

WBPSG9

Paper 1

12th Nov 2009, Wrexham

Wales Environment Strategy Outcome 21 – ‘Sites ... in favourable condition....’. Achievements and future issues

Background/Progress

Previous paper - WBP SG considered the Outcome 21 Communication and Engagement Plan in November 2007.

The Environment Strategy for Wales (ESW) sets targets (‘Outcome 21’) for getting designated sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar, SSSI and ‘local sites’) into favourable condition. The WBP Outcome 21 Task and Finish Group has been formed to oversee delivery. CCW and WAG are lead partners, with CCW’s Special Sites Project developing the tools to assist collaborative partnership working leading to the delivery of actions. The starting point in developing work programmes to achieve Outcome 21 has been sharing information on who needs to do what, and where. The Actions database holds information for designated sites (Natura 2000 and SSSI), divided into management units, with proposals for action which would lead to appropriate conservation management and ultimately favourable condition of the habitats, species or geological features. To date the data for Natura 2000 sites and those SSSIs in voluntary and public sector ownership has been entered. The conservation objectives and management requirements for all Natura 2000 sites have been published on CCW’s web site.

A web based view of this data has been developed and will be available for partners via an extranet login. Partners will be able to communicate directly to the CCW officer responsible for any unit, and report the status of that action, including when planned and completed. Spreadsheets with the data for individual organisations have already been shared and discussed, prompting action on the ground. Data has also been used to inform strategy and policy making, including the development of Glastir and the River Basin Management Plans.

CCW staff are now using the database to plan and monitor annual work plans and report achievements to WAG.

Plan/Proposals

Over the next 6 months:

- CCW will manage a phased roll out of direct access to the Actions database to partner organisations

- All partners will commence the process of agreeing, planning and reporting completed action
- CCW will provide reports of all partner organisations' achievements
- CCW will enter data for the remainder of the SSSI series by April 2010
- Link reporting of action achieved to BARS

Decision Points

1. WBP to endorse the following principles, as it is important that all the partner organisations participating in the Sites Actions Database fully understand the spirit in which it is intended.

- Issues are identified and Actions are proposed in accordance with the conservation objectives for the sites and their special features. Other actions for entirely different purposes (e.g. food production, business viability, climate change mitigation, access, etc) will often be needed on the same management units but are not recorded in the Sites Actions Database.
- The database includes all the actions thought to be necessary even though it is unlikely that there will be enough resources to do them all in the short to medium term. So we will need to prioritise and find innovative ways of resourcing action.
- The database is 'live'. It has been started up with CCW's often patchy knowledge of the individual units and will be continuously updated with new information gleaned from site visits, landowners, wildlife experts and so on.
- CCW has started up the database with its understanding of the management issues and its proposals for action by CCW and other organisations. There may be other options for solving different problems and it is unlikely that CCW's initial proposals will be the best choice every time. Negotiation will often involve substituting initial proposals with better solutions.
- The agreement of actions on individual units needs to balance the aspirations of landowners with the requirements of the target and legislation. Where there are choices about which organisation takes action on a particular issue, decisions need to be based on effectiveness – the most effective solution is one that will be sustainable in the long term, integrate well with other demands on the land, and deliver value for money for Wales.

2. WBP to agree to the continuation (and possible re- formulation) of the WBP Outcome 21 Task and Finish Group.

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