

SEFTON COAST PARTNERSHIP

NATURE CONSERVATION TASK GROUP NATURE CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY SUB-GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING

24 OCTOBER 2005

10.00 a.m. Ainsdale Discovery Centre

Present:

Steve White (Chair)	Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Dave McAleavy	Sefton Leisure Services Department
Christine Bennett	Environmental Advisory Service
Rob Matthews	National Trust
Alice Kimpton	English Nature
John Houston (Minutes)	Sefton Coast Partnership Biodiversity Project Officer

Apologies: Dr Phil Smith

This was the first meeting of the sub-group of the Nature Conservation Task Group (NCTG) set up specifically to guide the preparation of the Nature Conservation Strategy and Biodiversity Delivery Plan for the Sefton Coast. John Houston has been appointed to the 18-month post and started work on 10/10/05.

1. Clarification of project brief

Project area will encompass SAC, SPA and wider SCP area.

The project will be explicitly linked to the Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan: the strategy will include the woodland areas.

The development of the strategy will be informed by English Nature's condition monitoring of the SSSI/SAC. **JH to clarify timescale with Ruth Critchley.**

Partners' agreement to the strategy will be sought at the level of the SCP Board. Formal reporting on project progress will be to the SCP Working Group.

Opportunities for funding will be sought: this includes ongoing discussions between SITA and ENTRUST on the eligibility of the Sefton Coast for Landfill Tax Credits.

A draft communication strategy for the project to be presented at the next meeting. **JH**

Attention will be given to the monitoring needs of the strategy –this will be integral to the final document.

The project will support the delivery of the targets set out within the NMBAP –liaison will be established with the local biodiversity manager.

SCP partners will need to discuss the need to prepare formal agreements on elements of the co-management of the coastal area.

The work will comply with all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. **NCTG and Project Steering Group.**

2. Process, methodology and time-planning

Following initial contact with agencies and authorities information will be collated from interviews with site managers. The background studies will follow a logical framework looking at problems, reasons for the problems and general objectives for management (not detailed prescriptions). It is proposed then to hold a workshop for land managers to summarise the information and discuss common approaches to management (grazing, scrub control etc). The approach was accepted.

Information will also be collected under the categories of preparatory actions (surveys, plans), land tenure issues, ongoing management, restoration management, dissemination and overall coordination.

A close link will be developed with the data bases of the Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan.

The use of recognised experts to support the development of the strategy (as with the 'Issues Groups' of the nature conservation strategy 1999) to be further discussed.

The initial time-scale for the work was received and will be checked and completed by the next meeting. **JH.**

A programme of workshops and training events will be developed as part of the project.

The development of the strategy will be reported at the 2006 Coastal Forum.

3. Communication and consultation.

Communication is an essential on-going component of the strategy.

A draft press release will be prepared for approval of Sefton Council and English Nature. **JH.**

A coastwide approach to communication should be developed –perhaps once the key issues have been agreed at workshops.

An outline programme for consultation to be prepared by the next meeting. **JH.**

4. Key strategies, links and funding opportunities

To be developed. Key strategies to be reviewed include the Working Plan for the woodlands, natterjack toad strategy, sand lizard strategy. The revised NVC survey of the coast is a key reference document. **JH will undertake to prepare a resume of the main findings.**

Links will be developed at local, regional and national level as appropriate, e.g. links to the targets for dune management in the north west regional strategies.

5. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 15th November, 10.00 a.m. Ainsdale Discovery Centre

6. Any other business

(i) Local Grazing Network. Reported that Dr Richard Small was investigating the feasibility for establishing a LGN in the West Lancashire area. This may have relevance to the strategy.