation Officer	At least one article per year
Issue press releases about significant DBAP achievements	General public	Implementation Officer	Bi-monthly
Place articles on the DBAP and work achieved in local authority magazines	General public	Implementation Officer and Local Authority partners	At least one article per year per local authority
Place articles on the DBAP and work achieved in partner magazines (e.g. North Pennines newsletter, Northumbrian Natural history Society news, Durham Bird club newsletter)	Nature conservation specialists, general public	Implementation Officer and DBAP partners	At least one article per year
Email Updates			
Create full partnership electronic mailing list	All audiences	Implementation Officer	January 2009
Encourage organisations not involved in the DBAP to sign up to the full partnership mailing list/proposed e-newsletter	Town and parish councils, health authorities, police, schools, farmers and landowners	Implementation Officer	End 2009
Publications/surveys			
Develop a timetable of public participation	General public	Implementation Officer	January 2009

surveys			
Run at least one public participation survey per year	General public	Implementation Officer, Information Officer	Annually
Promote regional surveys and other EYE initiatives	General public	Implementation Officer	Ongoing
Support the NE regional forum in developing the Wildlife at Work information pack	Businesses	Implementation Officer	End 2009
Encourage schools to survey the wildlife value of their school grounds	Schools, general public	Implementation Officer, Local authority partners	2010
Train volunteers to identify and record BAP species and habitats	General public	Implementation Officer, Info Officer, DBAP partnership	Timetabled to meet actions defined in HAPS and SAPS
Presentations/training			
Seek an opportunity to give a presentation to the County Durham Association of Local Councils annual general meeting or similar forum.	Town and parish councils	Implementation Officer	October 2009
Provide talks and presentations on biodiversity and the BAP process to local groups on request	General public, Town and parish councils, Local community groups, businesses	Implementation Officer, Steering Group	Ongoing
Provide talks and presentations on DBAP achievements at regional and national events (e.g. National LBAP conference or IEEM)	Nature conservation specialists, Regional and national BAP partnerships	Implementation Officer, Steering Group	Ongoing
Give talks and presentations to local authority forums e.g LSPs, planning officers group	Local authorities	Implementation Officer, Steering Group	Ongoing
Arrange a joint presentation with DWT to	Local authorities	Implementation Officer,	Early 2009

senior officers of each local authority to highlight the role of the partnership, NERC and PPS9.		DWT, Local authority partners	
Encourage partnership members to be business and biodiversity champions. Write guidelines for what this involves.	Businesses	Implementation Officer	2010
Arrange a breakfast seminar for businesses to discuss the gains of incorporating biodiversity into their sites.	Businesses	Implementation Officer	2010
Consider developing a seminar for planners (possibly in conjunction with other LBAP in the region) on biodiversity links to LDFs/planning	Local Authorities	Implementation Officer	2011
Meetings			
Meet with LEA representatives to discuss working closer with schools, and information they require	Local authorities, schools	Implementation Officer	2010
Ensure that there is a "BAP champion" on each LSP and LEADER LAG, equipped with a briefing sheet on key points and issues	Local authorities, general public, community groups	Implementation Officer	March 2009
Wider Media			
Develop links with the BBC and local media, exploring the possibilities for radio and television coverage	All audiences	Implementation Officer	Ongoing
Co-ordinate a media programme of coverage for the BAP 10 year anniversary	All audiences	Implementation Officer	2009

Appendix 1

Suggested seasonal Media Opportunities

Month	Event	Contact/Link
January	Big Garden Bird Watch (24-25 January 2009)	RSPB Birdwatch www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/
February	National Nest Box Week (14-21 February)	British Trust for Ornithology www.bto.org/nbw/index.htm
May	International Dawn Chorus Day (3 May 2009)	International Dawn Chorus Day www.idcd.info
	International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May)	United Nations www.cbd.int/ibd/
June	National Badger Day	The Badger Trust www.badger.org.uk
	Garden Moths Count	Butterfly Conservation www.mothcount.brc.ac.uk
July	Save our Butterflies week	Butterfly Conservation www.butterfly-conservation.org
August	European Bat Weekend	Bat Conservation Trust www.bats.org.uk/euro_bat_weekend.php
September	National Moth Night (18 -19 September 2009)	Butterfly Conservation www.nationalmothnight.info
October	Feed the Birds Day (24-25 October 2009)	RSPB www.rspb.org.uk/feedthebirds
November	National Tree Week	The Tree Council www.treecouncil.org.uk