

# **Stakeholders' Evaluation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs)**

David Ian Cowley

Isle of Anglesey County Council/ Bangor University

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This evaluation is a slight adaptation of:  
**From Rio to Anglesey - Stakeholders' Evaluation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs)**  
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## **Summary**

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan was produced as part of the British response to the 1992 Rio Earth Conference, and the UK Government's stated commitment to Biodiversity Conservation. Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) were subsequently initiated in the UK as a means of supporting biodiversity conservation at local levels, and since the late 1990s over 150 LBAPs have to date been produced to this end.

A number of key areas relating to LBAP performance and process were identified for research. The work aimed to evaluate LBAPs in these areas on the basis of perceptions of representatives from two key stakeholder groups in Wales and England: i) LBAP coordinating officers or other staff contributing towards the process in related roles; and ii) individuals involved in LBAPs as representatives of local interest groups and other bodies in a number of LBAP partnerships.

Respondents were presented with questionnaires consisting of a number of semi-structured statements to which reaction was requested, and a number of more open-ended questions. Analysis of responses showed a general consistency in perception between the two groups in most research areas.

Overall findings show that, although the LBAP process appears to have brought certain conservation benefits locally, there are a number of key areas where it has been severely limited in effectiveness. These stem largely from a lack of clarity of its relationship to the UK BAP, and a lack of resources.

A number of policy and other recommendations for improvement are made in light of findings.

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## Foreword

Whether pursued through ecology, biological conservation, or under other headings, academic study of 'biodiversity' is essentially perceived as scientific in discipline. A principle driver of the quest for knowledge of the natural world is the fact that such knowledge is needed to help inform decisions which affect people, and that same natural world of which we are part. These decisions include policies, plans, strategies and management decisions. Evaluation of progress in such areas can be somewhat removed from the scientific backdrop which seeks to inform them. Such evaluation may not only involve elements of *social* science, but can also demand a degree of subjectivity in making conclusions which are based to a lesser or greater degree on opinion. Yet it is perhaps often overlooked that the evaluation of human-decision areas as processes is as essential for the continued development of our overall approach biodiversity as the purer scientific input of the biological disciplines.

The present study seeks to evaluate one such area in light of stakeholder experience - local biodiversity action plan processes, in Wales and England, since the inception of the LBAP idea in the mid and late 1990s. The main focus for the study is the material contained within ninety stakeholder responses to questionnaires designed to cover a number of key issues. A basic intention was to let these stakeholders speak - by communicating their perceptions on a number of research areas which were identified by the author, in light of some years personal experience in LBAP coordination. In developing the research, account was taken of the limited amount of evaluation material already available, together with original guidance and related documents. Overall consideration of the material covered has led to a number of conclusions about, and recommendations for, LBAP processes in England and Wales. This has not been a straightforward or easy task, and a lack of available relevant comparable material means that the study is perhaps particularly unique. This lack of material reinforced the need for the study in the first place. Whilst findings and conclusions from the study show significant areas of shortfalls, albeit with some indicators of limited success, it is hoped that the need for further evaluation to inform adaptation of the process, which is also highlighted, will be heeded.

This work is not intended as a definitive or final word, but rather a snapshot from a limited number of people at a particular time. Nevertheless, just as scientific studies of biodiversity are normally intended for beneficial use, it is hoped that this study will be beneficially used to improve the development the local biodiversity action process.



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## Definitions and Acronyms

**ALGE** - Association of Local Government Ecologists  
**AONB** - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (landscape designation)  
**ARSP** - Anglesey Red Squirrel Project  
**BAP** - Biodiversity Action Plan (can be used for LBAPs or UK BAPs, depending on context)  
**BARS** - Biodiversity Action Reporting System  
**BBNP** - Brecon Beacons National Park  
**BBNPA** - Brecon Beacons National Park Authority  
**CAP** - Common Agricultural Policy (for European Union member states)  
**CCW** - Countryside Council for Wales  
**DC** - Development Control (for planning process)  
**DEFRA** - Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
**EA** - Environment Agency  
**EBG** - England Biodiversity Group  
**EAW** - Environment Agency Wales  
**FCW** - Forestry Commission Wales  
**GCN** - Great Crested Newt  
**EN** - English Nature  
**HAP** - Habitat Action Plan  
**LA** - Local Authority  
**LBAP** - Local Biodiversity Action Plan  
**LIAG** - Local Issues Advisory Group (prepared original LBAP Guidance material)  
**LNR** - Local Nature Reserve  
**LPA** - Local Planning Authority  
**LRC** - Local Records Centre  
**LT** - Long-term  
**MBR** - Millenium Biodiversity Report  
**MT** - Mid-term  
**M o U** - Memorandum of Understanding  
**NERC** - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006. Legislation covering Wales and England, which included a duty for local authorities to have 'regard' to Biodiversity conservation in their exercising their functions.  
**NGO** - Non-Governmental Organisation  
**NNR** - National Nature Reserve  
**ODPM** - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
**PI** - Performance Indicator  
**Rhos, Rhos Pasture** - Terms used in Wales for purple moor grass and rush pastures  
**R o W** - Rights of Way  
**SAP** - Species Action Plan  
**SD** - Sustainable Development  
**SINC** - Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (areas of particular wildlife value with no special legal protection)  
**SMART** - Used in management for target-setting etc., meaning Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound  
**SNPA** - Snowdonia National Park Authority  
**SPG** - Supplementary Planning Guidance  
**SSSI** - Site of Special Scientific Interest (sites enjoy some legal protection and many are defined on basis of wildlife interest)  
**Tir Cynnal** - Welsh agri.-envoronmental grant scheme  
**Tir Gofal** - Higher-level Welsh agri.-envoronmental grant scheme  
**T o R** - Terms of Reference

**UA** - Unitary Authority

**UK BAP** - United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan

**UKBG** - United Kingdom Biodiversity Group

**UDP** - Unitary Development Plan

**WAG** - Welsh Assembly Government (body controlling administrative functions which have been devolved to Wales)

**WBP** - Wales Biodiversity Partnership (formerly Group)

**WLIAG** - Welsh Local Issues Advisory Group

**WT** - Wildlife Trust

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Aim of Research

### 1.1 LBAPs and LBAP Functions

Local Biodiversity Actions Plans - LBAPs - were developed as part of the UK's response to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Whilst, from 1994, the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) set out a UK-wide programme for wildlife conservation (with plans for 49 habitats and 577 species by 1999), LBAPs and the LBAP process were an attempt to express conservation work commitment locally. The basing of conservation effort around written action plans at both the UK and also at local levels was a new approach to conservation planning. The **Functions** of LBAPs were defined in LLAG's Guidance notes (1998) (considered in detail in Chapter 2) as follows:-

1. To ensure that national targets for species and habitats, as specified in the UK Action Plan, are translated into effective action at the local level.
2. To identify targets for species and habitats appropriate to local areas, and reflecting the values of people locally.
3. To develop effective local partnerships to ensure that programmes for biodiversity conservation are maintained long term.
4. To raise awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation in the local context.
5. To ensure that opportunities for conservation and enhancement of the whole biodiversity resource are fully considered.
6. To provide a basis for monitoring progress in biodiversity conservation, at both local and national level.

In simple terms, the theoretical undertaking of these functions works as follows: LBAP documents are built largely around the listing of actions under the first two functions. These are agreed, and implemented by organisations individually or in partnership. Awareness-raising action is similarly undertaken. The fifth function would be impractical in a literal sense, but does, however, lend justification to inclusion locally of desired action not covered under other functions. Monitoring is to enable the assessment and evaluation of progress.

The period 1998 to present has seen the establishment and development of over one hundred and fifty LBAPs in the UK. There are approximately one hundred LBAPs covering most of England, twenty-two covering all Wales, thirty-four in Scotland, and a still-growing number in Northern Ireland. Whilst LBAPs have in some cases been developed for District Council areas (in England), the majority are based on County Council, Unitary Authority or National Park Authority areas. LBAP coordination is most commonly carried out through a Biodiversity Officer, based with either the County/ Unitary Authority/ National Park Authority, or the local Wildlife Trust. The organisation where the coordinating officer is based is normally identified as the lead body for an area's LBAP. Coordinators' posts are normally funded by the lead bodies, often with some form

of financial support from Natural England (formerly English Nature) or the Countryside Council for Wales. Some level of facilitation (including information sharing) is provided by staff operating at national level on behalf of the Wales Biodiversity Partnership (formerly Group), England Biodiversity Group and also biodiversity officers for the English regions, whilst at further removal the United Kingdom Biodiversity Group.

## 1.2 What is in a Typical LBAP?

LBAP documents have normally been written to include background chapters on matters such as local partnership arrangements and conservation theory, followed by a number of action plans for habitats and for species. These can vary in number from less than ten to more than one hundred (e.g. Snowdonia LBAP has 17 Habitat and 83 Species Action Plans). Anglesey's contents layout is typical (Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1:** Main Contents of a typical LBAP (Anglesey)

Summary

### **SECTION A**

1. Background
2. The Anglesey Approach
3. Influences on Anglesey's Biodiversity
4. Threats and Opportunities
5. Implementation and Monitoring

### **SECTION B: Habitat and Species Action Plans**

- B1 General
- B2 Habitat Action Plans (20 HAPs)
- B3 Species Action Plans (23 SAPs)
- B4 Selection of Anglesey Species of Conservation Concern

References and Further Reading

Appendices

Source: *Working for the Wealth of Wildlife, Anglesey's Local Biodiversity Action Plan*, Isle of Anglesey County Council, 2002.

The most important feature of the documents are the habitat action plans (HAPs) and species action plans (SAPs), although supporting material can run into many pages. Local HAPs and SAPs are chosen from UK BAP habitats and species occurring locally, as well as further, locally identified, priorities. For example, Anglesey has twenty HAPs and twenty-three SAPs. These are shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1:** Details of Action Plan title make-up from a typical LBAP (Anglesey)

	<b>In UK BAP</b>	<b>Locally Identified</b>
<b>Habitats</b>	Ancient Hedgerows Broadleaved Woodland Lowland/ Coastal Heath Sand Dunes Coastal Saline Lagoons Coastal/ Floodplain Grazing Marsh Reedbeds Fens Limestone Pavement Seagrass Beds (N.B. Precise titles may vary between UK BAP and LBAPs)	River and Stream Habitats Ponds Sea Cliffs and Rocky Shores Sandy Beach, Flower-rich Road Verges Gardens Scrub Lakes (some have UK coverage) Plantations Field Edges
<b>Species</b>	<b>Mammals:</b> Red Squirrel, Water Vole, Otter, Harbour Porpoise, Pipistrelle Bat, Brown Hare <b>Birds:</b> Bittern, Song Thrush, Chough, Corncrake, Skylark, Grey Partridge <b>Herptiles:</b> Great Crested Newt, <b>Invertebrates:</b> Marsh Fritillary, Southern Damselfly, Medicinal Leech <b>Plants:</b> Shore Dock, Petalwort, Three Lobed Water Crowfoot, Slender Green Feather Moss	Noctule Bat , Lesser horseshoe Bat  Barn Owl

(Source: Isle of Anglesey County Council, 2002.)

Individual action plans are not written to a prescribed formula, and so the choice of headings and their order varies between LBAPs. Many took a lead from the UK BAP action plans in determining style and layout, and the headings adopted by Anglesey and shown in Figure 1.2 are typical.

The amount of material produced under each heading varies both within and between LBAPs. Anglesey, for example, keeps background information to a minimum, but in some LBAPs textbook-style detailed information is provided on matters such as identification and international distribution. Similarly, the number of proposed actions in HAPs and SAPs can vary greatly.

Many LBAPs were produced in A4 ring-binder format, enabling the addition of further material over time (e.g. Anglesey, Gwynedd, Caerphilly and most, if not all, other Welsh LBAPs). The documents have also normally been made available in electronic format, and are often backed up by explanatory summary leaflets and other material likely to be of interest to the public and other users.

**Figure 1.2** Typical Layout of LBAP Habitat and Species Action Plans (Anglesey):

**HAP/ SAP TITLE**

Background notes

**Area/ sites:** (for HAPs only: includes relevant local sites with protection)

**Condition** (HAPs only)

**Current Status** (SAPs only; *local* status)

**Factors causing Decline/ issues**

**Current Action**

**Overall Objectives and Targets**

**Proposed Action:**

Management and Protection

Advisory

Research/ Monitoring

Education/ Awareness

**Implementation**

Lead

Key players

**Main Links/ Common Interest with Other HAPs and SAPs**

### **1.3 LBAP Assessment: Perceived Problems and Need for Research.**

LBAP evaluation and assessment presents a number of problems which have helped inform development of the present research. These can be summarised as follows:-

#### **1. Lack of assessment of the LBAP process**

There has been no thorough UK, or Welsh or English national assessment of LBAP progress against LBAP functions. Although UK BAP reporting rounds have included questions relating to LBAPs in both 2002 and 2005, these were limited in scope and in what can be deduced about LBAPs as a result (see Chapter 2).

#### **2. Lack of Local LBAP reporting data:**

##### **i) On The Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)**

BARS (operational since 2004), though designed to fulfill LBAP reporting needs, does not hold suitable data for meaningful assessment of LBAP action progress. Development of BARS occurred *after* most LBAPs had been produced, and LBAP targets, actions and layout were often written in ways which were not fully compatible with BARS. This, and other issues of usability, have severely limited BARS utilisation to date, and its usefulness for assessing LBAP action.

## **ii) Lack of consistent, useful local monitoring material outside BARS**

Local-level LBAP monitoring outside BARS has been very limited and variable in nature. Although monitoring of LBAPs is listed in LBAP functions, there is not a body of relevant material available that would allow extensive and meaningful direct comparisons between LBAPs. Whilst much effort was expended on production of LBAP documents, the issue of long-term monitoring tended not form an immediate priority at the time of their writing. (The listing of actions and their subsequent undertaking was given precedence.)

The present study focuses primarily on seeking to fill some gaps in assessment of the process, on the basis of material provided by some of the people most directly involved in a range of LBAP activities on a day to day basis. The work is focused primarily on evaluation of process elements, the justification for this being that one needs to understand the machinery in order to properly assess whether one is satisfied with outputs (although, given limitations in knowledge of outputs, this aspect will be considered in broader, rather than finely-detailed terms).

## **1.4 Objective and Aims of Present Research**

The overall objective is:- to undertake a stakeholder-based evaluation of key elements of the LBAP process in Wales and England.

This was to be achieved through the following specific aims:-

- To review relevant Guidance, UK BAP Reporting results, and scientific literature, to inform a constructive critique of the LBAP process
- Assess evaluation material generated by surveys involving two stakeholder groups:
  - i) LBAP coordination/ associated officers
  - ii) Local partnership representatives from a sample of LBAP areas.
- Recommend steps to enhance LBAP effectiveness, better targeting existing resources

## **1.5 Outline of Thesis**

To meet these aims, the remainder of the work has been structured into six chapters.

Following the present introduction, Chapter 2, Literature Review, begins by considering aspects of the LBAP process in a wider context. The history of the process is then considered, particularly focusing on Guidance material and other documents which



shaped it, and the limited reporting material available. Previous research material also taken into account. Issues identified are used as a basis upon which subsequent research is built.

Chapter 3, Methodology, builds upon understanding gained in chapters 1 and 2, to set out the steps by which the research was carried out, including questionnaire formulation and piloting, data gathering, and analysis of results.

Results are analysed in chapters 4 - 6, which are structured to practically handle defined units of material generated by surveys. The Officers/ Staff survey produced significantly more data than the LBAP Partners' survey and is therefore covered in two chapters (4 and 5).

Chapter 4 introduces respondents and deals with response to semi-structured statements;

Chapter 5 covers analysis of open-ended questions.

Chapter 6 covers LBAP Partners' response to both semi-structured and open-ended questions.

Finally, Chapter 7 includes a Discussion of the analysed material, drawing together the main findings from previous chapters. Conclusions and consequent recommendations are set out. A critique of work and areas for further research are also included.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers LBAPs in a broader context and gives a chronological overview of the LBAP process from its origins in Rio in 1992, through to application at UK, Welsh/ English and local levels up until the present day (2008). In order to develop a basis for the main research element of the present study it is necessary to critically consider some of the more policy-focused material that lies behind the LBAP process, especially where this has directly influenced process development. (This approach is further detailed in 2.4.). A key aim of this chapter is to draw out relevant main topic/ issue areas for later coverage in the main part of the research.

### 2.2 Important Key Elements of The LBAP Process

The LBAP process aimed to - in simplest terms - to generate local biodiversity action and activity in terms of the six *LBAP functions* outlined in 1.1 (and summarised in 3.1). The main key elements of the process can be conveniently summarised as follows:

#### **LBAP Partnership** (*function 3*)

(**Agencies, NGOs** etc. locally, with **Lead Body** for Coordination)



#### **LBAP document**

(Paper and electronic) - outline of conservation work in **targets** and **actions** for identified **priority habitats** and **species**, set down by **Lead**, in consultation and agreement with partners (*functions 1 and 2*).



#### **OUTPUTS**

- in terms of LBAP action, **reported** by relevant partners, to enable **monitoring** of progress (*function 6*):

- **Action contribution locally to UK BAP** (*functions 1 and 2*)
- **Local conservation in areas of work outside UK BAP** (*functions 5*)
- **Better awareness of conservation locally** (*function 4*)

### 2.3 LBAP Process - Defining Success

In order to develop research to evaluate elements of the LBAP process, it is important first to give consideration to definitions of success - what would a successful LBAP process look like? A

key starting point for this consideration is the LBAP functions listed in Chapter 1. In simple terms, success for each of these in turn would therefore involve:-

- LBAPs resulting in new action which contribute towards UK BAP habitats and species.
- LBAP-initiated action to fulfill targets identified for their appropriateness to the local situation
- Development of local partnerships which lead to identification and undertaking of new conservation work locally, with members involved in areas of their own expertise and interest. Local groups being catered for and encouraged, as well as representatives from larger statutory agencies and NGOs
- Demonstrable rise in awareness of biodiversity matters amongst all ages/ social groups etc.
- Covers a broad a range of conservation issues locally, as close to full consideration of the whole biodiversity resource as possible (and certainly not allowing for what might be deemed significant issues to be left out)
- Effective reporting and monitoring of the LBAP enable success in the areas above to be specifically evaluated and defined

To achieve success in these terms it is possible to further detail a number of factors of key importance:-

- Availability of sufficient resources, in terms of funding for work and staff (whether paid and/ or voluntary) to undertake new and existing action
- The status of LBAPs both locally and at higher levels is sufficient that it encourages (or at least allows, but does not hinder) success as defined hitherto (above)
- Good relations between LBAP partnerships and Lead/ coordinating bodies, which together are a catalyst for new conservation work
- There is common understanding of what LBAP coverage should be (locally and at Wales/ England/ UK levels) , and of how LBAPs relate to the UK BAP process
- As well as recording relevant existing action, wholly new biodiversity action is generated and recorded by the process
- Reporting to local and to UK levels occurs at levels which give optimum amount of information at appropriate times, to enable the ongoing monitoring of the Plan in terms of outputs (including contribution to the UK BAP)

- LBAPs hold the levels of information so that they can be efficiently used by all players.

Actions are added, modified and removed over time to ensure that the plan does not become dated (this is much more practical with electronic systems, rather than by hard copy)

These criteria sometimes raise their own questions of definition (what is the 'optimum amount of information'? when are the 'appropriate times?'). However, this does form a basis of broad understanding which helps in identification of areas for research.

## 2.4 Relevance of Policy Evaluation

Ideally, detailed information on outputs/ outcomes would form a main basis for evaluation, and later research will attempt to at least touch on these, as far as practicable. However, as already noted (1.3), the amount of detailed information available on LBAP outputs is very limited; a detailed evaluation of LBAPs in terms of action is currently not practical and would require cooperation, time and resources beyond the means of the present study. The reason for the lack of output information is essentially a *process* issue (see 1.3; key factors were establishment of a reporting system *after* most LBAPs were written, and lack of compatibility between the two). It is important to evaluate the *processes* which drive outputs to inform decision-making for improvement of those process (Purdon *et al.*, 2001). This is true whether one has detailed information on outputs or not. Indeed, where output information is limited, as here, process evaluation can be a key first step towards rectifying this particular problem. Processes arise from policies and the present chapter considers some relevant areas of *policy* in as far as they relate directly to the LBAP process. This will help form a critique of the LBAP process and also help form the base upon which the identification of research topics is made. Consideration of policy and process in the present chapter will also inform discussion of research findings (7.3) and in turn add robustness to the reasoning behind the recommendations made in light of these (7.6).

## 2.5 Note on Relevant Material Available

Relevant independent critical material available on evaluation of LBAPs is limited (and search-engine trawls of academic/ scientific journals were unproductive), and there are no known comparable process outside the UK. There are a variety of official documents relating to the LBAP process, including guidance material and some results from official UK BAP reporting rounds.

To aid clarity, Table 2.1 places documents reviewed here in a timeframe, in context with some of the key events in the history of the LBAP process in the UK, and also including material relevant specifically to Wales and England.

**Table 2.1** Timeframe Summary of LBAP process in relation to Publication of Main associated literature.

Note: Documents appear in *italics*.

<b>Year</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>England</b>
1994	<i>Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan.</i>		
1995	<i>Biodiversity: The UK Steering group Report: Volumes I and II.</i> Included first UK action plans for habitats and species		
1996			
1997	<i>Guidance for LBAPs, Notes 1 - 5</i>		
1998		1. <i>Welsh Supplement to UK Guidance Note 3</i> 2. Shaikh's <i>The Implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans in Wales</i>	
1999	<i>Guidance for Lead Partners</i> (for UK HAP and SAP Leads) Production of further UK action plans for habitats and species		
2000			
2001	Report on 5 Years of the UK BAP		
2002	1. UK Government response to UK Report of 2001 2. UK BAP reporting including LBAPs	WBG advice to Welsh Assembly in light of UK Report of 2001	Launch of England's Biodiversity Strategy <i>'Working with the Grain of Nature'</i>
2003		1. <i>WAG EPTC Review of Local Biodiversity Action</i>	
2004	Launch of BARS (autumn)		
2005	UK BAP reporting, including LBAPs		
2006	UK BAP Review process ongoing	<i>Local Success</i> document on local action case studies in Wales	Report on <i>'Working with the Grain of Nature'</i>
2007	UK BAP Review process ongoing	Wales Biodiversity Framework (incl. <i>Annex H</i> )	Guidance for LBAPs being revised.

## 2.6 Identification of Key Issue Areas for Research

Consideration of relevant documents from the chronological coverage of LBAP history leads to identification of a number of topic areas for exploration in the main part of the research (these are informed by understanding of basic criteria for success considered in 2.3). For clarity, the topics identified and considered most relevant here are noted at appropriate points in the chronological coverage (normally after consideration of major documents or groups of related documents), under the heading ‘*Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification*’. There are practical limitations to the breadth and depth of research coverage possible, and the later development of these areas shall have to take account of practicalities of application to stakeholder perception-based questionnaires. The range of topics/ issues areas emerging from the present chapter’s findings are summarised in Table 2.16 (at the end of the chapter).

## 2.7 Origins: The Convention on Biological Diversity

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was a major international event held in 1992. One of the documents agreed at the Conference was the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which was signed by over 150 countries, including the UK (Gaston and Spicer, 2004). The objectives of the Convention are:

The conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources.

Article 1, CBD, quoted in Gaston and Spicer (2004).

In all, there are forty two articles in the Convention. Article 6 was to be of key importance for the UK’s subsequent development of LBAPs. It stated that each contracting party should:

a) Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes ...

b) Integrate ... the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant ... plans, programmes and policies.

Some of the most relevant remaining articles for the development of LBAPs in the UK are:

- 7 Identification and monitoring
- 8 In-situ conservation
- 13 Public education and awareness

It was left to individual countries to manage the ways in which the Convention would be realised and followed within their own highly varied national circumstances. The UK government chose to develop a national plan - the UK BAP - within which was outlined and developed the concept of local biodiversity action plans.

## **2.8 Early UK Development of the LBAP Approach, 1994 - 2000**

2.8.1 Consideration can now turn to key stages in the history of the LBAP process in the UK. The UK's approach to fulfillment of its commitments under the CBD were set out in UK BAP, which is made up of a series of documents which emerged from the mid 1990s.

The first of these documents was Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan (UK Government, 1994). This provided background information on Biodiversity Action Plan theory, and reasoning behind the UK Action Plan. The stated overall goal of the plan was:

To conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and to contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity through appropriate mechanisms.

2.8.2 1995 saw publication of the two volumes of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group's Report which together formed the first part of the UK BAP. The first of these was Biodiversity: The UK Steering group Report: Volume I: Meeting the Rio Challenge (UK Government, 1995a). This set out background thinking on the need for a UK BAP in some detail, and practicalities on how the BAP was envisaged to go ahead. Importantly, the document defined four key components of the UK BAP process:

- developing costed targets for our most threatened and declining species and habitats
- establishing an effective system for handling the necessary biological data at both local and national level
- promoting increased public awareness of the importance of biodiversity, and the broadening of public involvement
- promoting Local Biodiversity Action Plans as a means of implementing the national plan.

The inclusion of LBAPs as a major component here was an important moment in the initiation of the LBAP process. The definition here clearly saw LBAPs as integral to the UK BAP process, and as a key way of implementing the UK BAP. Annex C of the report further provided some more detail on what was envisaged:-

‘The purpose of Local Biodiversity Action Plans is to focus resources to conserve and enhance biodiversity by means of local partnerships, taking account of both national and local priorities.’

Notes relating to LBAPs were included under a number of headings, anticipating the basic approach which was to be outlined in more detail in the 1997 LBAP Guidance notes (considered in depth in 2.8.5 - 2.8.13 below). Annex C also named key areas in the process, such as *establishing a partnership, defining areas for priority action and implementation of action plans for habitats and species*.

2.8.3 The other part of the Report was entitled Biodiversity: The UK Steering group Report: Volume II: Action Plans (UK Government, 1995b). This set out the first UK Habitat and Species Action Plans (HAPs and SAPs). There were 116 SAPs and 14 HAPs. Each included listings for action under: *Current Action, Objectives and Targets* and *Proposed Action* (amongst other headings). These first UK HAPs and SAPs were to become one of the main reference points for LBAPs, (particularly under influence of the first LBAP function, see Section 1.1 of present work). Many habitats and species found in UK action plans here were to be included in LBAPs, and the headings and layout of action plans used in LBAPs tended to follow the pattern set out here.

2.8.4 In 1999, the remainder of the UK BAP was published as UK Biodiversity Group Tranche 2 Action Plans, (UK Biodiversity Group, 1999). This was covered in six volumes as listed below (and included 35 new HAPs and several hundred further SAPs):

Volume I - Vertebrates and Vascular Plants

Volume II - Terrestrial and Freshwater Habitats

Volume III - Plants and Fungi

Volume IV - Invertebrates

Volume V - Maritime Species and Habitats

Volume VI - Terrestrial and Freshwater Species and Habitats

Under the influence of LBAP function 1, relevant habitats and species from these volumes were often subsequently included as HAPs and SAPs in LBAPs.

2.8.5 As already noted above (2.8.2), 1997 saw publication of a set of LBAP Guidance documents. As officially defined guidance from the UK Biodiversity Group’s Local Issues Advisory Group (LIAG), these were to be crucial for the early years of development of LBAPs



in Wales and England. The guidance notes covered key areas of the process, under the general heading *Guidance for Local Biodiversity Action Plans*, and included:

*Guidance Note 1: An Introduction*

*Guidance Note 2: Developing Partnerships*

*Guidance Note 3: How Local Biodiversity Action Plans relate to other plans*

*Guidance Note 4: Evaluating priorities and setting targets for habitats and species*

*Guidance Note 5: Incentives and advice for Biodiversity*

In addition, a Welsh supplement to Note 3 had been produced in 1998 by the Wales Local Issues Advisory Group, entitled *The Context for Local Biodiversity Action Plans in Wales; Supplement to (UK) Guidance Note 3*, whilst the England Biodiversity Group published a Guidance Note 6: *Education - Awareness to Action* in 2000. These documents have largely shaped the formation and operation of LBAP partnerships, layout and detail of the LBAP action plan documents themselves.

2.8.6 The first of the LIAG LBAP guidance documents, *Guidance Note 1: An Introduction* (UK Local Issues Advisory Group, 1997), was of fundamental importance because it set out the basic elements of the UK Biodiversity process and how LBAPs were to be a part of this. Its defining of the six functions of LBAPs has already been noted in Section 1.1 above. These six functions defined what LBAPs were to cover in broad terms. Some further detail on realisation of these is provided in the document (whilst details relating to some of the functions were expanded on in the later Guidance Notes). Referring to the nature of the LBAP process under *Main Elements of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan*, the document stated that:

‘A Local Biodiversity Action Plan is both a product and a process. It identifies priority action required to implement agreed targets, and specifies appropriate delivery mechanisms, It also provides a mechanism for long-term implementation through the local partnership. The local action plan is therefore an ongoing process comprising a sequence of steps which form a long-term strategy.’

The main components for this step-by-step process were listed in order as:

Establishing a Plan Partnership



Agreeing broad objectives



Reviewing the wildlife resources of the area



Establishing a data-base



Identifying priorities within the national and local context



Setting specific targets and proposals for action



Identifying delivery mechanisms and sources of finance and advice



Publishing the plan and implementing the agreed programme of action



Establishing a long term monitoring programme to measure the effectiveness of the Plan in achieving national and local targets

The last of the steps above clearly envisaged that LBAPs monitor work which contributes to UK targets happening locally. The document acknowledged that there would be variation in the process to reflect local circumstances, stating ‘there is no single model for production ... which has to be followed in detail.’

The document stated that it would be ‘particularly important’ that biodiversity initiatives in given areas should be integrated with one another in the area concerned, and that ‘there will also be significant differences of approach between plans at various levels from regional to very local.’ i.e. Some actions might be applicable to large areas (e.g. reflecting operation of an agency in several LBAPs) whilst others may be very specific and unique to much smaller areas within individual LBAPs.

A listing of *Suggested Content of an LBAP* is given here in summary:-

1. Vision statement/ broad objectives.
2. Review of local wildlife resource, identifying national and local priorities for habitats and species.
3. Review of priority habitats and species in terms of status, loss/ decline, and also current action for their conservation.
4. Detailed habitat and species action plans, including a variety of headings.

5. Geographical analysis of local biodiversity showing e.g. key areas for action.
6. Review of generic issues affecting biodiversity (locally).
7. Proposals for raising public awareness and involvement.
8. Communication and publicity for partnership work.
9. Proposals for monitoring the LBAP.

2.8.7 Further details were provided on the key LBAP area of partnership working in *Guidance Note 2: Developing Partnerships* (UK Local Issues Advisory Group, 1997), which focused on LBAP partnership establishment, roles and other practicalities. Setting the scene from UK BAP level objectives and targets, it outlined LBAP partnership make-up envisaged:

‘The following organisations all have a role to play: central government and its agencies, land managers, voluntary bodies, academic institutions and local authorities and many commercial concerns and individuals ... These partners, together with the local community, need to be involved at a local level to ensure the effective development and delivery of LBAPs.’

A basic rationale behind the partnership approach was outlined:

‘Having a partnership approach means that the workload can be shared and a wide range of resources and skills used. It also ensures that there is a shared commitment to and ownership of the plan process. This should provide a commitment to implementation of the plan.’

The document stated the need for ‘a common understanding of the purpose of the process, respective roles and methods of working at an early stage.’ A list of basic principles expanded on this, covering a variety of points including (in summarised form here) *decision-making, responsibilities, links to other plans/ strategies, communication, relationship to other fora, resources, data/ information sources, timetable* and *monitoring*. The need for a *defined purpose* was underlined, and a number of key principles for developing a successful LBAP partnership listed. In summary, these covered: *involvement of those who can achieve results, need for a shared objective, effective communication, clearly defined roles for every partner* ‘including the resources they intend to contribute’, *recognition that members and their roles will change over time* and that ‘some partners will have their interests affected by the biodiversity action planning process.’

Following initiation by one or more local lead players (undefined), a core group of key partners was to be identified to work on plan objectives and identify a wider partnership considered for involvement from ‘all organisations and individuals associated with, or influencing, biodiversity conservation in the area’. It was stated that ‘it is essential that objectives are determined and

commitment received from partners before the plan proceeds'. The importance of monitoring of partnership effectiveness is stated.

The document did not give any guidance for how local partnerships are to relate to UK HAP and SAP steering groups. This theme shall be returned to below.

2.8.8 The next document in the series, *Guidance Note 3: How Local Biodiversity Action Plans relate to other plans* (UK Local Issues Advisory Group, 1997), underlined a need to broaden 'the constituency of bodies involved in nature conservation'. Biodiversity was seen as part of sustainable development, and it was:

'... expected that development of such plans [would] be closely integrated with Local Agenda 21, as part of a long-term programme for sustainable development.'

(The UK's Local Agenda 21 process saw development of sustainability strategies locally. The initiative was another part of UK response to the Rio Earth Summit).

The document included notes on *Biodiversity Guidance at the Regional Level*. Amongst areas where regional initiatives was said to be helpful, they were stated to ensure:-

'that organisations which operate on a geographic scale greater than that covered by local plans are able to focus their limited resources and plan their biodiversity work effectively. This particularly applies to statutory agencies operating at a regional level such as the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission etc., and to voluntary bodies.'

Detail was not provided on how the organisations mentioned were practically meant to integrate with LBAPs by means of such initiatives. With regard to existing plans (such as coastal zone plans, National Park Management Plans and others) in relation to LBAPs, it was stated that:-

'... those involved in writing and revising other plans relevant to the biodiversity process need to be made aware of the aims and targets contained in LBAPs and encouraged to consider how their own plans may contribute to the achievement of biodiversity objectives ...'

The document urged that these other relevant plans adopt 'relevant actions from the suite of habitat and species action plans' in the UK BAP and relevant LBAPs. Practicalities such as resources to ensure that such compatibility could be achieved were not covered, nor was it stated that a plan covering more than one LBAP area would have to be disaggregated as appropriate.

The expectation on agencies and other bodies already working on their own remits was clearly that some kind of integration with LBAPs would have to occur.

2.8.9 This guidance was supplemented in Wales by: *The Context for Local Biodiversity Action Plans in Wales; Supplement to (UK) Guidance Note 3*, (Wales Local Issues Advisory Group, 1998), which highlighted aspects of the Welsh situation - as then was - where nomenclature etc. differed from that in England. Guidance relating to the process was not fundamentally different.

There have been significant changes resulting from legislation and governmental policy development in the ten years since guidance note 3 and its Welsh supplement were produced.

2.8.10 Continuing with the UK-level guidance material, *Guidance Note 4: Evaluating priorities and setting targets for habitats and species* (UK Local Issues Advisory Group, 1997) covered some key steps in the production of HAPs and SAPs locally:

- identification of priority 1) *Species* and 2) *Habitats*,  
in terms of both a) *UK* and b) *local* conservation concern.
- 3) *Prioritisation* of species for local conservation action.
- 4) Determining appropriate *local targets* for priority habitats and species.

Under '*Links with National Biodiversity Implementation*', it was stated that:

'LBAP action is essentially a bottom-up process for implementing the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. However, this process needs to interface with the UK, or top-down, process that steers the implementation of individual habitat and species action plans.'

Three basic steps were suggested to achieve targeted HAP and SAP listings:-

1. Review of Species and Habitats.
2. Evaluate and Prioritise.
3. Set Local Targets.

Step 1 outlined identification of habitats and species which were UK priorities, on the UK long list (species only) or deemed to be worthy of inclusion locally (for local reasons). In step 2, the habitats and species identified were to be evaluated and prioritised for action, using suggested criteria. Although UK priority listing is top of these criteria, it was noted that:

'Selection of local priority species or habitats in a given area may involve choice *between* UK priority habitats and species, not simply identifying all those that occur in the area'

(emphasis is in original).

Step 3 gives some specific guidance for local target setting; targets should be realistic but ambitious, set to measurable parameters as used in the UK BAP, and set to clear timescales (mirroring those in the UK BAP where possible).

In terms of resources, it was noted that LBAPs:

‘need not set targets limited by the apparent lack of financial resources. Targets should be set that are *appropriate* to the area ... not solely on the basis of current resource availability.’

On page 6 it is suggested that:

‘It may be helpful ... to be aware of, and liaise with, the national habitat steering groups ... by making contact with the relevant lead agency contact Points, and for national species action plans to make contact with the relevant Contact Point or Lead Partners.’

It is evident from the above that LBAPs were 1) not expected to include all UK species and habitats, and 2) could set their own targets, with or without reference to other players in the UK BAP process. Point 1) implies a less than full coverage of UK BAP priority habitats and species locally, and point 2) allowed for setting of local targets which might bear little relation to the UK process. True integration with the UK BAP would mean all relevant habitats and species included in all LBAPs and that local targets would be clearly linked to - i.e. derived from (and/or informing) - UK targets. Rather than outlining how to make LBAP action ‘a bottom-up process for implementing the UK BAP’, the document helped pave the way for separation and non-integration.

The document saw ‘Target setting’ being done on the basis of best available data, but there is no realistic acknowledgment that baseline data was (and is) very scarce for many species and habitats. This too has had performance implications.

2.8.11 *Guidance Note 5: Incentives and advice for Biodiversity* (UK Local Issues Advisory Group, 1997) included notes on engaging support from individuals and groups involved in land management, and how to raise their awareness and support, outlines of regulatory acts and conventions, sources of information and advice, and a table listing funding incentives then available in the UK (by country). Much of this was to become dated over the following years.

2.8.12 The remaining guidance for LBAPs was produced three years after the main series as *Guidance Note 6: Education - Awareness to Action* (England Biodiversity Group, 2000). This outlined the importance of education and its integration into LBAPs, including priority setting, SMART (*specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound*) target setting, implementation, monitoring and funding. Unlike Notes 1 - 5, this document was produced by the England Biodiversity Group (rather than UK), presumably for English use.

## 2.8.13 Critical Consideration of Guidance Notes

The Guidance notes did not offer a comprehensive guide to all aspects of the LBAP process - there were gaps in coverage such as function six (monitoring and reporting) and the advice on target setting in particular failed to take account of the lack of baseline data for many species and habitats locally. Overall, there was no clear picture of how the UK BAP habitat and species processes should relate to LBAPs nor how organisations working at different scales were to relate their action to both UK BAP and LBAPs at the same time.

## Problems of Interpretation

LBAP function listings in guidance (Note 1) left a number of key question areas open to interpretation. These are shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2** LBAP Function Interpretation - Some Key Questions

Function (and Notes)	Key Questions for Interpretation
<b>1. Action towards UK Habitat/ Species Targets;</b> Local input into UK BAP, on basis of information provided by partners	How to feed into the UK process? Should LBAPs: - have disaggregations of <b>all</b> UK BAP work carried out locally? - initiate new work towards the UK process?
<b>2. Habitat/ Species Targets, locally appropriate;</b> Agreement (with partners) of local <i>targets</i> towards priority habitats and species	Are targets disaggregated from UK BAP? What number of plans, breadth and detail?
<b>3. Partnerships, development of;</b> Typically involve governmental agencies, NGOs, local groups and individuals with specialist interest.	Do partners have a common understanding of the LBAP process, and agree on their roles? (In practice, wide variation in the degree to which partnerships relate to LBAP functions.)
<b>4. Awareness;</b> For general public, schools etc., covering the LBAP/ need for conservation.	(Interpretation relatively straightforward)
<b>5. Conservation Opportunities, full Consideration of;</b>	To what degree can this be done justice?
<b>6. Monitoring</b>	Given interpretation questions in other areas above, could there be meaningful monitoring and reporting of action for evaluation of the process?

These areas of interpretation doubt meant that there would not be a definitive vision of how LBAPs would operate in key areas such feed-in to the UK BAP (e.g. from disaggregation of actions and targets in relation to the UK BAP).

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

Areas where guidance may have been unclear can contribute towards identification of issues for research and an assessment of understanding of these amongst stakeholders can help confirm what actual understanding has been. Some topics in Table 2.2 stand out as being particularly important in this respect, and are noted here. The first is the *relationship of LBAPs to the UK BAP*, particularly in relation to functions 1 and 2. *Partnerships* is another area which research could investigate (function 3). Interpretation of Function 5 raises the question of *how broad LBAP coverage should be*, and this also applies to interpretation of Function 1 in Table 2.2 ('should LBAPs have disaggregations of **all** UK BAP work carried out locally?'). Lastly, *monitoring* of the process is an area where a significant amount of evaluation - in terms of outcomes - can be derived, but how possible would a meaningful monitoring be in light of the other areas of doubt? For example, different understandings of coverage could result in very different monitoring and reporting requirements. The points noted so far are apparent from consideration of the overview of the LBAP process as outlined in Guidance Note 1, and are not negated in light of the other notes in the series. Guidance Note 2 underlines desirability of researching the area of *Partnership* already noted. The partnership approach to LBAPs is a key feature of the process. Doubt about *relationship* of partnership working to the UK BAP process is also supported by Guidance Note 2 further backing up the identification of the *LBAP/ UK BAP relationship* as an area for research. The *leadership/ coordination* of the LBAP process by the various kinds of lead bodies (see 1.1) is clearly meant to work in the context of partnership, and research into *leadership track record* is thus an area which would also benefit from research.

The existence of leads/ coordinating bodies and local partnerships in itself points to identification of two key groups of stakeholders which can be included in research: i) *LBAP coordinators and associated staff from LBAP coordinating bodies*, and ii) *representatives from bodies which are members of local partnerships*.

*Education and awareness* clearly fall into the area of the fourth LBAP function ('awareness'), which was covered in Guidance Note 6. Although for practical purposes it might prove to be hard to devise meaningful ways of assessing the degree to which there has been success in these areas with, for example, educating the general public, the need to research this area can be considered as part of the issue of *impacts of LBAPs on local people*.



2.8.14 Having considered guidance material for LBAPs in the early years of the process and identified links between LBAPs and the UK BAP process as a significant area with lack of clarity, it is worth giving some consideration of the Guidance Notes produced for the lead partners in the UK process (for UK HAPs and SAPs as identified in Volume II of the UK Steering group Report, 1995) in 1999 as: *Guidance Notes for Lead Partners* (UK Targets Group, 1999), in seven Guidance Note documents. Those of main interest from the point of view of LBAP evaluation, for what they said about how LBAPs were to relate to UK HAP and SAP processes are:

*Guidance Note 1: Background and Current Guidance*

*Guidance Note 2: Partnerships and Work Programming*

*Guidance Note 3: Monitoring, Review and Reporting*

The relationship between the UK plan processes and LBAPs is directly relevant to the first stated LBAP function.

2.8.15 *Guidance Note 1: Background and Current Guidance* (UK Targets Group, 1999)

Section 4 of this document *Lead Partners and Local BAP*, set out the relationship between these two areas. 4.1 and 4.2 were particularly relevant:

4.1 ... Local BAP groups are responsible for developing action plans for habitats and species considered of importance in their local area, in particular those which have been identified as national priorities. **Coherence between national and local processes is essential** as, in many cases, key actions within national strategies will need to be undertaken at the local level ...

4.2 Lead Partners have responsibility for ensuring that national species and habitat action plans are implemented consistently and coherently across relevant local BAPs. It is recognised that it currently often proves impossible for a given Lead Partner to maintain direct communication links with all local BAP groups undertaking work on their lead species.

(Note: emphasis in original).

The guidance underlines the importance of coherence between UK BAP (HAP and SAP) processes and LBAPs, whilst also acknowledging serious communication problems relating to achievement of the same. There is little attempt to resolve this anomaly, other than a reference in 4.4 that:

‘Lead Partners could use alternative communication options, such as issuing information sheets or guidance for local BAP work.’

2.8.16 **Guidance Note 2: Partnerships and Work Programming** (UK Targets Group, 1999) covered the running of UK HAP and SAP partnerships. In section 2.3 *Operating the partnership* the following point was made:-

iv) A key activity of the partnership will be to provide a steer for coordinated activity across the local BAP level...

This clearly suggests that these UK-level partnerships were seen as being responsible for ensuring that coherence between national and local processes existed. Section 4 *National/ Local Links* builds on this issue of communication:-

4.1 The link between Lead Partner activities at the UK level and local BAP activities at the local level needs strengthening. Lead partners should be aware of local BAP activities for their species ... The work programme should be responsive to information supplied from the local level.

The guidance then went on to state:-

4.2 It is recommended that communication between Lead Partners and local BAP partnerships should be on a pragmatic basis ... Where there is a real need to engage all relevant local BAP partnerships, for example with a highly restricted species, direct links should be established to ensure targets are harmonised and work programmes are complementary.

The term ‘real need to engage’ is open to interpretation. Definition - particularly of what is envisaged by the word ‘engage’ - would have been useful to help ensure lead UK players had a clearer idea of how they should develop contact/ relations with LBAPs.

On the matter of how to deal with contact initiated by LBAPs, the following guidance is given (in 4.3):-

‘... Lead partners should attempt to respond positively to these requests, although for widespread species, this will be very demanding.’

As a practical way of dealing with this, it is suggested that ‘generic action sheets that can be circulated to all local BAP partnerships to facilitate communication.’

2.8.17 **Guidance Note 3: Monitoring, Review and Reporting** (UK Targets Group, 1999) is noteworthy for its almost total lack of reference to LBAPs in relation to these important processes. Rather, focus is on HAP and SAP leads/ partnerships feedback on the UK BAP. In the one place where LBAPs are referred to (Section 3.5), it is stated that:-

‘Country Groups will: ... provide a link between national activities and local biodiversity initiatives.’

(Note: *Country Groups* refers to the Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland Biodiversity groups, made up of lead players in these countries):-

Although unclear, it *could* be inferred from this statement that relevant issues of monitoring, review and reporting would be for the country groups to take on. This statement introduced a new idea, not present in the earlier Guidance Note 2 on communication between UK HAP/SAP processes and LBAPs. Clearly, if LBAPs were to contribute towards UK BAP targets, then the issue of how such action would be monitored and reported up the line should have been covered in guidance for stakeholders - but such was not the case.

#### Lead Player Guidance: Summary of Main Issues Relevant to Present Study

Guidance given to lead players for UK BAP HAP and SAP processes stressed the importance of coherence between UK HAP/ SAP and LBAP levels, but noted communication issues hindering this. The material neglected to cover the means by which coherence would be achieved in the key process areas of monitoring, review and reporting. This guidance (like the LBAP Guidance already considered) did not give a solid definition of the relationship between LBAPs and the UK processes, though Note 2 suggested that the onus for ensuring coordination was on UK HAP and SAP partnerships.

The subject of contact between LBAPs and these groups is returned to below (section 2.6).

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

These lead player guidance notes further back up some of the research areas identified in 2.4””” above. These include *what LBAP coverage should be; also relationship between the UK BAP and LBAP, and partnership.*

2.8.18 The early stages of LBAP process development have thus far been considered by reference to original documents produced as part of the process. A critical evaluation of aspects of the process was made as an academic study (MSc) by Shaikh (1998) entitled *The Implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans in Wales*. Shaikh was particularly concerned to study operational aspects and understanding of the how the UK BAP related to LBAPs in the Welsh context. His stated aim was:-

‘to explore the link between action planning at the UK/ Wales level and outcomes at the local level, in order to progress Local Biodiversity Implementation in Wales.’

After outlining development of the BAP process in the UK, Shaikh noted, under Key Issues (p 42):

‘... A key component of this plan is the implementation of LBAPs which seek to provide a bottom-up approach to conservation, complimenting that of the established top-down process. However despite the publication of various guidance documents ... reconciling these two approaches has remained fraught with difficulty.

If coherence between the two approaches is to be obtained the link between Lead Partner/ Agency activities at the UK level and LBAP activities at the local level needs to be addressed. Of critical importance is effective communication between these levels, especially in relation to information flows and reporting routes. Central to this problem is defining what the role of the LBAP is within the UK BAP framework. The exploration of such issues forms the basis of this study ...’

Main stated Objectives are given in the left-hand column of Table 2.3 below. By way of outputs, the study sought:

‘to provide decision-makers and those actively involved in the biodiversity action plan process in Wales with a number of models which can be considered for use in implementing LBAPs in Wales. This will include recommendations for members of UK Steering Groups ... as well as recommendations for reporting from the local level to the Wales/ UK level.’

The study gathered data from representatives of key groups involved in the (then new) LBAP process, by means of interviews. These were structured to draw out perceptions of how the process would work. The topics covered (p. 53) were:-

- The purpose and scale of LBAPs
- Development of targets
- LBAP Partnership operation
- Information requirements and flows
- Monitoring arrangements
- Reporting routes
- Public awareness

The defined Groups from which interviewees were classified as follows: 1. CCW Strategic Management, 2. Lead agency/ Partners, 3. CCW Advisory, 4. CCW Area, and 5. Local Authority. There were three interviewees in each group.

**Table 2.3** Shaikh's Research Objectives with Summary of Main Results (Shaikh,1998)

Objective	Results
1. Describe perceptions of the role of LBAPs in Wales.	Views ranged from seeing the LBAP as 'the main delivery mechanism of the UK BAP', to believing that the LBAP's role should be to only deliver local biodiversity objectives.  Major perception of the LBAP as a mechanism for developing local partnerships; lesser focus on role to take account of both national and local priorities; lesser focus still on providing a focus for resource provision.
2. Describe how information deriving from the UK Steering Groups for habitats and species reaches those carrying out action locally.	Three main channels for reporting information regarding action at the local level to the UK level were identified: 1. Via a Welsh body; 2. Direct from the LBAP Partnership to the UK Steering Groups; 3. Via CCW.
3. Identify and describe a number of routes, for consideration by CCW, by which information about local action can be reported to the UK/ Welsh level.	Same three main channels for objective 2 above were identified.
4. Highlight the range of critical issues relating to the operational aspects of LBAP implementation which have relevance to the above objectives.  (i.e. In relation to LBAP Target Setting ... and LBAP Composition)	Target Setting - Three main approaches identified: 1. Top down - disaggregate targets set at UK Steering Group level to Country levels and ultimately the LBAP. 2. Top down, bottom up - UK targets provide the context in which LBAP groups determine what they can achieve. 3. Bottom up - LBAP groups determine what they can achieve towards UK targets.  There was 'very little consensus' on the most appropriate method.  LBAP Composition - Local authorities, statutory and voluntary sector organisations favoured. Inclusion of local groups and communities in the partnership not strongly supported

**Results.**

Main findings from the complex interview-generated data analysed in the study are summarised in Table 2.3 (right-hand column). In the main discussion chapter (p.120), a number of important issues are raised on strategic matters, under topic headings, most of which warrant consideration in some detail here:-

### i) The Purpose of the Local Biodiversity action Plan

A number of significant concerns of importance were raised under this heading:

... **the role of the LBAP must be clarified. This is absolutely necessary** if the LBAP is to ... make an effective and meaningful contribution towards nature conservation ...

The results presented in this study illustrate that **there is a lack of a comprehensive understanding by people operating at all levels, of the purpose of the LBAP** as outlined in the UK Biodiversity literature. It would appear that, **in the absence of any strong strategic leadership, individuals have interpreted the available literature in ways which are ... not always consistent with others...**

Clarifying and raising awareness of the LBAP's purpose and role within the UK BAP process would also provide a solid basis for their subsequent and effective implementation ... At present **there is a dichotomy of views between those who perceive the purpose of the LBAP to be that of delivering local biodiversity objectives, and those who believe that it should be the main mechanism for delivering the UK Plan. ... confusion has reigned over debates regarding the operationalisation of LBAPs.**

... if biodiversity is to be conserved effectively ... **the status of LBAPs must be elevated sufficiently** or, formalised, **to ensure that they are considered an integral component of the UK Plan. This is a fundamental issue which needs [to be] addressed,** and ... could have potential negative ramifications for the future development of the biodiversity action plan process.

(N.B. Highlighting of quotes here and remainder of text from Shaikh is by present author.)

### ii). Communication from the UK Level

Shaikh's comments here relate to those above on LBAP purpose, and the need for formalisation highlighted would naturally follow the comprehensive clarification suggested above:

**If LBAPs are to maximise their full potential, coherence between the UK/Welsh level and the local level is crucial. ...**

To operate successfully LBAP partnerships need reliable information relating to a wide variety of issues. ... While ... recognising the need for a degree of flexibility, ... it would be beneficial for communication routes to be formalised in a way which demonstrated a system of operation.

Overall, interviewees most strongly favoured a view that communication to the LBAP partnership should be 'undertaken from the UK Steering Groups via an, as yet unnamed, Welsh body.' This issue remains unresolved in 2008.

### **iii). Reporting to The UK Level**

Shaikh considered (p. 129) that LBAP reporting risked being overlooked where there was lack of linkage to UK Steering Groups, and noted that many of the uncertainties over reporting were related to the bigger question of purpose of the LBAP. (This has remained the position up to the time of writing - 2008 - because LBAP reporting is not linked to the UK BAP on BARS, neither has LBAP purpose itself been clarified by the existence of BARS.)

### **iv) Target Setting**

Shaikh discussed options for target setting for LBAPs, in context of the two views on how LBAPs relate to the UK BAP which his work highlighted:

‘... there seems to be a dichotomy of views relating to bottom up or top down approaches (or a compromise approach somewhere in the middle) It would appear that such views have their origins in the debate surrounding the purpose of the LBAP. ... if the LBAP is a mechanism which is integral to the UK BAP process, then the majority of its targets must be developed within the strategic framework of UK or Welsh operations. This dichotomy of views is evident from, and perhaps perpetrated through, UK biodiversity literature.

The results from this study portray a strong preference for utilising a top down approach to target setting for LBAP groups. This would seem to indicate that the majority of those interviewed perceive the LBAP as a key component of the UK Plan. Nevertheless ... there should be scope for those operating at the local level to inform the process.

... there would also be the opportunity for LBAP groups to develop targets for those species and habitats identified as being of local importance.’

### **v) LBAP Partnership Composition**

Shaikh commented on the status of LBAPs amongst organisations which have parent bodies with representation on the various UK Steering Groups, for example CCW, Environment Agency, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and other specialist wildlife or conservation bodies:

‘Not only will they possess among them ... the ability to undertake a variety of key actions, but they will also constitute the reporting link to the UK Steering Groups. It will be important ... for these local operatives to receive the necessary levels of support from their parent organisations. It is a perception among some of those interviewed that very often, although an organisation has subscribed to the UK BAP process at the UK/Welsh level, its operatives at the local level lack support, guidance and political backing from within. This is often due to UK BAP sponsored biodiversity conservation being seen as a periphery activity ...’

This issue of status amongst local players has implications for reporting and evaluation of LBAPs which are relevant to the present study, and shall be returned to later.

In the final **Summation** for this work (p138), Shaikh notes:

It has been contended that LBAPs should be developed as an integral component of the overall UK BAP process. In order for this to happen **the LBAP's main purpose, and ... roles, must be publicised, accepted and supported by those involved in the process. Only when this purpose has been defined can processes and structures be developed and put in place to progress its objectives.**

The main summary also notes funding as ‘a key issue which needs [to be] addressed.’

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

Shaikh’s work provided rare independent academic critical coverage of certain core LBAP strategic issues. Areas of concern from his analysis add support to their inclusion as research topics in the present work: the issue of *relationship between the UK BAP and LBAPs* was given extensive coverage, and Shaikh clearly saw the uncertainty and lack of definition here as a fundamental problem. From his work this is integral/ clearly related to a number of other issues areas, which have already been noted above (this chapter) as potential investigation areas for development of the present research. These include LBAP *Partnership* and *leadership* (coordinating) body working, the remit and *coverage of LBAPs*, and the *reporting* of action (to UK level). Shaikh also pointed to the issue of LBAP *status* as a factor important for ensuring that LBAPs be ‘considered an integral component of the UK Plan’, and noted *funding* as a key issue.

#### 2.8.19 Official Assessment of the LBAP Process to 2000

A document on the early years of the LBAP process was produced by DETR for the UK Government in 2001, and known as the Millennium Biodiversity Report (MBR), (Anon., 2001). The report gave an overview of UK Biodiversity Action 1995 - 2000, covering development history, policy framework, principles and objectives, delivery, implementation progress, future direction of action plans, and LBAPs. A record of the UK Biodiversity Group position at the time, it made seven specific recommendations on LBAPs, in Chapter 10: *Local Biodiversity Action Plans*, which are shown in Table 2.4 (*comments* by present author):-



**Table 2.4** LBAP Recommendations in the Millennium Biodiversity Report (Anon., 2001), with present author's comments.

Recommendation	Comment
The UKBG urges the England Biodiversity Group to adopt the goal of 100% LBAP coverage and for all Country Groups to seek to ensure that LBAPs are comprehensive and effective.	English coverage still not full as of 2007. Rest of recommendation is more general.
We believe that LBAPs ... should be a component of ... community strategies. Local authorities should take account of biodiversity in their duties of achieving Best Value and make links to local quality of life indicators.	Integration of LBAPs into local authority-led work. Under Community Strategies, they form one of a number of existing schemes.
Country Groups should encourage LBAPs to increase the involvement of all sectors of the community in plan preparation and implementation, if necessary by the preparation of best practice guidance.	Some examples of projects etc. have been included in various publicity documents.
Lead Partners and Agencies should be clearer about what national actions and targets are best delivered through LBAP means.	Relates to issue of clarification of LBAP remit
Considerable further work is necessary to facilitate communication between LBAPs and leaders of national Action Plans. The aim should be to ensure that LBAP activity and results can be reported regularly and effectively to the national reporting framework by electronic means.	BARS now allows reporting, but the relationship between LBAPs and national plan leaders not resolved.
The individual Country Groups should consider the funding needs of their LBAPs in more detail and the possibility of funding strategies which support the goal of 100% effective LBAP coverage and implementation.	Funding is a key issue, but country groups themselves have always had limited resources to address this.
LBAPs should provide a stimulus to the development of local biological record centres as nodes of the NBN.	LBAPs known to be involved to some extent in development of LRCs. Most significant local players may be involved directly rather than through LBAPs.

2.8.20 Two documents gave governmental response to the MBR within the geographical area of the present research (England and Wales). The first of these was *Government Response to the MBR*, (Anon, 2002b), which gave the UK Government position. The specific LBAP-relevant comments are:-

### Local Biodiversity Action Plans

The MBR rightly gives considerable prominence to the importance of LBAPs in helping to deliver the national priorities and ensure that the consideration of biodiversity needs penetrates through all parts of society. It is clear that considerable energies are devoted to LBAPs and there have been many important achievements. The further development and encouragement of LBAPs is primarily the responsibility of the Country Biodiversity Groups, but the UK Biodiversity Partnership must take the lead in establishing mechanisms for effective communication between the local players and the Lead Partners and Agencies of the UK Action Plans. It is essential that LBAP partnerships are enabled to play a full part in the UK implementation strategy as substantial members of the UK Biodiversity Partnership.

This does not systematically deal with the LBAP recommendations in MBR (see Table 2.4 above). However, of particular interest are the notes on: 1) Country groups' responsibilities, 2) on communication between LBAPs and UK BAP, and 3) on enabling LBAPs to play a 'full' part in UK BAP implementation. The resources issue is not directly referred to and specific means of achieving results in the areas outlined are not mentioned. There has been no follow-up report on progress in these areas since 2002. Points 2) and 3) are essentially about the relationship between the UK BAP and LBAPs, which has been shown earlier in the present chapter (2.8.5 - 2.8.13) to have been unclear in guidance notes, and which forms a key line of study in the present research.

2.8.21 The other response to the MBR, covering Wales, was *Future Biodiversity Action in Wales: Advice to the National Assembly for Wales on the UK Millennium Biodiversity Report*. (Anon., 2002c), produced by the Wales Biodiversity Group. Chapter 5 (Local action for Biodiversity) included a statement which recognised the need for consideration of biodiversity in other areas:

'If there is to be long-term progress, local biodiversity action needs to be integrated into wider objectives, so that it is seen as a natural component of programmes to meet local social and economic needs, and recognised as a means of achieving sustainable development at the local level.'

There are no comments on actioning NBR recommendations, nor recommendations on how LBAPs relate to the UK BAP process within Wales. However, some space is given to the issue of LBAP funding:

'We believe that a commitment to widen and strengthen the funding base for LBAP posts for all the local partnerships is essential if we are to translate local plans into sustained action.'

There is no available follow-up report which shows the extent to which this belief may subsequently have been acted upon in Wales (and findings from the present study did not yield anything to suggest any fundamental changes).

Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification (from MBR and associated Response Reports):

Documents covered from 2.8.19 - 2.8.21 all refer to the Millennium Biodiversity Report. *LBAP funding/ resources* and the *relationship between LBAPs and the UK BAP action plans* are clearly identified in the document and both of these areas have been considered in connection with other documents in the present chapter. The lack of response in either Wales or England to the *funding* issue recommendation (sixth recommendation in Table 2.4) has been noted (see 2.8.20 and 2.8.21). The English response made some mention of the LBAP/ UK BAP relationship issue (the Welsh none), but no specific actions to put this in place have been identified in the course of the present research. These two areas can be argued to be some of the most important which should be explored to help inform evaluation of LBAP success. The Welsh response to MBR noted need to integrate local biodiversity work more widely, to help meet local needs, including social and economic needs. The exploration of perceptions in these areas is a possible area for research in the present study. How much do stakeholders think, for example, that biodiversity could be beneficially linked into health?

## **2.9 LBAPs and LBAP Process from 2001 - Present (2008)**

2.9.1 LBAP processes were initiated for many areas from the late 1990s, under direction and influence of the Guidance and other relevant documents considered above (2.8). Formation of local partnerships based normally on local administrative areas (as noted in 1.1) helped lead to printed action plans for all of Wales and many parts of England, most of which had been published by the 2005.

A certain amount of evaluation material relevant to the early 2000s is available from the UK BAP Reporting Results. UK BAP reporting rounds have run on a three-yearly cycle since 1999. Questions specifically involving to LBAPs were asked in the 2002 and 2005 rounds. Respondents included UK BAP lead partners and local LBAP coordinators (though questions asked varied according to group).

2.9.2 A report on the 2002 reporting round was produced, entitled *Welcome to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan - tracking progress - results of 2002 reporting* (Anon., 2002a) (this is available on the UK

BAP Website, at: <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/2002OnlineReport/mainframe.htm>). This reporting round covered some key aspects of the UK BAP, including questions to UK Lead partners relating to species and habitat *status, trends* and *targets*. There were also questions relating to LBAPs which were asked both to UK lead partners and to LBAP coordinators.

**Links between Lead Partners and LBAPs:** Asked to assess the importance of LBAPs in achieving plan targets, 83% of lead partners indicated that LBAPs were at least slightly important. Of these, 60% had made little or no contact with LBAPs. The report stated that ‘further work is clearly needed to improve this’.

Lead Partners were asked the following questions about their own contact with LBAPs:

- a) Which of the following most accurately describes your interaction with Local Biodiversity Action Plans, up to now? (Select from drop-down list).
- b) If you have been in contact with Local Biodiversity Action Plans how was it initiated?

The report stated that there were Lead Partner responses to these questions for 44 (98%) habitats and 364 (93%) species. Results are shown in Table 2.5 below.

**Table 2.5** Level of Contact with LBAP Partnerships, from Lead Partner Responses (Anon., 2002a).

Level of Contact	% Habitats Leads (n = 45)	% Species Leads (n = 391)
Good contact with LBAPs, developing local projects that are contributing to UK Targets.	2	4
Good contact with LBAPs, information exchanged.	13	12
Generic advice to LBAPs on species/ habitat needs or appropriate local actions produced/ distributed	29	16
Little or no contact with LBAPs	53*	61
No data entered	2	8

\* Number of respondents here is greater than total respondents, and appears to be a mistake. N.B. Respondent numbers in this table are different to those given in the text (as quoted above), which suggests a need for particular caution in their use.

On contact with Leads, *LBAP partnership representatives* (i.e. coordinators) were asked the following:-

- a) Which of the following types of interaction have you had with Lead Partners/Agencies up to now? (Select from categories)
- b) Please select the type of contact you have had for each UK priority HAP or SAP for which your Local Biodiversity Action Plan has plans, indicate who initiated contact and

whether (in your opinion) future contact with the Lead Partner/Agency would be desirable if targets are to be achieved.

There were responses to this question from 118 (73%) LBAPs. Results are shown in Table 2.6 below.

**Table 2.6** Types of Contact Between LBAP Partnerships and Lead Partners, from LBAP Partnerships' (= Coordinators') Responses (Anon., 2002a).

Type of Contact	% LBAP Partnerships (n = 118)
Indirect contact (e.g. via newsletters)	69
Generic information	63
Direct advice received (e.g. advice on LBAP target setting)	56
Reciprocal attendance at meetings	40
Development of collaborative projects	17

As well as the discrepancies noted under Table 2.5, there are other complicating factors which limit practical usefulness of results from this study. Firstly, Lead Partners' responses were provided by individuals within organisations who would not necessarily be aware of contacts which might have been made between other staff within their organisation and individual LBAPs. This would particularly apply to larger organisations with regional offices and relatively numerous staff.

For results from LBAP Partnership representatives, there is again a logistical problem: the responses were made by LBAP coordinators and it is not clear to what extent they were based on real knowledge of partnership member experience as opposed to partial knowledge/ general feelings.

Another area of ambiguity concerns what may have been understood by 'interaction' with Lead Partners/ Agencies. Did this refer to *central* leads from these bodies, *local* officers and contacts, or both/ either? It is highly unlikely that LBAP coordinators would be fully aware of contact between all lead partners and all local LBAP partnership members.

## Successes

In this section of the 2002 reporting results document, Anon. (2002a), LBAP coordinators were asked list up to five habitats, five species and five other successes in the implementation of their plan for which they feel their LBAP had been most successful. Responses were received for: habitats 70 (43%), species 68 (42%), other successes for 75 (46%) of LBAPs, though full breakdown of response detail is not provided. Figures are provided for ‘other’ successes reported by LBAP officers, and are given in Table 2.7 below.

**Table 2.7** ‘Other’ successes reported by LBAP officers (Anon., 2002a).

Category of Success	Number of Successes
Public awareness/ communications	42
Development and Planning	28
Community/ local involvement	26
Links to local strategies and programmes	26
Partnership building	25
Education	23
Surveys	20
Funding (implementation)	18
Agriculture	13
Data management	11
Funding (coordination)	10
Business	9
Other	6
Forestry	4
Tourism	3

Note: table shows successes by category other than those for the habitats and species where officers felt their LBAPs had been most successful.

For both this material and habitat and species successes questions, there was no indication as to what extent the successes listed were *new* action resulting from the LBAP rather than action which would have been carried out without the process. The results given also depend on LBAP officers’ knowledge in the relevant areas and there is likely to be a range of variation here. E.g. Officers newer to post would tend to be less aware. The definition of what exactly constitutes ‘success’ is open to subjective interpretation. E.g. *Links to local strategies and programmes* may simply involve attending a meeting or e-mailing the relevant officer in an organisation. Given these qualifications, these results need to be treated with caution.

## Obstacles to Progress

Two questions were asked to LBAP coordinators. The first was set out as follows:

‘This question seeks to gain information on constraints to progressing the LBAP overall, rather than individual SAPs and HAPs.

It is widely acknowledged that financial resources are limiting the delivery of LBAPs. Given this, select the three other most significant constraints to achieving the targets of your LBAP overall, and indicate the order of priority (1-3; with 1 being the most significant constraint). Only include constraints that are acting as a real blockage to delivering your LBAP or leading to substantial delay in delivery. For each constraint, please indicate whether you feel that it is within the ability of your partnership to resolve the constraint.’

Responses to this question were made for 91 (= 57%) LBAPs, and results are presented in Table 2.8 below. This material is presented in graph form in the document as ‘Funding and Incentives Constraints’, though the question clearly seemed to be steering respondents away from funding in terms of ‘financial resources’, and several of the categories directly imply funding. One category actually includes the word funding: ‘Heritage Lottery Funding - support required’.

**Table 2.8** LBAP Incentives Constraints (Anon., 2002a).

Constraint	% of Constraints
Staff resources - insufficient	63
Agricultural schemes structure/ payment changes needed	18
Other	5
Agency grant - support required	4
Agricultural schemes - not delivering wildlife gains	3
Heritage Lottery Funding - support required	3
Charitable trust/ organisation - support required	1
Landfill/ aggregates tax-support required	1
Species/ habitat champion not found	1

More material is provided on constraints to implementation, research, and process constraints for LBAPs. This is presented in Tables 2.9 - 2.11 below. It is not clear from the document how data in these Tables were derived and broken down in relation to the question quoted above, or whether any of the material was derived from another question.

**Table 2.9** LBAP Implementation Constraints (Anon., 2002a).

Constraint	% of Constraints
Funding and incentives	31
Research, survey and information	19
Action plan process	17
Communication	11
Partnership	10
Policy, legislation and Designation	9
Species and Habitat management	4

This material again clearly includes funding (which has come in the top category for perceived constraints to implementation).

**Table 2.10** LBAP Research, Survey and Information Constraints (Anon., 2002a).

<b>Constraint</b>	<b>% of Constraints</b>
Baseline survey - required	40
Local Records Centre - required	21
Monitoring surveys required	17
Coordinated recording scheme/ database required	10
Habitat inventory compilation - required	4
Specialist expertise required	4
Data access/ exchange required	2
Skills transfer/ training required	2

This breakdown of survey and related constraints clearly shows baseline data being the biggest perceived constraint. This is closely related to some of the other categories. A general criticism of this material is that there do not seem to be rigid boundaries between some of the categories (e.g. LRCs also involve Data access and exchange).

In Table 2.11, lack of establishment of a work plan suggests a proportion of LBAPs in relatively early stages. However, the usefulness of the material is limited; it is unclear whether responses are in reference to whole LBAPs (as in Table 2.8 above) or to individual HAPs and SAPs within LBAPs. Local-national link insufficiency was noted as being the second highest process constraint. This is of significance for the key theme of relationship between UK BAP and LBAP processes which has been identified for the present study.

**Table 2.11** LBAP Action Plan Process Constraints (Anon., 2002a).

<b>Constraint</b>	<b>% of Constraints</b>
Work plan not established	24
Local-national links - insufficient	22
LBAP partnership not established or working	15
Unrealistic timescales for targets	15
Other	12
Country Group/ Forum not useful	7
National Steering Group not established	5



In summary, although there is some quite detailed material relating to LBAPs in the 2002 Reporting round, its precise meaning and interpretation is often open to question or subject to some ambiguity. It therefore needs to be used with some caution.

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

A number of areas covered in the reporting round can help inform development of topics to be covered later in the present research. Considering coverage of perceptions of successes, the meaningfulness of results would have been enhanced by knowledge of the degree to which the kinds of work in the given in reporting round results would have happened without the LBAP process. This leads to considering the question to what degree is *new action being generated by LBAPs?* Related to this is the *degree to which LBAPs are being used in local decision making in practice*, which would be an indicator of credibility in the document. The areas where constraints were explored in 2002 reporting were often bound up with *resources*, the allocation of which is a reflection of *status* of the LBAP process. Stakeholder perceptions into these areas could give valuable insights in context of the present evaluation research.

### 2.9.3 2005 Reporting Round

The 2005 reporting round was not followed up with a comparable report for UK results to that of 2002, but a summary of highlights was produced as: *The UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Highlights from the 2005 reporting round*. (Anon., 2006a). The main focus of this document was UK-level habitat and species action plans, from the point of view of the relevant UK lead players. There were two areas where summaries of results involving LBAP coordinators were noted. The first of these in on *Constraints to Delivering Action Plans*. Figures derived from the table presented in the document are shown in Table 2.13 (far right-hand column). The most common constraint identified was lack of funding or incentives. Due to the fact that responses were chosen from categories set by the questionnaire writers, the present author would suggest that results should be treated as general, rather than a comprehensive reflection of LBAP coordinators feelings on the full range of constraints in terms appropriate to LBAPs.

Under *Links between national and local plans*, some rather basic material was included on responses from UK Lead Partners and LBAP coordinators, on whether there had been an improvement in contact between the two groups since 2002. Most Lead Partners felt:

‘... contact was “about the same” but ... 11% ... felt it had improved’. For LBAP coordinators, 26 (20%) ‘thought contact had improved with only 6 (5%) feeling it was worse than in 2002’.

The document grouped cases of no change with instances of improvement in contact:

‘LBAP coordinators were asked to give examples of national plans where good contact had been maintained, contact had improved or new contact had been made since 2002. LBAPs listed 130 plans (37 habitats and 93 species) in these categories including 53 where contact was improved or new.’

From the above quote, it can be inferred that well over half of the 130 plans noted merely referred to *maintaining* of existing contact. Where improvement was recorded, there was no information on the species or habitats concerned, nor the extent of the improvements in contact. The statement that there ‘are therefore some signs of improving contact’ should thus be treated with some caution.

Overall, the document gave little information relating to LBAPs ( focus was actually on UK BAP Lead Partner results.) The lack of prominence given to LBAP coordinators’ responses may itself be an indicative reflection of the relatively low position of LBAPs in relation to UK BAPs.

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

The general nature of the constraints identified in the document again helps underline the potential usefulness of obtaining more detailed stakeholder perceptions in some of the key relevant areas which could lie behind actual success, such as the areas of *resources* and LBAP *status*.

2.9.4 A more detailed breakdown of results from the 2005 reporting round was however produced for Wales as: Progress Towards the 2010 Target in Wales: Wales Report from the 2005 UK BAP Reporting Round (Anon., 2007) The material most relevant to LBAP evaluation covers i) LBAP successes, ii) LBAP constraints, and iii) Links between Local and National Plans. 23 out of a possible 24 Welsh LBAP coordinators reported in this reporting round.

For ‘LBAP successes’ (Table 2.12), respondents had to indicate successes based on a list defined topic areas. Some of the categories in Table 2.12 seem to be less than clearcut, and the way they were responded to would not necessarily be consistent. For example, *Community/local involvement* could involve action on the ground, and might potentially overlap with *Funding (implementation)*, or with *Education*. A project with several elements could potentially be recorded as several responses or once only, in the area most relevant to the main part of the work. These results should

therefore be treated with caution. *Public awareness/communication* is the most popular category, and the related area of *Education* can be considered alongside this.

**Table 2.12** LBAP Successes (Anon., 2007).

Success Topic Area	Number of Welsh LBAPs
Public awareness/communication	23
Community/local involvement	14
Survey/monitoring	12
Partnership building	12
Education	10
Development/planning	9
Funding (implementation)	8
Links to local strategies and programmes	7
Data management	3
Agriculture	2
Forestry	1
Tourism	1
Other	5

Table 2.13 shows results from a question where LBAP Coordinators were asked to list major constraints restricting progress on their LBAPs. These had to be chosen from a set list.

**Table 2.13** LBAP Constraints (Section 6.3) (Anon., 2007).

Constraint	Number of Times Cited Wales	Number of Times Cited UK*
Lack of funding or incentives	33	87
Inadequate Communication	14	31
Problems with Partnership working	12	40
Problems with Policy, Legislation or Designation	12	33
Inadequate Research or Survey Information	12	58
Problems with the Action Plan Process	6	38
Inadequate Species and Habitat Management	4	18

\* See DEFRA (2006) in 2.6.3 below.

The lack of detail provided (as shown in Table 2.13) makes the material of limited use for evaluation purposes. Lack of funding or incentives was clearly seen as the biggest constraint, but it is unclear whether this is general, or in reference to particular areas of funding need. Other categories are hard to interpret. For example, *Inadequate Communication* could refer to one or more of various sub-groups: local partners, UK BAP leads, County Council staff and elected members. Without more detail, these results can only be used to point to broad areas.

Finally, results are presented from a question which explored perception of contact between the work of Local Biodiversity Partnerships, the National lead partners and steering groups (see Table 2.14).

**Table 2.14** How has Contact changed since 2002? (Anon., 2007).

<b>Contact with Lead Partners</b>	<b>Improved</b>	<b>About the Same</b>	<b>Not Known</b>	<b>Deteriorated</b>
Lead Partners for Species Action Plans	13	112	20	0
Lead Partners for Habitat Action Plans	12	21	5	0
Welsh LBAP Coordinators Opinion	10	10	2	1

First two rows show Lead partner perception of how communication with LBAP partnerships had changed since 2001 (all UK).

The 2002 Reporting Round (and The Millennium Biodiversity Report of 2001) had highlighted the need for improved communication between lead partners and LBAPs. Table 2.14 shows perception in Wales was that there had been some improvement since 2002 in communication between lead partners and Welsh LBAPs. The actual significance of the figures is however unclear. Lack of knowledge of original baselines means that the improvements cannot be gauged. For example, if communication with UK habitat or species leads in 2002 had been non-existent, contact from one alone would be registered as an increase.

In summary, material from the 2005 Reporting Round in Wales is limited in usefulness, but has some indicative value for gaining insights into LBAP coordinators' perceptions of aspects of the LBAP process. Some of the limitations and uncertainties pointed out in the present review reflect question-format choices made by those who agreed Reporting Round questions.

Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

The issues considered and identified from the 2002 report (2.9.3) are further underlined from consideration of this Welsh report of the 2005 reporting round.

2.9.5 In considering the period from 2000 - present, there is a certain amount of critical material available for consideration. Firstly, Avery *et al.* (2001), in an NGO-produced document, although giving positive impressions of the role of LBAPs and their importance, focused on the UK BAP process, LBAPs being seen as just one factor in this process. In concluding a brief section on LBAPs, they noted:

‘we recognise that there have been some difficulties in linking and coordinating LBAP work and the UK biodiversity process, and this is an area that needs further work.’

Here is recognition by a number of significant NGOs of the lack of clarity on how LBAPs were meant to relate to the UK process, which further supports the need to research current perceptions of relationship between UK BAP and LBAPs.

2.9.6 The year after Avery *et al.* saw publication of Nature Conservation (Marren, 2002). This gave an overview of British conservation scene in last fifty or so years. Chapter 11 gave some critical opinions on BAP and LBAP history to 2002. Marren considered the BAP process to have had some benefits:

‘By means of a hive of talk-shops and a mountain of plans, the Biodiversity industry has capitalised on public opinion, brought nature conservation more firmly into the national agenda, and produced more cooperative ways of working.’

He noted the variation in engagement in the process between different governmental bodies and was critical of the bureaucratic weight of the process, particularly in connection to species action plans (SAPs), stating that

‘some fear the process is promoting a species-centred approach ... which is wasteful and logistically daunting.’

It is worth quoting Marren’s final misgivings about the process:

‘... Biodiversity planning appeals to those, perhaps the majority of conservationists, who are wrapped up in the *means* to an end and feel at home in the planner’s world of plans, targets and zones. What one misses in all the literature devoted to it is any readiness to stand back from the details and look where this self-replicating mountain of plans may be taking us.’

Comment: Marren was particularly concerned to note possible over-emphases on SAPs and paperwork generated by the process, which helps support identification of *action listings* and

possible need for more *flexibility* in these in LBAPs as areas for possible study in the present research.

2.9.7 A rare example of published research relating directly to the LBAP process was produced by **Evans**, in 2004, entitled: *What is local about local environmental governance? Observations from the local biodiversity action planning process* (Evans, 2004). This found that LBAP processes tended to involve existing players rather than drawing in new participants and interested parties. This supports an argument that LBAPs tend more to focus on links between existing established players than actually broadening out partnership involvement. This is related to issues of *partnership* working and success which are raised in the present study e.g. to what extent LBAPs are dealing in work that would have been done anyway, without the existence of the process.

2.9.8 Biodiversity work focus within England was defined in 2002 by a Biodiversity Strategy specifically focused on the country: *Working With the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England* (Anon, 2002d). Covering 2002 - 07, the Strategy included *Local and regional action* (making up chapter 9). The stated *Vision* for this area in the Strategy was:

‘The full integration of biodiversity considerations within regional and local policies, strategies and programmes. Healthy and flourishing broad partnerships that champion, promote and enhance local and regional biodiversity and its distinctiveness and help deliver national priorities.’

Two key issues under *The Nature of the Challenge* are of particular relevance to the present study:

- Clarifying the role and purpose of the respective administrative tiers (national, regional and local) in implementing biodiversity action
- Ensuring that local contributions are fully recognised as integral to biodiversity action in England

In considering local work to date, it was acknowledged that ‘a number of factors have constrained progress.’ It went on, making some acknowledgment of certain *significant issue* areas:

‘One of the biggest has been **resource limitations**. For example, in many cases it has been difficult for partnerships to secure resources to coordinate LBAPs in the long-term, and short-term contracts and lack of continuity have been common. There have also been problems with communication between the local and regional levels ... and **between LBAPs and national action plan lead partners and agencies** ... The diversity of local administrative approaches could benefit from the establishment of common standards on target setting and **guidance on best practice in reporting and monitoring**. Work has already been taken forward to integrate LBAPs into the new Biodiversity Action Reporting System ... Further work here will help to ensure that

activities in local areas are complementary to one another and together contribute tangibly to national objectives.’ (Emphases added by the present author.)

Under *What we want to see and how we will achieve it*, a programme for local and regional action was outlined. Essentially, this entailed integration of biodiversity into other sectors, encouraging ‘the development and improvement of LBAPs and regional coordination mechanisms’ and (with BARS) development of target setting, reporting and monitoring systems. *Priority policy issues* for the achievement of this programme were:

**‘Managing the Process: Taking Stock** - The efficient operation of local and regional biodiversity processes and structures to contribute to national objectives and local priorities

**Target Setting, Reporting and Monitoring** - Measurement of the achievements of local and regional biodiversity action

**Integration** - The contribution of local and regional action to national biodiversity objectives.

- Integration of biodiversity into local and regional policies and programmes.

**Biodiversity made relevant to local people**

**Sharing Information and Good Practice** - To promote communication and shared understanding at the local and regional levels.’

Appendix vi of the Strategy includes desired outcomes, with a number of actions.

Overall, the Strategy, essentially about England’s contribution to the UK BAP process, listed key problem areas in relation to local biodiversity work/ LBAPs and proposed to undertake specific action to resolve these. Integration of work at all levels, to feed into the UK plan, effective reporting, and the need to resolve funding and resource problems were all matters directly or indirectly addressed. The emphasis on integration reflected policy development since production of the UK BAP and the LIAG LBAP Guidance documents.

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

From identification in ‘*significant issue areas*’ the document further underlines the desirability of research investigation into issues of *funding/ resources, reporting* and the *relationship of LBAPs to UK BAP*.

2.9.9 How did the England Biodiversity Strategy fare in the years after it was published? A report covering the first four years was produced entitled: *Working With the Grain of Nature - Taking it Forward Volume 1. Full Report on Progress under the England Biodiversity Strategy 2002 - 2006* (Anon, 2006b). Although described as a ‘full report’ Strategy progress, this document was

disappointing for not including proper assessments of the action programmes outlined in that Strategy. In its own words:

The work programmes published in the original strategy were found to be unnecessarily detailed and prescriptive. In some cases, the policy landscape changed fast and the key deliverables were either achieved early on in the implementation or became out of date.’ The Strategy seems to have been extensively modified during its run time and reporting on the original Strategy for ‘Local and Regional Biodiversity’ was minimal - many of the policy issues and their desired outcomes were not referred to. Under ‘Challenges’ the document built up a new focus for action:

‘A key priority is to ensure that the regional core services ... are delivered to maximise the potential for securing longer term sustainable funding. These services include maintaining regional and local biodiversity partnerships, securing funding and influencing local and regional policy and delivery. ....’

New work programmes for 2006 -10 were listed. These were simpler than those in the original Strategy. The most relevant *anticipated outcomes* for local action (for the present study) were:

**Anticipated Outcomes by 2010:**

- Biodiversity partnerships at the local and regional level are secure and fully funded.
- Appropriate guidance is available to Local and Regional Biodiversity Partnerships.
- Frameworks such as BARS and Local Records Centres are being fully utilised and supported at both local and regional level and provide clear local and regional monitoring data.

The document lists ‘Deliverables’ to achieve the outcomes noted above. These include securing sustainable funding for LBAP partnerships, improved data accessibility, and biodiversity integration through establishment of landscape-scale partnerships.

Overall, the report did not actually give progress on many key England Biodiversity Strategy action areas in relation to LBAPs. It signified a greater emphasis on biodiversity integration across various work areas and sectors, with less direct references to LBAP issues. However, it clearly supported proper *funding* for LBAPs, and thus showed official acknowledgment in England of the issue of LBAP *resources* (already identified as an area where research is desirable in the present study).

2.9.10 No specific Biodiversity Strategy has been produced for Wales (although a Wales Biodiversity Framework was produced in 2007 and is considered below). Welsh response to the MBR in 2002 above has been considered above. In 2003 saw another Welsh document which



covered Welsh local biodiversity action: *Environment, Planning and Transport Committee Review of Local Biodiversity Action* (Anon., 2003). This was produced following consultation with County Councils and other organisations involved with LBAPs for the Assembly's Environment, Planning and Transport Committee (EPT) Committee. The document included ten recommendations made by the Committee. Seven of these have particular local relevance and are shown in Table 2.15 below, with comments (by present author, with some information supplied by Julia Korn of WBP Support Team) on resulting progress.

**Table 2.15** EPT Recommendations (Anon., 2003), with present author's Comments/ Subsequent progress history.

Recommendation, that ...	Comment/ Progress History
WAG considers means of strengthening local government commitment to local biodiversity action, and presses all Local Authorities in Wales to adopt LBAPs as supplementary planning guidance, in line with planning policy guidance, and use them to underpin Community Strategies.	Was actioned; a few authorities made LBAPs into SPG, something they were not written to be. Failure of this idea - U-turn on advice in 2007 Wales Biodiversity Framework. Many LBAPs do have biodiversity policies in CSs.
WBP take steps to increase coordination between local and national strategies and partnerships, and place a greater emphasis on local target setting.	Some local target advice given, being revisited in 2007 Coordination: Basic issue unresolved 2008; WBP support for BARS development e.g. through training.
WBP take the lead in developing a strategy and accompanying guidance on monitoring and reporting of local biodiversity actions.	Development of BARS at UK level has changed situation since the recommendation. (BARS is WBP supported.)
WAG establish a review of financing arrangements to clarify, streamline, and synchronise funding sources available to support local biodiversity action.	Funding review was commissioned by WBP in 2004 - no further progress. Funding a key issue in present study.
WAG ensure that dedicated funding is made available to finance the WBP LBAP Facilitator and a permanent full-time LBAP officer for each partnership, and consider mechanisms for the specific funding of local biodiversity actions, possibly by the direct funding of partnerships.	Facilitator funded; from 2007 three posts funded by WAG, hosted by Wildlife Trust (2) and CCW (1). No progress on dedicated funding for LBAP Officers (are LA/ NPA funded sometimes with CCW support). No direct funding of partnerships; some actions funded through CCW
WAG take steps to establish the development of a national Local Records Centre network ...	Significant progress in all areas of Wales (all operational by late 2007)

All-Wales bodies such as CCW and EA look at ways of increasing the accessibility of expert support locally, and to increase the capacity of local authorities in their ecological and LBAP expertise.	Situation has worsened since 2005 with CCW cutbacks.
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WBP = Wales Biodiversity Partnership

Considering these recommendations four years after the document was produced, it is clear that resulting action has been mixed. Establishment of local records centres covering all Wales is perhaps the greatest success. Progress on many of the other points has been more limited. There has never been an official follow-up report to explain progress, or to revisit issues to update recommendations.

In summary, this document did attempt to address some key strategic LBAP issues, leading to some success in certain areas. Progress on recommendations has been limited.

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

Table 2.15 shows that LBAP *reporting* and *funding* were two issues where recommendations were made, with different responses by way of later follow-up. Both of the issues have been identified elsewhere in the present chapter; their presence here further supports their being areas of study for the present research.

2.9.11 Autumn 2004 saw the launch of the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) based with the JNCC/ English Nature in Peterborough. This complex, web-based electronic system was designed to fulfill reporting requirements for the UK BAP, including LBAPs, and thus help fill a gap in provision for undertaking the stated LBAP function of Monitoring (see 1.1). In the words of an information note produced at the time of the launch of BARS (Anon, 2004):

‘a more coordinated approach to recording BAP action and delivery will make it possible to identify both what is and is not being done at UK, country and local levels.’

Training for stakeholders in BARS use has been given at various times (e.g. at WBP Biodiversity conferences and in one-off sessions. The issue of linking of actions between UK and local levels (also noted in 2.3 and 2.4.3) was to remain unclear despite the existence of BARS and is still not properly resolved at the time of writing in 2008.

2.9.12 In 2006 a document was produced with the aim of publicising biodiversity action success stories in Wales: Anon., 2006c. *Local Success A Celebration of Biodiversity Action in Wales*. Wales Biodiversity Partnership. This covers eleven case studies. The ministerial forward states:

‘The 24 Local Biodiversity Partnerships in Wales have done an enormous amount of work to prepare and enact ... LBAPs in support of the UK BAP’

A key question which this statement ignores is what amount of the work which has been done in LBAPs would have been achieved anyway? To what extent is generated work really new? LBAPs were written to include existing action and action that had already been planned or was likely to have happened without the process. There is no control for this effect, and this is one of the problem areas in evaluating policies (see Purdon *et al.*, 2001). At least some of the projects outlined in the document were funded and organised with little or no relationship to the LBAP process, for example Cardigan Bay Marine Wildlife Centre, Pontygwaith Nature Reserve and Gwent Grassland Initiative. This is not to be criticised here in itself, but rather the fact that in light of the quote above from the forward, there is a distinct possibility that readers could get the impression that all of the projects were somehow bound up with and even brought about by the LBAP process.

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

The critical points made above relate to the question of degree of *new action generation by the LBAP process*. They also suggest that an overly positive ‘*spin*’ might be put on aspects of the process in some contexts, which might lead to unrealistic impressions of the worth or usefulness of the process. Exploration of perceptions on this topic amongst stakeholders could be an interesting area for research.

2.9.13 In contrast to England, Wales has not to date produced a specific biodiversity strategy, but the *Wales Biodiversity Framework*, (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007) does set out operation of biodiversity action in Wales, including operation of LBAPs and is an official (minister-approved) outline of main governmental policy and action in biodiversity. The Framework was produced as an action from WAG’s Wales Environment Strategy (2005). Some of the statements on the operation of LBAPs within Wales effectively supplement the original Guidance material of 1998.

The most relevant parts of the Framework for the present study are *Section 5* and *Annex H*. Section 5.2 is concerned with *reporting* of action to LBAPs:

5.2 Lead partners such as EAW and FC are lead organisations for priority habitats and species as identified in the UK BAP, they may report at a national level but should keep LBAP Partnerships informed of actions they are taking within LBAP areas.

The section *Enhancing Delivery* clearly points to a perceived need for links between various levels involved in the process, and a need for a common understanding of elements of the LBAP process. It states (in 5.19) that main players:

5.19 ... need to ... provide a stronger link between lead partners and local action in Wales. Local, regional, country and UK partners need a common understanding of the LBAP and the LBAP Partnership to enable better targeting of biodiversity action that enables biodiversity to adapt to climate change as well as continuing to focus on vulnerable species in appropriate locations.

Annex H provides notes on the operation of LBAPs in Wales in some detail. It covers the following areas in three sections:-

- A: Roles and Responsibilities of the LBAP, Partnerships and Individuals Involved
- B: UK Reviews and their Relevance for LBAPs
- C: Linking the LBAP to Local Statutory Plans

The first two of these sections are most relevant to the present study for consideration here. Section A reaffirms the six LBAP Functions as identified in Guidance note 1 (1998), and recommends LBAP coverage to fulfill these (under *The Remit of the LBAP*). There are recommendations on areas not included in original guidance, specifically that a Welsh LBAP:

be 'written on BARS to allow for regular reporting, review and flexibility',

'Prepares for climate change by planning and carrying out action that maximises connectivity, and will provide flexibility for biodiversity e.g. by the creation of corridors, buffer zones, stepping stones ...'

'Is in line with UK action plan definitions of biodiversity conservation i.e.: Maintain Extent, Achieve Condition, Restoration and Expansion for habitats and Range and/or Population for species, all aiming to achieve favourable conservation status.'

These recommendations, if followed, would lead to potentially very different LBAPs from those originally developed and in use at the time of writing.

There are further recommendations on partnership make-up and roles of members. Here, the most significant material is an attempt to outline *principles* for partners, with more clarity than original Guidance.:

**Three key principles relevant partners need to adopt are:**

- It is especially important to have an agreed consistent approach from national and local government, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs) and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who are UK BAP Lead Partners involved in biodiversity work.
- LBAPs need to benefit from the extensive baseline data the above organisations hold, in order to engage in informed debate and habitat target-setting at the local level.
- Organisations need to report on BARS at disaggregated scales to reflect agreed LBAP areas, and to integrate LBAPs with their own statutory plans etc.

These principles, if adopted fully, would go some way to resolving the lack of clarity in relationship between LBAPs and UK BAP processes, although at the time of writing, it is unclear what weight they, and this document as a whole, carry.

The issue of staffing coverage is given some acknowledgement, under *Local Authority*, where there is a recommendation that:

‘local authorities have sufficient staff resources ... to devote to LBAP/LBAP Partnership work and ... to local authority planning and development control work.’

Section B, *UK Reviews and their Relevance for LBAPs* includes material covering further aspects of the relationship between UK and local levels which were not detailed in original Guidance. Under *LBAP and BARS*, there is acknowledgement of the issue of long action listings, which has hindered reporting:

‘Currently LBAPs tend to include long lists of actions without resource backing commitment... These listings can make LBAPs overly complicated, as well as adding to the reporting burden on BARS.’

To deal with this:

‘... it is suggested that [LBAPs] focus on targets as the defining statements from which actions can be developed over time. Action listings in LBAPs should include existing action and action that has been definitely approved.

This will make LBAPs more concise, flexible and easier to work with...’

Another aspect where original Guidance was unclear relates to *targets*. Section B of Annex H includes a key element in better defining the link between targets at UK/ Welsh and local levels:

‘SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound) Targets will be set for Welsh Priority habitats and species at a Wales/UK level. LBAPs need to use these to set quantifiable targets that are achievable and relevant.’

Further details on targets are added to this under 2.1 *Targets Review*, where the need to follow UK terminology for target categories is noted. It is also stated that ‘Lead partners need to consult with LBAP Partnerships to ensure that Welsh targets are disaggregated to a regional/local level.’

In summary, the Framework (section 5 and Annex H in particular) attempts to improve definition of LBAP operation in Wales, and includes material on a number of the key LBAP issue areas. Issues tend to be covered in term of what ‘needs’ to be done, and by suggestions/recommendations, rather than what *has to/ must* be done.

As one of many annexes to the Biodiversity Framework document, the amount of attention likely to be paid to Annex H, and weight that it will carry amongst operators at all relevant levels is open to question.

#### Contribution Towards Research Topic Identification

The document refers to a number of issue areas which could be subject to research amongst stakeholders. In particular, these is reference to links between various levels (i.e. including *LBAP-UK links*) and ensuring common understanding of elements of the process. *Reporting* needs are noted. There is support for a more *climate-change related work* focus to LBAPs, and the issue of *action listings* is raised also. Attitudes to the changes in focus suggested here could be explored amongst stakeholders. The *action listings* issue could be split into two parts, the first exploring the *reasoning behind detailed, long action listings*, the other exploring support for *cutting back on length of listings*. Do stakeholders back up the basic positions/ understanding of these areas gained from the document. The issue of *staffing* coverage for LBAP coordination has also been noted. The suggestion that authorities have ‘sufficient staff resources’ to cover LBAP is likely to mean that coverage at the time of writing may not have been deemed sufficient in some areas at the time. Exploring staffing for LBAP coordination could include seeking to draw out perceptions about capacity of existing coverage to meet perceived needs and also current *workloads* faced by staff.

2.9.14 At the time of writing (2007 and 2008) a review of the UK BAP is underway. This is primarily focused on updating the lists of species and habitats named as UK priorities, defining new targets for work on these, and listing a number of key actions for each. The resulting lists and targets/ action will effectively replace those developed in earlier stages of the UK BAP. Targets for Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland have been derived from those decided at the UK level. Much detail relating to this process has yet to emerge.

## 2.10 Main Findings of Literature Review

The present chapter has considered the history of the UK BAP process, with particular reference to relevant documents which influenced and shaped the LBAP process. In light of this a number of areas for research have been highlighted, and these will form the basis for development of the main element of the present research. A summary of findings from this chapter and those areas identified for research is given in Table 2.16; to compliment this, issues identified from each specific document are detailed in Table 3.1.

Some of the most important findings areas relate to lack of clarity in how the process is supposed to operate. This has been especially apparent from original guidance material for both LBAPs and for Lead Partners, as well as from Shaikh's work and others. This would certainly have implications for success of the LBAP process (as outlined in 2.1.3) because desired outcomes will tend to be less likely to occur if the process itself is fundamentally unclear.

**Table 2.16** Summary of Literature Review Findings and Key Issues Identified for Research.

Type of Material and Findings Summary	Key Issues Identified/ Supported for Research
<p><b>1. UK BAP and related documents</b> Set conservation focus, and action basis of UK BAP process (with HAPs and SAPs). UK BAP material was used to inform LBAPs, particularly in relation to LBAP function 1.</p>	NA
<p><b>2. Guidance documents:</b>  <b>i) LBAP Guidance</b> - Set basis on which LBAPs and LBAP processes became established. Lack of clarity identified in a number of areas.  <b>ii) UK BAP Habitat and Species Action Plan (HAP and SAP) Lead Partner Guidance</b> - Useful for understanding relationship between UK BAP and LBAPs from point of view of UK BAP Lead Partners.            Both i) and ii) did not set out clearly how LBAPs were to relate to the UK BAP process. E.g. How action would be split between LBAP areas, and reporting.  <b>iii) Wales Biodiversity Framework.</b> Pointed to need for improvement in a number of key areas of LBAP operation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Partnership success</i></li> <li>- <i>Leadership/ coordination success</i></li> <li>- <i>What LBAP Coverage should be</i></li> <li>- <i>Action Reporting</i></li> <li>- <i>LBAP Impacts on local people</i></li> <li>- <i>LBAP/ UK BAP relationship</i></li> <li>- <i>Action listings - rationale behind long lists</i></li> <li>- <i>Support for flexibility in action listings</i></li> <li>- <i>Support for climate-change link focus</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>3. UK BAP Reporting Round Results (2002 and 2005)</b> A three-yearly process which has produced some results specifically on LBAP issues in 2002 and 2005. Limited use because: a) limited range of LBAP-related material and b) lack of consistency in material gathered in these reporting rounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>LBAP Resources</i></li> <li>- <i>LBAP Status</i></li> <li>- <i>LBAP use in local decision-making</i></li> <li>- <i>New Action generation</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Previous Research</b> Shaikh (2000) is of particular relevance: clearly pointed to differences in perception about the nature of LBAPs and LBAP processes, due to the lack of clear guidance E.g. On relationship with UK BAP process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Action listings</i></li> <li>- <i>LBAP/ UK BAP relationship</i></li> <li>- <i>LBAP Status</i></li> <li>- <i>Partnership success</i></li> <li>- <i>LBAP coverage</i></li> <li>- <i>Reporting</i></li> <li>- <i>Impacts of local people</i></li> </ul>

**5. Millenium Biodiversity Report (MBR), Local Success and England Biodiversity Strategy**

MBR and related documents highlighted lack of evidence for action on recommendations in the MBR.

Local Success (2006) potentially misleading praise by ignoring whether action would have happened without LBAPs or not.

Focus on LBAPs within the England Biodiversity Strategy had been limited. The strategy had been extensively changed before it had run its course.

- *LBAP Resources*
- *Action reporting*
- *LBAP/ UK BAP relationship*
- *Support for health link focus*
- *New Action generation*
- *Possible use of 'Spin'*



## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Identification of, and Rationales for Issues to be Investigated.

Chapter 2 saw the identification of a number of LBAP-process-related key issues for research investigation. Table 3.1 lists these key issues, showing the rationale behind each. To some degree, these key issues were also further backed up/ reinforced by personal experience and by active contact with LBAP coordinators in other areas. Links between key issues and the six stated functions of LBAPs are also listed in Table 3.1, for reference. These functions (as covered in the Introduction) may be briefly summarised here as:-

1. Action towards UK Habitat/ Species Targets
2. Habitat/ Species Targets (locally appropriate)
3. Partnerships (development of)
4. Awareness
5. Conservation Opportunities, full Consideration of
6. Monitoring

Reference numbering for survey questions and statements subsequently used to explore these issues are also listed in Table 3.1 (far right-hand column). These individual questions and statements were developed to cover part(s) of one or more of the research areas, having regard to the key respondents to whom they would be aimed. Specific rationales for these in their contexts are listed in Tables 3.2 - 3.5.

### 3.2 Identification of Key Respondents

Based on importance for the operation of key areas of the LBAP process (see 2.2), two groups of respondents were selected for survey, as follows:-

1. LBAP Coordination: Officers/ staff from organisations undertaking (or funding) coordination of individual LBAPs. Made up of two sub groups:-
  - i) Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) members
  - ii) Officers and Staff working for Lead Bodies (organisations with LBAP coordination role)
2. Local Partnership players - partners representing organisations within local LBAP partnerships, with roles relating to LBAP process and action other than coordination.

These groups covered a broad a range of LBAP players with experiences of the process at various levels. All were expected to have perceptions on key issues identified for research.

**Table 3.1** Research Issues Identified, Rationales for Identification, Issues links to LBAP Functions, and Subsequent Coverage in Survey Questions

Issue Identified for Research	Rationale for Issue Identification (linked to Chapter 2)	Links to LBAP Functions	Survey Questions covering Issue
<b>Resources</b> - particularly funding for action implementation and staffing.	Needed to undertake action and run all parts of process. <i>EBS, EPT, MBR, Rpt 02, 05, WBF</i>	All	<i>Officers: 2. i), ii), iii), iv) 3. i) b) Partners: 2. i) b) 3. i), ii), iii)</i>
<b>Status</b> - perceptions on issues relating to LBAP status.	Direct link to credibility of process and support from stakeholder bodies. <i>Rpt 02, 05, Sh.</i>	All	<i>Officers: 2. i), ii), iii) Partners: 3. i), ii), iii)</i>
General LBAP <b>Partnership</b> success	Partnership is a key part of process, networking, generating new action etc. <i>G (LBAP 1,2), G (LP), Sh.</i>	3	<i>Officers: 2. iv) 3. i) a), b), c) Partners: 2. i) a), b), c), d) 3. iii)</i>
Local coordinating body <b>Leadership</b> track record	Part of partnership arrangement, key to process. <i>G (LBAP 2)</i>	All (process)	<i>Officers: 3. ii) a), b), c), d) Partners: 2. ii) a), b)</i>
Perception of what <b>LBAP Coverage</b> should be.	Degree to which certainty here would tend to hinder the process. <i>G (LBAP 1), G (BP), Sh.</i>	All (esp. 1, 2, 4, 5)	<i>Officers: 3. iii) a) Partners: 2. iii) a)</i>
<b>LBAP Use</b> in local decision-making in practice.	Use reflects relevance of document locally for conservation. <i>Rpt 02, 05</i>	All	<i>Officers: 3. iii) b) Partners: 2. iii) b), d) 2. v) b)</i>
Degree to which <b>new action</b> is being generated by LBAPs.	New action is a key aim of LBAPs and a key indicator of success. <i>LS, Rpt 02, 05</i>	All (esp. 1, 2, 4, 5)	<i>Officers: 3. iii) c) Partners: 2. iii) c)</i>
<b>Reporting</b> of LBAP action progress.	Is essential if action outcomes are to be known (which are a key measure of success). <i>EBS, G (LBAP 1), MBR, Sh., WBF</i>	6	<i>Officers: 3. iv) a) Partners: 2. iv) a)</i>
<b>Action listings</b> - rationale behind long lists of actions; are these being progressed?	Test understanding behind practice; progress is indicator of success. <i>Mar., WBF</i>	1, 2, 4, 5	<i>Officers: 3. iv) b) Partners: 2. iv) b)</i>  <i>(Table continued ...)</i>

Issue Identified for Research	Rationale for Issue Identification (linked to Chapter 2)	Links to LBAP Functions	Survey Questions covering Issue
Impacts of LBAP on local people.	Difference made to local people is indicator of success. <i>G (LBAP 6), Sh.</i>	3 - 5 mainly	<i>Officers:</i> 3. iv) c) <i>Partners:</i> 2. iv) c)
LBAP targets and reporting in relation to UK BAP habitat and species action plan processes.	Test understanding (lack of clarity could hinder process success). <i>Av., EBS, EPT, G (LP), G (LBAP 1, 2), WBF</i>	1	<i>Officers:</i> 3. iv) d) <i>Partners:</i> 2. iv) d)
Degree of support for flexibility in actions (rather than long 'wish' lists)	Test support for an approach which could make LBAPs clearer. <i>WBF, Mar.</i>	1 and 2 (actions feed targets)	<i>Officers:</i> 3. iv) e) <i>Partners:</i> 2. iv) e)
Degree of support for more climate change-related work and mutually-beneficial work for health and wildlife.	Test support for links to two higher-status (in terms of policy) areas. <i>MBR, WBF</i>	All	<i>Officers:</i> 3. v) a) <i>Partners:</i> 2. v) a)
'Spin' in formal/ official LBAP contexts.	Test whether may be a risk that some material could give unbalanced views of the process/ its success <i>LS</i>	Potentially all	<i>Officers:</i> 3. v) b) <i>Partners:</i> Not covered
Range of LBAP Officer skills and work.	If staff are overstretched, process may be hindered. <i>WBF</i>	Indirectly, all	<i>Officers:</i> 3. v) c) <i>Partners:</i> Not covered
Other Issues	To allow respondents to raise matters not otherwise identified/ covered elsewhere.	Potentially any/ all	<i>Officers:</i> 4 . <i>Partners:</i> 4 .

### Key to second column:

Italics refer to documents in Chapter 2 used for issue identification, coded as follows:

*Av.* - Avery et al. (2001)

*EBS* - England Biodiversity Strategy (2002)

*EPT* - EPT Committee report (2003)

*G (LBAP)* - LBAP Guidance documents (with relevant document number) (1997, 1998, 2000)

*G (LP)* - Guidance documents, Lead partners (1999)

*LS* - Local Success A Celebration of Biodiversity Action in Wales (2006)

*Mar* - Marren (2002)

*MBR* - Millenium Biodiversity Report and Governmental Responses to MBR (2001, 2002)

*Rpt 02, 05* - UK Biodiversity Reporting Rounds, 2002 and 2005

*Sh.* - Shaikh (1998)

*WBF* - Wales Biodiversity Framework (2007)

Specifically, Group 1 would provide viewpoints from/ related to higher-levels of the process, whilst Group 2 would provide material from the point of view of (no less important) levels of participation within individual LBAPs.

Details of participants within the groups can be found on Tables 4.3 and 6.1. Their general make-up can be summarised as follows:-

1. i) ALGE members were normally County Ecologists, Biodiversity Officers (or similar job titles). These are key roles within local authorities' input to LBAPs. The local authorities concerned are normally LBAP Leads for their own LBAP areas (or if not, provided funding for the relevant Wildlife Trust to administer this function).

The ALGE e-forum provided a convenient site for survey piloting (see Appendix ii), after which all ALGE results would be treated together with those of group ii).

ii). Officers and Staff working for Lead Bodies had key relevant roles within their organisations (normally county councils, national park authorities or, sometimes - in England - local wildlife trusts). Many were leading on LBAP coordination, or line-managing staff involved in this function.

2. Local Partnership players were representatives from statutory agencies, NGOs etc., involved in biodiversity action locally, or otherwise had an interest/ connection with the process for specific LBAPs.

This group was made up of two main parts:- roughly half were Anglesey partners and half from seven other Welsh LBAP partnerships.

### 3.3 Questionnaire Structure

All questionnaires consisted of three parts:

- Request for personal background information (job title, time in post etc.)
- Semi-structured statements, to which responses were requested by means of choosing an appropriate reaction (agree, disagree etc.), and with option for further comment.
- Open-ended questions on relevant LBAP topics.

The range of options for response to all semi-structured questions included the following:-

*Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know, Other (e.g. sometimes).*

All respondents were also given an option for further comment after any question. Similarly, the open-ended questions allowed for addition of further material by including a general question for ‘any other specific or general comments’. This approach allowed flexibility for responses, considered to be important for gaining understanding of what were likely to be complex situations, with variation between individual experience.

Some of the open-ended questions covered imaginary scenarios where respondents were asked what they would do for LBAPs. However unlikely in reality, they sought insights into where it was felt action should be taken, and often why.

The wording of semi-structured sections and the open-ended question sections will now be considered in detail. In tables 3.2 - 3.5 below, the statements and questions are listed, together with the rationale behind each. Officers’ parts of the survey (tables 3.2 - 3.3) are considered separately from Partners’ (tables 3.4 - 3.5). Apart from the differences in wording etc. for some parts of the surveys *within* the two main groups, there were a number of differences in statements/ questions *between* the two surveys. These reflected differences between the two groups. e.g. Officers, being involved in, or closer to, the coordination process, were given open-ended questions with imaginary high-level scenarios. A basic comparative table of statements and questions used in surveys is included in Appendix i. Full details of differences between pilot questionnaire, Welsh and English parts of Officers’ Survey are noted in Appendices v and vi. Appendices ii - iv and vii provide full text of Survey Questionnaires.

### **3.4 Officers/ Staff Survey**

#### **3.4.1 Officers/ Staff Semi-Structured Section**

A list of statements in the section, and the rationales behind each is given in Table 3.2.

#### **3.4.2 Officers’ Open-ended Questions**

By their nature - openendedness - these questions could be considered the most challenging of the whole survey. The nature of Biodiversity coordinators’ (and related staff) work mean that the questions should have presented no significant problems. Officers are employed to work on production and (to a degree) implementation of extensive lists of proposed conservation action for their areas. Input into the process at the levels involved was thought to naturally lead to perceptions and opinions about how that input could be improved.

**Table 3.2** Statements used in Semi-Structured Section of Officers' Survey, showing Rationale for each Statement

Statement	Rationale (Perceptions Sought)
3. i) a) The Local Biodiversity Partnership has proved to be a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new biodiversity actions and projects.	Perceptions of partnership success in process and the achievement of new work, such success being at the heart of the LBAP ethos.
i) b) Factors such as already-busy work commitments and competition for limited funds significantly limit partnership cooperation in practice.	Following i) a), sought perceptions on some possible significant limitations to partnership work success.
i) c) The Local Biodiversity Partnership has successfully drawn in a good number of businesses, landowners and community groups.	Partnership make-up from some key LBAP target groups other than conservation-gear statutory agencies and NGOs.
3. ii) Council ii) a) The County Council leads on local Biodiversity action by example and is thus a highly credible LBAP leader.	Officers' perception of their own organisations' role in the LBAP. (Note: The issue of organisational performance as a whole is distinct from an individual officer's performance. Assurance of confidentiality was felt to be particularly important for gaining responses to this statement.)
ii) b) Staffing and resources are not a problem issue for Council LBAP input.	Perception on the staff/ resource issue, which anecdotal evidence suggested would be significant.
ii) c) LBAP Officers and the LBAP function are well-linked to power and decision-making within the Council.	To gain further perceptions of the situation within lead bodies. Results here were intended to be used together with other perceptions of council performance relating to the LBAP.
ii) d) Prioritisation issues mean that Council work often comes before wider LBAP Partnership work.	Further detail on perception of lead body input, with the aim of shedding light on whether councils prioritise biodiversity work internally before the external partnership and coordination process. Anecdotal evidence and experience had suggested that this was so.
3. iii) LBAP Document iii) a) To follow best practice, LBAPs are meant to aim to cover all biodiversity action happening locally.	To test perception on LBAP remit in a broad sense. The 1998 Guidance speaks of 'full' coverage (see Functions, Chapter 1). Statement sought to test how far this has become embedded in perception of what LBAPs - at least theoretically - are meant to be covering.
iii) b) Partnership members constantly use the LBAP to inform conservation decision-making in the area.	Perceptions on degree of LBAP use. Given the variety of partners in most LBAP partnerships, and the unlikelihood of officers having detailed knowledge on use, would be taken to be a relatively rough assessment of the situation.
iii) c) Success in new action implementation often tends to be with things that would have happened anyway.	Degree to which implementation results in 'new action' rather than work which would have happened without the LBAP. To be used to help complement results from 1. i) a). <i>(Table continued ...)</i>

Statement	Rationale (Perceptions Sought)
3. iv) LBAP Reporting and Results iv) a) Our Partnership members are reporting on BARS or to the LBAP Officer, thus ensuring that progress on their actions is normally clear.	Reporting of LBAP action, clearly a key part of the process and essential for accurate evaluation of progress. Anecdotal evidence suggested that reporting on actions is often severely limited.
iv) b) Although significant numbers of actions in the LBAP seem to show little or no progress, their inclusion shows what needs to be done, and can help draw in funding.	Relates to the tendency in many LBAPs to include long lists of desired actions for habitats and species. There are two elements to this statement: the first refers to lack of progress in many actions, whilst the second sought to confirm two reasons for formulation of such lists. Results would hopefully help evaluation of the practicality of lists, particularly in light of results from 3 iv) a) above.
iv) c) The LBAP enthuses and informs many local people.	Perceptions of impacts of the LBAP on local people - specifically in terms of raising enthusiasm and awareness.
iv) d) There is lack of clarity about how LBAP targets and action reporting stand in relation to national HAP and SAP management and steering processes.	Perception on the key area of how UK BAP processes and LBAPs relate/ integrate to one another.
iv) e) It would be better to focus more on priority objectives with long-term flexibility for project decision-making, rather than including long lists of detailed actions with variable degrees of backing commitment.	Opinion on a suggestion which aims to alleviate problems of long detailed action listings by allowing for evolution rather than listing of actions with little or no commitment. (Anecdotal evidence that such listings are indeed problematical).
3.v) Other v) a) Local Biodiversity action would benefit greatly by focusing more on Climate Change-related projects (such as habitat linking) and mutually-beneficial projects for health and wildlife.	Opinion in two topical key areas (not given prominence in the 1998 LIAG guidance). Tend not to have been prominent in LBAP processes to date. Climate-change directly affects biodiversity. It can be argued that the linking of biodiversity action to climate change could boost funding and effectiveness. Developing cross-sector links could likewise lead to new resources.
v) b) In formal/official contexts, it is often the 'done thing' to refer only to positive features and results of LBAP action.	Perceptions on whether there is pressure to give positive stress rather than negative, with the aim of shedding light on why there seems to have been relatively little reference to some key issues/ problem areas as the process has developed. Anecdotal evidence suggested that there is such pressure in local government.
v) c) The range of skills and work expected of an LBAP Officer are a great deal to ask of one person.	Perception on expectations from officers, given the fact that LBAP remit covers biological and ecosystem and process knowledge, awareness, public speaking, report writing etc., as well as council-related work in many cases. Results would complement those from statements ii) b) and d).

N.B. There were slight differences in wording between different parts of the survey (e.g. ALGE pilot) for 3. i) a), ii) a) - d), iii) a) - c), iv) a) and v) b) (for details, see Appendix v).

### 3.4.3 Rationale for Officers' Open-ended Questions

Table 3.3 lists these questions and rationales behind each.

**Table 3.3:** Questions in Open-ended Section of Officers' Survey, showing Rationale for each Question

Question	Rationale
2. i) You have £2 million for local Biodiversity work - what would be your first priorities for spending it?	Sought respondents' thoughts on where funding should be directed. Results would hopefully give insights into where current shortfalls are perceived, and also degree to which partnership working and other LBAP themes might influence thinking.
ii) If you were Leader and Chief Exec of your Authority, how would you change things for its input to the LBAP process?	Sought to shed light on perceived biodiversity/ LBAP needs within local authorities - i.e. the organisations respondents work for.
iii) If you were First Minister of the Assembly, what would you do as top priority for LBAPs?	Sought perceptions of what officers think WAG/ government in England should be doing for LBAPs.
iv) If the LBAP and process were abolished, what would be the biggest losses to your area for biodiversity conservation?	Sought responses on partners' perceptions of current LBAP benefits.
4. Do you wish to make any other specific or general comments?	Allowed respondents opportunity to raise any other issues or otherwise add general comments of relevance.

N.B. 1. Wording for 2. ii) and iii) was slightly different in England (see appendix vi).

2. Questions 2. iii) and iv) were not on the ALGE pilot.

## 3.5 Partners' Survey

### 3.5.1 Partners: Semi-structured Statements

A list of statements in the section, and the rationales behind each is given in Table 3.4.



**Table 3.4:** Statements used in Semi-Structured Section of Partners' Survey, showing Rationale for each Statement

Statement	Rationale (Perceptions Sought)
2.i) Partnership a) The Local Biodiversity Partnership has proved to be a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new biodiversity actions and projects.	Perceptions of partnership success in process and the achievement of new work, such success being at the heart of the LBAP ethos.
b) We would be more open to partnership work, if increased resources were available.	Perception as to whether resource shortages are barriers to partnership work.
c) Long-term project stability and job security for our organisation have to take priority over commitment to new projects with partners.	Perception on another possible barrier to partnership working. Starts from assumption that many partnership projects do not offer the degree of job stability which most organisations would be more likely to be seeking.
d) New Partnership work takes up valuable time, needs consensus, and if successful usually results in temporary projects and employment.	Following from c) above, statement sought to further explore possible barriers to partnership work.
2. ii) Council a) The County Council leads on local Biodiversity action by example and is thus a highly credible LBAP leader.	Perceptions on Council credibility as LBAP leader in light of its own biodiversity action track record.
b) It would be worth investigating whether the LBAP process could be more clearly separated from County Council work.	Further to 2 ii) a), to test perception on whether there would be some advantage in <i>exploring the possibility</i> of distancing the LBAP process from council work.
2. iii) LBAP Document a) The LBAP is just about the right size and level of detail.	Local perceptions relating to the amount of material in the LBAP, a common feeling (as revealed in the LBAP Officers' Survey) being that level of detail on actions is too great.
b) We actively use the LBAP to inform our conservation decision-making in the area.	Information on the level of practical active use being made of the LBAP in locally.
c) Success in new action implementation tends to be with things that we would have done anyway.	Degree to which implementation results in 'new action' rather than work which would have happened without the LBAP. To be used to help complement results from 2. i) a)
d) The LBAP is more a reference list of who's doing what than itself setting the agenda for what gets done.	To further test perception on the degree to which the LBAP is actively used in local conservation.

*(Table continued ...)*

Statement	Rationale (Perceptions Sought)
2. iv) LBAP Reporting and Results a) We report on BARS or to the LBAP Officer thus ensuring that progress on our actions is normally clear.	Reporting of LBAP action, clearly a key part of the process and essential for accurate evaluation of progress. Anecdotal evidence suggested reporting is often severely limited.
b) Although significant numbers of actions in the LBAP may show little or no progress, their inclusion shows what needs to be done, and can help draw in funding.	Relates the tendency in many LBAPs to include long lists of desired actions for habitats and species. There are two elements to this statement: the first refers to lack of progress in many actions, whilst the second sought to confirm two reasons for formulation of such lists. Results would hopefully help evaluation of the practicality of lists, particularly in light of results from 2 iv) a) above.
c) The LBAP enthuses and informs many local people.	Perceptions of impacts of the LBAP on local people - specifically in terms of raising enthusiasm and awareness.
d) There is lack of clarity about how LBAP targets and action reporting stand in relation to national HAP and SAP management and steering processes.	Perception on the key area of how UK BAP processes and LBAPs relate/ integrate to one another.
e) It would be better to focus more on priority objectives with long-term flexibility for project decision-making, rather than including long lists of detailed actions with variable degrees of backing commitment.	Opinion on a suggestion which aims to alleviate problems of long detailed action listings by allowing for evolution rather than listing actions with little or no commitment. (Anecdotal evidence that such listings are indeed problematical).
2.v) Other a) Local Biodiversity action would benefit greatly by focusing more on Climate Change-related projects (such as habitat linking) and mutually-beneficial projects for health and wildlife.	Opinion in two topical key areas, not given prominence in the 1998 guidance. Tend not to have been prominent in LBAP processes to date. Climate-change directly affects biodiversity. It can be argued that the linking of biodiversity action to climate change could boost funding and effectiveness. Developing cross-sector links could likewise lead to new resources.
b) For us, most, if not all, important local conservation decisions are made outside the LBAP partnership and process.	Perception on a matter which is important to understand when evaluating the degree to which the LBAP Partnership - as a group rather than individually - is active in decision-making contexts.

N.B. There were slight differences in wording in 2. ii) a) - b) as asked within national park authority LBAP areas (for details, see appendix viii).

3.5.2 Partners: Open-ended Questions are covered in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5:** Questions in Open-ended Section Partners' Survey, showing Rationale for each Question

Question	Rationale
3. i) You have £2 million for local Biodiversity work - what would be your first priorities for spending it?	Sought respondents' thoughts on where funding should be directed. Results would hopefully give insights into where current shortfalls are perceived, and also degree to which partnership working and other LBAP themes might influence thinking.
ii) Please give an example of how you would change the LBAP document to improve it.	Specific opportunity for partners to offer suggestions for improving the document (which was produced in 2002/03). Trends could be pointers to changes which might lead to increased ownership and involvement from partners.
iii) If the LBAP and process were abolished, what would be the biggest losses to your area for biodiversity conservation?	Sought responses on partners' perceptions of current LBAP benefits.
4. Do you wish to make any other specific or general comments?	To allow respondents the opportunity of raising any other issues or otherwise adding general comments of relevance to the research.

### 3.6 Piloting

A pilot study amongst members of the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) was carried out amongst members from England only. The pilot questionnaire was posted on the ALGE e-forum with a request for voluntary responses. This did not include all questions used in the main part of the staff survey because a key pilot aim was to test the basic questioning style and approach. Response level both in terms of numbers and amount of material generated would be deemed to be some indication of whether the format and questions/ issues covered were practical.

A further pilot study was carried out with a draft of the full staff questionnaire. This was targeted by agreement from an initial phone contact to a person who had until some months previously been covering the LBAP coordination role in a Welsh county council.

Response to the pilot surveys was used to help refine the later full versions of the questionnaire for staff in Wales/ England, and also helped confirm the approach adopted for the Partners' survey. Such refinements are relatively minor, and have been noted in detail at the appropriate places (see Appendix i). As far as possible, pilot survey results have been incorporated into the

study as a whole, and the ALGE material in particular forms a significant part of the overall study.

### **3.7 Survey Method**

#### **3.7.1 Officers/ Staff Survey**

Responses were sought from in all Welsh LBAP areas, and a cross-section of English counties (representing both broadly rural and urban areas).

Respondents were asked to indicate their reaction to the statements and questions listed in Tables 3.2 and 3.3. Initial approach was made by e-mail in Wales, where a follow-up reminder and (if still no response) a phone call were made. For England, where the author was not known to many relevant staff, initial contact was made by phone to request participation in the survey. Questionnaires were subsequently sent by e-mail to those who agreed, and were once again followed up by reminders if response was slow.

#### **3.7.2 Partners' Survey**

Statements/ questions largely sought information on perceptions relating to the same issues as those covered in the officers/ staff survey, but were worded specifically to relate to partners' experience (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5).

Members of the Anglesey Biodiversity Partnership and also a number of other biodiversity partnerships were asked to complete survey questionnaires. The latter were chosen to reflect a range of different features:- similarity to Anglesey - Pembrokeshire, urban - Cardiff and Swansea, National Parks - Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons (note Pembrokeshire LBAP includes both the wider county of Pembrokeshire and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and rural - Ceredigion.

Questionnaires were sent (by e-mail in most cases) to partnership members. In the case of Anglesey and Snowdonia, this was done by direct e-mailing to respondents by the author. In other areas, the LBAP coordinator (or relevant other member of ecological staff) themselves sent questionnaires and requests to participate to their partnership members.

Most responses were received by e-mail. The few sent on printed paper were entered in electronic format and analysed with other responses by computer.

### 3.8 Analytical Process and Methods.

#### 3.8.1 Main Stages of Analysis

Analysis for both parts of the survey involved the same methodology and followed a number of steps:

1. Incorporation of all responses into tables (see Appendices vi and viii).
2. Initial interpretation of open-ended questions in tables, in relevant columns (see Appendices vi and viii).
3. For semi-structured questions, deriving totals for each response, and presentation in tables by question (see Chapters 4 and 6).
4. Classification of open-ended question responses into broad themes, and presentation of this material in summary tables.
5. Circulation of material from steps 3 and 4 to respondents; particularly to allow respondents a chance to check whether the interpretation being made seemed an accurate reflection of their responses.
6. Corrections made to table entries in light of any misinterpretations noted by respondents in step 5.
7. Comment on results (see chapters 4 - 6) with particular reference to results summary tables from steps 2 (for semi-structured) and 4 (for open-ended questions) above.
8. Final discussion of results/ outcomes, informing conclusions and recommendations.

#### 3.8.2 Distinguishing Subgroups in the Analysis Process

For step 7 in 3.8.1 above, *comment on results*, subgroups were distinguished within each of the main groups investigated. For the Officers/ staff survey, respondents from *Wales* and *England* were differentiated. The rationale for this is that there are differences in conditions between the two countries which might have led to differences in results. For example, many aspects of conservation and environmental work as covered by government agencies have been devolved from Wales and are under the National Assembly for Wales' remit (since 1999; devolution in conservation matters had in effect started earlier than this under the Welsh Office e.g. the establishment of CCW in Wales from the early 1990s). This has led to increasing distinctions in areas such as policy, interpretation of environmental legislation and funding (for example, agri-environment scheme terms and funding differ between the two countries). Also, the local government units upon which LBAP areas are based in Wales - unitary authorities - are more consistent and less complex than in England, where some areas are served by unitary authorities, but many have a two-tier system of local District Councils and larger Shire/ County Council

units. LBAPs in England can and do cover any of these differing units (note, National Parks also normally form units for LBAPs in both countries). Furthermore, division of England into regions and the existence of non-elected regional assemblies (though with more restricted remits and power than the Welsh Assembly) has added another tier between central government and LBAP areas.

For the Partners survey, Anglesey LBAP was considered as a subgroup, and results from the other LBAPs involved were grouped together to form the other subgroup. Anglesey was chosen as a subgroup because the author's employers (Isle of Anglesey County Council *unitary authority*) have funded the present research, and the results were to be used to help evaluation of aspects of Anglesey's LBAP in their own right. In the Partners survey, it had originally been intended to compare results between several different LBAPs (effectively meaning several subgroups), but response rates for most LBAPs involved were later found to be too low to justify this, and so responses - which together made a similar-sized subgroup to Anglesey - were subsequently pooled as such, to make the other subgroup for this part of the research.

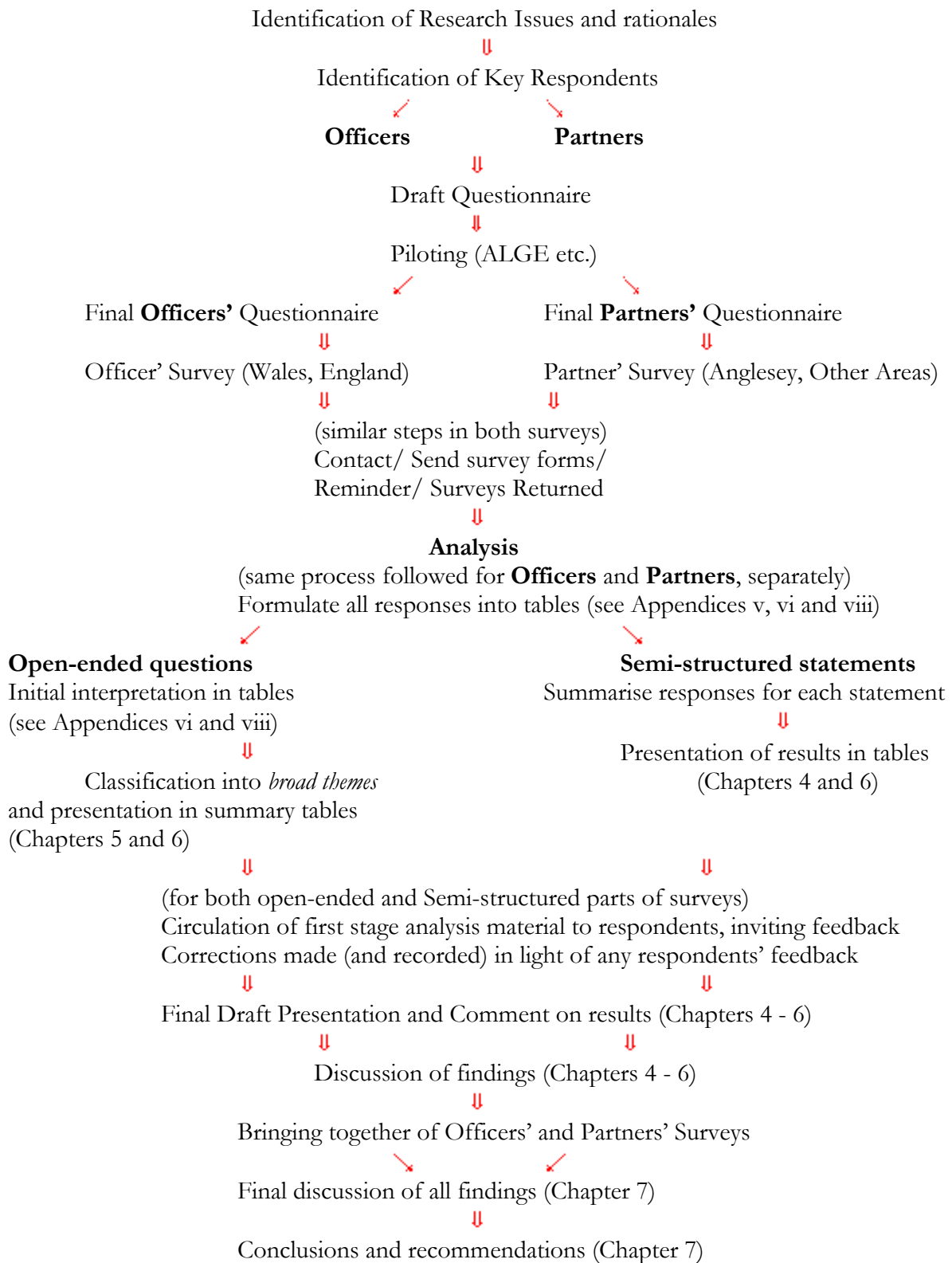
Subgroup differences are considered particularly in chapters 4 - 6, whilst in chapter 7, focus is mainly on comparisons between results of the two main groups as wholes. Differentiation between subgroups gives those with an interest in comparing the groups a basis on which effects of differing conditions and policies could be considered.

### **3.9 Confidentiality**

Responses were provided with a promise of confidentiality, so that responses would not be linked to respondents' names in subsequent written material. Respondents are included along with other names in Acknowledgments, whilst responses are included in full in Appendices v, vi and viii.

### **3.10 Summary of Methodology**

Relationships between the stages outlined above, and the order in which stages were undertaken are summarised in Figure 3.1

**Figure 3.1** Summary Flowchart of Main Stages of Methodology

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## Chapter 4: Officers' Response: Introduction and Semi-Structured Questions

### 4.1 Coverage and Response.

All respondents were LBAP officers/ coordinators, county ecologists or had related biodiversity roles (see Table 4.3). Responses were sought from all Welsh LBAP areas, and a cross-section of English counties (including both broadly rural and urban areas).

There were forty-nine respondents in all, comprised of:-

- i) twenty-six from Welsh local authorities/ national parks (the bodies leading LBAP coordination in Wales) covering twenty-two of the twenty-four Welsh LBAP areas;
- ii) twelve officers involved in leading coordination in a variety of English LBAP areas, mainly from local authorities, but including wildlife trust and other organisations in instances where these lead coordination.
- iii) eleven Association of Local Government (ALGE) members who were officers from a range of other English local authorities. (All but two of these worked for authorities leading LBAP coordination.)

Results from ii) and iii) were each from England, and have therefore been grouped. This leaves two main subgroups for treatment in analysis: Wales and England.

Welsh coverage was high. The two areas which did not respond were 1) Ceredigion, and 2) Rhondda Cynon Taff.

English coverage by region and number of respondents was as follows:

- East of England - 4
  - East Midlands - 1
  - London - 2
  - North West - 2
  - South East - 5
  - South West - 4
  - West Midlands - 2
  - Yorkshire and Humberside - 3
- (i.e. there were no respondents from one region: North East England)

There was some variation in number responding to individual questions amongst the forty-nine respondents. This was mainly due to a number of questions not being on the ALGE pilot version, but there was also some variation due to differences in the single Welsh pilot, the fact that question 4 was optional, and that occasionally questions were not answered. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below summarise the actual number of responses for each question upon which analysis in the following chapters is based. Full records of all Officers' responses are provided in Appendices v and vi.

**Table 4.1** Details of Number of Responses for Officers' Open-ended Questions, by Subgroup (including ALGE pilot)

Question	Wales		England		ALGE (Pilot)		Total Responses
	Asked in Wales?	Wales * - Number of Responses	Asked in England?	England Number of Responses	Asked to ALGE?	ALGE - Number of Responses	
<b>2 i)</b>	Yes	25	Yes	11	No		<b>36</b>
<b>2 ii)</b>	Yes	26	Modified	11	Proto-type	11	<b>48</b>
<b>2 iii)</b>	Yes	26	Modified	11	No		<b>37</b>
<b>2 iv)</b>	Yes	26	Yes	11	No		<b>37</b>
<b>4 (vol.)</b>	Yes	14	Yes	4	Yes (proto-type)	3	<b>21</b>

\* Includes single pilot for Welsh questionnaire, the wording of which differed slightly from the final version (differences in material from this pilot are clarified in Chapter 5).

**Table 4.2** Details of Number of Responses for Officers' Semi-structured Statements, by Subgroup (including ALGE pilot)

	Wales	England	ALGE (Pilot)		ALL
Statement	Number of Responses	Number of Responses	Asked to ALGE?	Number of Responses	Total Responses
3. i) a)	26	12	Yes (Prototype)	11	49
3. i) b)	26	12	Yes	11	49
3. i) c)	26	12	No		38
3. ii) a)	26	12	No		38
3. ii) b)	26	12	Yes	11	49
3. ii) c)	26	12	No		38
3. ii) d)	26	12	No		38
3. iii) a)	26	12	Yes (Prototype)	11	49
3. iii) b)	25	12	No		37
3. iii) c)	25	12	Yes (Prototype)	11	48
3. iv) a)	25	12	No		37
3. iv) b)	26	12	No		38
3. iv) c)	26	12	No		38
3. iv) d)	25	12	Yes	11	48
3. iv) e)	26	12	Yes	11	49
3. v) a)	26	12	Yes	11	49
3. v) b)	25	12	Yes (Prototype)	11	48
3. v) c)	26	12	No		38

Notes: i) All Statements in Table 4.2 were used in Wales and for the main English group.  
 ii) Use of material from Welsh pilot is clarified in notes at the foot of Tables 4.4 - 4.9  
 iii) For exact wording differences in statements in the three parts of the survey, see Appendices v and vi.

Amounts written by respondents varied greatly, but overall there was a good deal of material offered; some gave concise bullet points, others were more prosaic.

#### 4.2 Respondents.

Although names and precise locations have been kept confidential, basic information from Question One (personal details) is included in Table 4.3. For presentation of results and analysis, each respondent was allocated a code (Appendices v and vi give a full record of responses).

**Table 4.3:** Details of Respondents from Question 1 responses, including country/ area, coordination/ lead within respondents' LBAP areas, and whether Local (or NP) Authority is LBAP Coordination Lead in area covered.

<b>Respondent Code, and Country/Area</b>	<b>Is Local (or NP) Authority the Coordination Lead in LBAP area covered?</b>
1R (Wales)	Yes
2R (Wales)	Yes
3Re (Wales)	Yes
1U (Wales)	Yes
2U (Wales)	Yes
3U (Wales)	Yes
4R (Wales)	Yes
5R (Wales)	Yes
6R (Wales)	Yes
7R (Wales)	Yes
8Re (Wales)	Yes
9R (Wales)	Yes
10Re (Wales)	Yes
11R (Wales)	Yes
4U (Wales)	Yes
5U (Wales)	Yes
6Ue (Wales)	Yes
12R (Wales)	Yes
13R (Wales)	Yes
7Ue (Wales)	Yes
8U (Wales)	Yes
14R (Wales)	Yes
9Ue (Wales)	Yes
10U (Wales)	Yes
11U (Wales)	Yes
12Ue (Wales)	Yes
15R (Mid)	Yes
16R (Mid)	Yes
17R (South)	Yes
13U (Mid)	Yes
18R (South)	No
19Re (South)	Yes
20R (South)	Yes
14U (North)	No ( <i>Table continued ...</i> )

<b>Respondent Code, and Country/Area</b>	<b>Is Local (or NP) Authority the Coordination Lead in LBAP area covered?</b>
21R (South)	No
15U (North)	No
22R (Mid)	No
16U (South)	Yes
17U (North)	No, but is on LBAP Executive and Steering Group
23Re (South)	Yes
18U (North)	Yes
19U (Mid)	No, but all unitary authorities in area on LBAP Steering Group
24Re (Mid)	Yes
20U (South)	Yes
25Re (South)	Yes, overall (several LBAPs in county, not all led by LAs)
26R (South)	Yes, overall (several LBAPs in county, not all led by LAs)
27Re (North)	Yes
21U (South)	Yes
28Re (Mid)	Yes

Note: 1. Coverage of LBAP coordination and local authority ecological function is quite often split between Biodiversity Officers and Ecologists respectively. However, there is no rigid distinction, and persons with either title can, and often do, cover any mixture of functions from both roles.

2. Urban areas for Wales were defined as the southeast - former Glamorgan and western Gwent - apart from Monmouth; Wrexham is the only area designated 'U' in the north.

3. English 'areas' used here, are made up of official English regions as follows:

South: London, South East and South West.

Mid: East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England.

North: North West, Yorkshire and Humberside.

(Disclosing respondents' official region details would risk confidentiality.)

4. Where local authorities do not provide coordination lead, this function can be covered by other bodies, such as by the local Wildlife Trust or other local conservation body.

5. All but two respondents worked for LBAP Lead bodies. These were: i) 17U - works for District Council, which leads on some LBAP action, and ii) 19U - works for a unitary authority, which leads on some action locally.

### 4.3 Analysis of Results Material

(Full results are included in Appendix v.)

The remainder of this chapter covers Question 3 from the Officers' survey. Results here are shown as summaries of responses to each statement. The summaries are presented for each question in tables which are divided into the statements which made up each part of that question.

For details of minor differences in statements between different parts of the surveys, see Appendix v. Commentary notes on results are given for each question and its constituent statements. In the text, responses of 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree' are (unless referred to separately) normally grouped together and referred to in terms of 'agreement' and 'disagreement'. Commentary includes notes comparing results from Wales and England.

A discussion section explores the relevant main research issues in light of results.

English totals in Tables 4.4 - 4.9 include ALGE pilot responses, where relevant. A further breakdown showing separated response rates for both ALGE and the remaining (main) English respondents is included in Appendix v (last page).

#### Key to Tables 4.4 - 4.9:

W = Wales

E = England

#### 4.3.1 Comment on Results by Statement: 3. i) (see Table 4.4).

##### a) **The Local Biodiversity Partnership has proved to be a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new biodiversity actions and projects.**

Most respondents stated that they agreed with the statement, though minorities either disagreed or responded 'other' (the latter category accounting for nearly one quarter of responses). In Wales, agreement for the statement was greater overall.

**Table 4.4:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *Partnership* theme statements, 3. i), (Officers)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
3. i)												
a) <i>The Local Biodiversity Partnership has proved to be a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new biodiversity actions and projects.</i>	2	2	15	10	3	4		1			6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>25</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>1</b>				<b>12</b>	
b) <i>Factors such as already-busy work commitments and competition for limited funds significantly limit partnership cooperation in practice.</i>	14	9	6	9	4	3			1		1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>7</b>				<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>	
c) <i>The Local Biodiversity Partnership has successfully drawn in a good number of businesses, landowners and community groups.</i>			9½	1	8½	3	2	3		1	6	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>10½</b>		<b>11½</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>10</b>	

Where respondents added comments, these were either negative or mixed, rather than wholly positive. For example, 18R, although agreeing with the statement, adds ‘... there is now lethargy towards the process and a perception that it is meaningless bureaucracy’; there seems a perception here that success is largely in the past.

Considering these results overall, the main perception would appear to be that the partnership approach is achieving results. It would however be wise not to overstate this - there are other questions which have provided details to be used alongside, to help gain a fuller picture. E.g. 3.i) b) below.

**b) Factors such as already-busy work commitments and competition for limited funds significantly limit partnership cooperation in practice.**

Similar Welsh and English results combine to give a picture of quite strong agreement with the statement, with relatively few registering disagreement or other responses.

A number of respondents shed further light on their position, pointing to specific resource and logistics matters: e.g. 23Re (strongly agreed) adds:

'Funds ... are very resource-demanding in terms of application'.

3U (strongly agreed) echoes this, and also points to competition between LBAPs, suggesting:

'[a] need to work together more on regional projects which will be of benefit to more than 1 LBAP...'

18R (strongly agreed) states:

'Biodiversity projects bid for competitive grant fund does not encourage partnership. Biodiversity Partnerships should be allocated fund[ing] - then people would have a reason to show up and take part.'

Results show that most respondents' perception is that partnership cooperation *is* significantly limited in practice by factors such as already-busy work commitments and competition for limited funds. This clearly places limits on the degree to which the favourable picture gained from 3.i) a) above should be understood.

**c) The Local Biodiversity Partnership has successfully drawn in a good number of businesses, landowners and community groups.**

Due to the fact that the statement mentioned three different groups, it was always likely that there would be some mixed responses, indicating differences in degree of progress between these groups. This was indeed the case, and has complicated interpretation of results: respondents have in some cases added comments which limit their face-value responses: one 'other' noted 'definitely not businesses'; one 'disagree' added 'business very little', another 'not business'. One responding 'other' noted 'getting there with community groups. Business a different matter', and a further 'other' plainly agreed for the first two categories, but less so for business. Finally, a respondent who agreed added the note 'few businesses'. These responses point to a need for caution in interpretation of these results.

Results from Wales showed that most respondents either disagreed, agreed or gave 'other' in an uneven three-way split, with the biggest single group in disagreement. This contrasted with England, where there was a greater tendency to disagree. From overall totals, the biggest single group of respondents disagreed with the statement. The actual number responding this way was



less than half, whilst over one quarter agreed. The qualifications to basic responses noted above may mean that those in partial agreement with the statement (but who responded other than ‘agree’) tend to tip balance of opinion less towards disagreement than is at first apparent.

Notwithstanding the above complications, it can be said with more confidence that these results are far from indicative of great success in drawing in these key groups - rather there would seem to be a feeling that there is in many cases significant room for improvements.

#### 4.3.2 Comment on Results by Statement: 3. ii) (see Table 4.5).

**Table 4.5:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *Council* theme statements, 3. ii), (Officers)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
3. ii)												
a) <i>The County Council leads on local Biodiversity action by example and is thus a highly credible LBAP leader.</i>	1		6	6	12*	2	1				6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>1</b>				<b>10</b>	
b) <i>Staffing and resources are not a problem issue for Council LBAP input.</i>	1		2		10	11	13	11				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>21</b>		<b>24</b>				<b>1</b>	
c) <i>LBAP Officers and the LBAP function are well-linked to power and decision-making within the Council.</i>			2½		6½	3	10	4	2	2	5	3
<b>Total</b>			<b>2½</b>		<b>9½</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>8</b>	
d) <i>Prioritisation issues mean that Council work often comes before wider LBAP Partnership work.</i>	7	2	13	5	3	2					3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>18</b>		<b>5</b>						<b>6</b>	

\* Includes result from Welsh Pilot, where the statement was slightly differently worded: ‘a) County Councils lead on local Biodiversity action by example and are thus highly credible LBAP leaders.’

**a) The County Council leads on local Biodiversity action by example and is thus a highly credible LBAP leader.**

In Wales, the biggest single group of respondents, in disagreeing with the statement, were criticising their employers' record in an important area of the LBAP process. Significant minorities either agreed or responded under the 'other' option.

In contrast, in England the biggest single group - half - agreed with the statement, and only one sixth disagreed. A significant minority gave responses under the 'other' option. Of these, there was an interesting comment from 18R, an LBAP coordinator based in a Wildlife Trust:

‘The Wildlife Trust does a great deal of biodiversity work but, as with all other organizations in the Partnership, is exhausted with the LBAP process. Staff in the Wildlife Trust may not therefore understand their role in the process.’

Even when run by a specialist conservation organisation, the LBAP process will not necessarily be easier than in the hands of local councils.

When compared, Welsh respondents were distinctly more inclined to disagree with the statement than English.

When responses are taken as a whole there is a near even split in agreement and disagreement on the statement (the biggest single group disagreeing). Nearly one quarter of responses were 'other.'

**b) Staffing and resources are not a problem issue for Council LBAP input.**

Unusually, nearly all respondents either agreed or disagreed with the statement. In Wales there was a strong majority who disagreed, most of whom strongly so. Only three respondents agreed. This result is consistent with responses to open-ended questions 2 i) - iii), where themes involving resource shortfalls were identified more than any other issues (see Chapter 5).

With the exception of one 'other', all English respondents disagreed with the statement (half of whom strongly so). Lack of budget and staffing time were specifically referred to in a number of responses.

Respondents from both countries added comments to underline their positions:

e.g.: 5R (disagreed) 'continuity of funding for both staff and resources is currently a major problem.'

26R (strongly disagreed) ' ... I don't really have a budget to deliver anything!'

Overall perception amongst respondents was strongly of the opinion that staffing and resources are a problem issue for their Councils' (or, where different, other Lead organisations') LBAP input.

**c) LBAP Officers and the LBAP function are well-linked to power and decision-making within the Council.**

In both Wales and England there was a clear majority feeling against the statement.

Combined, figures show perception among a clear majority of respondents is that LBAP Officers and the LBAP function are not well-linked to power and decision-making within their Councils/ Lead bodies. The minority who responded 'other' shows that for some respondents this topic does not have a yes/ no answer. (One respondent gave 'Agree /Disagree', which accounts for the halves in figures here).

**d) Prioritisation issues mean that Council work often comes before wider LBAP Partnership work.**

There was some lack of clarity over this question, reflected in two respondents' responses (5R and 7R) over of whether respondents' *personal workloads* or the *Council/ Lead Body in general* was being referred to. The intention had been that the statement be taken as an overall perception of council attitude to prioritisation of biodiversity work between council and partnership areas, taking both the general situation and personal work experience into account.

Agreement with the statement in Wales was clearly the majority opinion. Minorities disagreed or stated 'other'. Interestingly, and possibly connected to the question of clarity noted above, there were sometimes differences in opinion between officers who worked for the same authorities: In one case, one officer disagreed, whilst another (the LBAP coordinator) agreed; in another case, one officer disagreed, whilst the LBAP coordinator responded 'other'.

In England, a majority of respondents agreed with the statement, with small numbers either disagreeing or responding 'other'.

Overall, although there was some evidence for lack of understanding of the precise meaning of the statement, it would be unwise to detract from what seems to be a clear overall negative outlook on prioritisation of wider LBAP Partnership work - whether understood to be at the personal workload level, or for the Council/ Lead body in general.

**4.3.3 Comment on Results by Statement: 3. iii) (see Table 4.6).**

a) To follow best practice, LBAPs are meant to aim to cover all biodiversity action happening locally.

In Wales there was a clear majority trend to agree with the statement. A minority (six) disagreed.

In some contrast, the biggest single grouping of English respondents (under half) disagreed.

**Table 4.6:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *LBAP Document* theme statements, 3. iii), (Officers)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
3. iii)												
a) <i>To follow best practice, LBAPs are meant to aim to cover all biodiversity action happening locally.</i>	2	1	13 +1*	6	6	10		1	2	4	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>3</b>	
b) <i>Partnership members constantly use the LBAP to inform conservation decision-making in the area.</i>			2	3	10	2	2	1	6	2	5	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>5</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>9</b>	
c) <i>Success in new action implementation often tends to be with things that would have happened anyway.</i>	2	1	5½	9	9½	6	2	1			6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>14½</b>		<b>15½</b>		<b>3</b>				<b>12</b>	

\* '+1' refers to Welsh pilot answer to statement worded: 'a) To follow best practice, LBAPs are meant to aim to cover the sum of biodiversity action happening locally.'

A substantial minority agreed, whilst smaller minorities responded 'don't know' or 'other'.

This does not imply that any LBAPs actually *are* covering everything; e.g. 7Ue (agreed) adds that the LBAP fails to do so. 4R (other) commented 'in the ideal world!'. Comments from some respondents who disagreed could point to the impracticalities of this approach:

e.g. 2Re 'trying to cover everything in the LBAP is too much and surely spreads very limited resources too thinly'.

18R pointed out that LBAPs should 'identify what ISN'T happening and make it happen', and 25Re said much the same. The near impossibility of actually including everything is not the issue here, rather the principle of what LBAPs should try to cover.

The biggest overall grouping of officers was found to be in favour of aiming to cover everything. A substantial minority disagreed, though interestingly, there was a clear difference of opinion between Welsh and English respondents - the former being more in favour than the latter.

**b) Partnership members constantly use the LBAP to inform conservation decision-making in the area.**

The biggest single grouping of respondents in Wales (twelve) disagreed (although this was not quite a majority opinion). Only two respondents agreed, whilst the remaining eleven responded 'don't know' or 'other'. In England, there was a close to even split in responses, showing no overall clear trend - one quarter disagreed with the statement, one quarter agreed, and the remainder responded either 'other' or 'don't know'.

Overall, the biggest single grouping of respondents disagreed, although this opinion actually accounted for under half. Significant minorities did not know the situation on this issue (understandable, given that coordinators could not be expected to be sure of degree of use, especially generalising amongst partners as a whole), or responded 'other', whilst only just over one tenth agreed. There was a clear Wales/ England difference - Welsh respondents being more in strongly in disagreement than English.

**c) Success in new action implementation often tends to be with things that would have happened anyway.**

In Wales there was a tendency to disagreement, this being the position of the biggest single grouping (halves in results were due to one respondent who indicated both agree and disagreed). In some contrast, English respondents were more in agreement (though still under half) than disagreement. Just over one quarter responded 'other'. (N.B. In the main version of the statement there was a specific reference to/ emphasis on *success* in *new* actions, which was not present in the ALGE statement. ALGE responses were almost evenly split between agreement, disagreement and 'other'.) English results are more in agreement than disagreement (whether ALGE responses are counted or not) whilst the opposite is true in Wales.

Overall, results show only slightly more agreement than disagreement, and a significant grouping of respondent indicating 'other' close behind (this holds true both with and without the ALGE responses).

An exercise in readjustment of results was made for this question on the basis that there were a number of respondents who admitted that the statement(s) applied *sometimes*. These had responded as follows:-

Wales: 1U: 'other'; 6R: 'Sometimes', adding '– not all the time, but probably mostly!'; 13R: 'sometimes'.

England (main group): 15R: 'Disagree', added: 'This is sometimes the case, but by no means always'; 13U: 'other', added: 'sometimes but not always'.

ALGE: All 'other': 21U added 'Sometimes. ...'; 24Re: 'in some cases'; 27Re: 'Some'.

These clearly show a degree of partial agreement and partial disagreement. By reclassifying these results, it is possible to arrive at an alternative - and arguably better - interpretation of the data. In Table 4.7 below, the 'other' responses listed above, and the 'disagree' response from 15R, were reclassified as half 'agree' and half 'disagree'.

The resulting overall picture is evenly balanced between agreement and disagreement (the same being true for ALGE responses as detailed in Appendix v). The exercise has to a degree altered the unadjusted position. Only in comparison between Wales and England can opinion favouring one way or the other be seen - there being this time a majority in Wales in disagreement, whilst in England a majority in agreement (this majority becomes proportionally rather greater when only the main English group is considered).

**Table 4.7:** Reinterpretation of Responses for 3. iii. c)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
iii. c)	2	1	7	11½	11	7½	2	1			3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>18½</b>		<b>18½</b>		<b>3</b>				<b>5</b>	

#### 4.3.4 Comment on Results by Statement: 3. iv) (see Table 4.8)

**Table 4.8:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *LBAP Reporting and Results* theme statements, 3. iv), (Officers)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
3. iv)												

a) <i>Our Partnership members are reporting on BARS or to the LBAP Officer, thus ensuring that progress on their actions is normally clear</i>			2	3	10	2	8	5			5	2
<b>Total</b>			<b>5</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>13</b>				<b>7</b>	
b) <i>Although significant numbers of actions in the LBAP seem to show little or no progress, their inclusion shows what needs to be done, and can help draw in funding.</i>	5	1	13	8	3	1		1	3		2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>21</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>3</b>	
c) <i>The LBAP enthuses and informs many local people.</i>	1		9	2	9	2	1	4		1	6	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>9</b>	
d) <i>There is lack of clarity about how LBAP targets and action reporting stand in relation to national HAP and SAP management and steering processes.</i>	6	1	15	10	2	7				2	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>25</b>		<b>9</b>				<b>2</b>		<b>6</b>	
e) <i>It would be better to focus more on priority objectives with long-term flexibility for project decision-making, rather than including long lists of detailed actions with variable degrees of backing commitment.</i>	5	3	13	13	1	3	1		3	1	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>26</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>6</b>	

**a) Our Partnership members are reporting on BARS or to the LBAP Officer, thus ensuring that progress on their actions is normally clear.**

There was a particularly high rate of disagreement with the statement in Wales. Of the two in agreement - (from the same authority) - one added 'they will in future', casting doubt on whether this is happening now. A remaining group of respondents answered 'other'.

In England, the majority also disagreed, with minorities agreeing or responding 'other'. Comments from those agreeing included notes that BARS reporting is not happening without 'nagging' or 'encouragement and support'.

Overall, of the thirty-seven respondents for this statement, twenty-five were in disagreement (over half of these, strongly so). Small minorities either agreed (less than one seventh) or responded 'other'.

Reporting is a key element in the LBAP process - this result would suggest that there is a significant gap in many LBAPs at present, such data not being passed into the system. This raises serious doubts about evaluation of LBAP progress for actions and targets.

**b) Although significant numbers of actions in the LBAP seem to show little or no progress, their inclusion shows what needs to be done, and can help draw in funding.**

In Wales there was significant majority agreement on this statement, with only small numbers in other categories. English results also show clear agreement - three quarters - with only a small number disagreeing.

No respondents took issue with the first clause of the statement, or made any differentiation between this and the remainder of the text.

Overall, there was clear majority agreement on this statement - twenty-seven in the two relevant categories in all - whilst only small numbers either disagreed or indicated 'don't know' or 'other'.

**c) The LBAP enthuses and informs many local people.**

In Wales, agreement and disagreement balanced one another (ten agreeing and ten disagreeing) whilst six responded 'other'. In England, half of all respondents disagreed, with only a small number in agreement. Thus, there was proportionally more disagreement in England than in Wales.

Overall, there was more disagreement than agreement to the statement (less than half agreed; one third disagreed), with a fair number responding 'other'. A significant proportion of respondents did not commit one way or the other.



It can be suggested that responding ‘disagree’ called for a certain amount of extra courage from the officers concerned, because in some contexts this might be judged to be an admission of failure. On the other hand, the many instances of issues raised in some of the open-ended questions (2 i) to iii)) relating to problems, for example, with funding and implementation, may point to the kind of reasoning which officers would use against accusations of personal failures.

**d) There is lack of clarity about how LBAP targets and action reporting stand in relation to national HAP and SAP management and steering processes.**

In Wales, there was clear majority agreement with the statement, with only two disagreeing or responding ‘other’. In England, the biggest single group agreed, although this was less than half the total number. A significant minority disagreed. Agreement was distinctly more pronounced in Wales than in England.

Overall, over half of officers who responded believe that there is indeed lack of clarity in this matter, though a significant minority disagreed. Conversely, there was more disagreement in England than in Wales.

**e) It would be better to focus more on priority objectives with long-term flexibility for project decision-making, rather than including long lists of detailed actions with variable degrees of backing commitment.**

In Wales, there was strong agreement with only small numbers disagreeing, and three each responding ‘don’t know’ or ‘other’. In England, there was also a clear majority in agreement, with only small numbers disagreeing or responding otherwise. Agreement was thus slightly stronger in Wales, but the overall position in both countries was similar.

One respondent (17R, strongly agreed) noted:

‘We originally had many long lists of very specific and prescriptive actions but these soon become out of date and fail to mesh with the changing priorities and funding.’

(As background, many LBAPs were produced with long and detailed action listings for the various species and habitats which were prioritised. In many cases, new action plans have been added in later years.)

Combined, there was a clear majority of respondents in agreement with the statement, with only small numbers disagreeing or responding otherwise. The alternative to the inclusion of long lists of actions (see 3. iv) b)) suggested in the statement was given endorsement.

### 4.3.5 Comment on Results by Statement: 3. v) (see Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *LBAP Other* theme statements, 3. v), (Officers)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W	E
3. v)												
a) <i>Local Biodiversity action would benefit greatly by focusing more on Climate Change-related projects (such as habitat linking) and mutually-beneficial projects for health and wildlife.</i>	4	3	12½	6½		6½			3	2	6½	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>6½</b>				<b>5</b>		<b>11½</b>	
b) <i>In formal/ official contexts, it is often the 'done thing' to refer only to positive features and results of LBAP action.</i>	4	1	13	11	5	6			2	2	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>11</b>				<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>	
c) <i>The range of skills and work expected of an LBAP Officer are a great deal to ask of one person.</i>	8	1	9	7	5	2	2	1		1	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	

#### a) Local Biodiversity action would benefit greatly by focusing more on Climate Change-related projects (such as habitat linking) and mutually-beneficial projects for health and wildlife.

In Wales, unusually, no respondents responded *disagree*. There was a significant level of agreement - a clear majority. Respondents who had indicated 'other' raised a number of points. e.g. 8U pointed out that there are two issues in the statement (climate change and cross-sector working). 8Re suggested that LBAP work is already climate-change related, though this missed the point that the statement specifically referred to a greater focus on this (acknowledgment of climate change has grown in the years since publication of LBAP guidance documents and original production of LBAPs).

In England, the biggest single group agreed with the statement, whilst just over one quarter disagreed. This included one that disagreed with the first part of the statement, but agreed with the second. 14U disagreed - stating that there would be ...:

‘danger of side-tracking evidence-based conservation work into more concept-based approaches whose value is less certain’, and that this shift ‘ would also widely discredit the BAP process amongst experienced conservationists.’

25Re also disagreed, stating:

‘it is not clear to me that we are in a position yet to be able to predict with sufficient accuracy the likely trends in climate so that we know what to do now in order to mitigate for the impacts.’

On the issue of links to health and well-being, this respondent was:

‘... in favour of making the links more explicit so long as the social and economic outcomes of projects do not become the sole drivers of projects.’

Less than one quarter of responses from England were in the ‘other’ category. Support was thus somewhat stronger in Wales than in England - with more agreement in the former than the latter; there was no disagreement in Wales.

Overall, a majority of respondents agreed with the statement, but there was a relatively high number who responded ‘other’. There were some interesting opinions expressed on aspects of the statement, which suggest there could be potential for debate on both climate change and linking into health-related aspects of biodiversity work.

It would seem strange to find such a difference between agreement in Wales and England here. Could it be that there may be more confidence in Wales that LBAPs could take on this role, whereas in England it might be seen as something for higher planning, such as English regional government?

**b) In formal/official contexts, it is often the ‘done thing’ to refer only to positive features and results of LBAP action.**

Overall, reflecting similar results from Wales and England alike, a clear majority of respondents were in agreement with the statement, with small minorities disagreeing or responding otherwise.

One respondent expanded:

‘We are excellent publicists and if you read all the various publications, newsletters, etc. you'd think we've got it all wrapped up! Perhaps sometimes we should not be afraid to admit to the problems as well’ (8U, strongly agreed).

There were also suggested reasons as to why ‘spin’ features in LBAP culture:

e.g. ‘We have to sing for our supper therefore pointing out weaknesses could potentially damage our funding (18R, agreed).

This refers to the often fragile nature of conservation funding - having to justify need, but also feeling that if work is not seen to be succeeding then funders may withdraw support. Another commented: ‘that’s the problem with targets/PI approach’ (18U, agreed). This seems to point to a need to please those who make decisions on the basis of success towards targets and performance indicators. Failures to meet such criteria reflect poorly on those running the process, their departments, and the organisations involved as a whole.

Any attempt to introduce more balance in dealing with this issue - the overemphasis on the positive - would have to allay these concerns.

**c) The range of skills and work expected of an LBAP Officer are a great deal to ask of one person.**

Overall, well over half of respondents agreed with the statement, whilst a minority disagreed. Welsh and English results were similar.

One respondent (15R, strongly agreed) gave the following overview:

‘The post has a high public profile and requires an ability to forge effective working relationships with an unusually broad range of stakeholders. It demands strong coordination, communication (writing and public speaking) and organisational skills, an in-depth knowledge of biodiversity and conservation, and an ability to process and deal with a very large volume of information.’

1U (strongly agreed) added:

“you are expected to be ‘jack of all trades, master of none!’ Far too much for one person to deal with effectively, particularly when you are also expected to be the County Ecologist as well!”

(N.B. some LBAP coordinators also have an ecological role within planning/ development control in local authorities). 16R (agreed) also noted a need to be ‘jack of all trades’, but felt pressure to be ‘master of most too!’. Other respondents made further capacity-related comments, such as 5R (agreed):

You could easily have a team of 10 LBAP officers working on the LBAP and them still be overworked.’<sup>1</sup>

4U, though in agreement, adds

‘But this is not unusual in the conservation sector where underpaid and overstretched is the norm.’

Whilst relatively few respondents disagreed, some made pragmatic comments about dealing with workloads: 21R added that ‘you have to focus the job down to a 1 person job’, whilst 11R (strongly disagreed) stated: ‘This comes with the territory. It is the volume not the range that is the issue.’

#### 4.4 Discussion

How can responses be used to gain a meaningful overall understanding of Officers’ perceptions of the LBAP process? To begin with, it is important to consider some apparent inconsistencies from comparison of responses to several of the statements. Firstly, in response to 3. i) a), a clear majority indicated that their Partnership had been ‘a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new ... actions and projects’, whilst a greater majority immediately responded - in 3. i) b) - that *in practice*, existing work, competition for funds and other factors significantly limit partnership cooperation. Twenty respondents felt able to agree to both of these statements. Furthermore, 3. iii) c) revealed a near-even split in opinion on whether new action would have happened without the LBAP or not. Of those who agreed that action would have happened without the LBAP, seven had also agreed to 3. i) a). Finally, seventeen respondents who agreed to 3. i) a), also agreed to 3. v) b), as part of the majority who perceived that it is the ‘done thing’ to be positive about the LBAP process *in official contexts*.

How should these results be interpreted together? Was upbeat response to 3. i) a) to some degree an ‘official mode’, positive reaction (in light of 3. v) b))? As we have seen, agreement with both 3. i) a) and 3. i) b) was quite frequent, and it would seem reasonable to infer that this actually means that there has been new agreement and delivery of action, but that has only gone a limited way. It seems harder to reconcile the seven cases where there was agreement to both 3. i) a) and 3. iii) c). To what extent can the LBAP have been both ‘real catalyst for ... delivering new action’ and yet at the same time can success in ‘new action implementation’ often tend to be with ‘things that would have happened anyway’? It can be suggested that a reconciliation of these results is possible if this is understood to mean that, whilst there has been a certain amount of new action

arising from the LBAP, much action which appears ‘new’ would have happened without the LBAP. Nevertheless, this cannot be proved, and these results should be treated with some caution.

In considering responses to statement 3 iii) b) in relation to LBAP partnerships, it was found that use of LBAPs in local conservation decision making by partnership members was thought by many officers to be low. Added to consideration of other possible inconsistencies above, this further points to a need for caution in interpretation of 3. i) a) responses. Furthermore, statement 3 iii) b) was unusual in that it sought perception about *use made by third parties*, but it should be noted that we do not know how accurately informed respondents were in this matter.

A number of semi-structured statements had particular relevance for LBAP status. These focused on position of the LBAP function and LBAP officers within councils. Opinion from 3. ii) c) quite overwhelmingly pointed to low status due to lack of strong links to power and decision-making. In considering other aspects of lead/ coordinating body track record, officers tended to be highly critical. An overwhelming majority felt that staffing was a problem for input (3. ii) b)), and a clear majority felt that council work often came before LBAP partnership work. Despite these trends, opinion on overall leadership track record and credibility was divided, and was only slightly more negative than positive (3.ii) a)). Once again, there is inconsistency between responses. Response to a more general statement contrasts somewhat with response to statements which sought to explore more specific key aspects of direct relevance to the same issue. How could this be explained? Again, there are possible interpretations which allow for compatibility. For example, it could be inferred that those who responded less negatively to 3. ii) a) than to one or more of statements 3. ii) b) - d) wanted to say something positive (or not harshly negative) about their organisation’s leadership overall, but were willing to highlight some problem areas when specifically asked in more detail. There is however a possibility that there has been some influence from the ‘spin in official contexts’ factor already noted above. Might other factors have affected response choices to help produce this pattern? In 3. ii) b) - d), respondents were being asked for opinions on issues of LBAP status within their own organisation. These issues are largely out of the control of individual staff involved in the LBAP process. But in 3 ii) a), it is possible that staff felt that they were being asked to give an opinion not only on their organisation, but on their *own* effectiveness and track record in their work on their LBAP. If so, and if respondents were loathe to imply personal failings, it is possible that response to 3. ii) a) may have been understated (compared with 3 ii) b) - d)). Either way,

responses to these statements overall clearly yielded substantially more criticism of lead bodies than indications of approval.

LBAP coverage proved to be an issue on which there was divided opinion, although there were more respondents who thought it ‘best practice’ to cover all local conservation action in LBAPs than were against (3 iii) a)). This variation in opinion is consistent with the lack of clarity in original guidance material on how LBAPs were to operate explored in Chapter 2, where it was found that whilst LBAP functions seemed to suggest coverage of all issues, there was lack of clarity over the relationship to UK BAP habitats/ species action plans process. Response to 3 iv) d) directly confirmed that officers feel unclear over links to the UK process.

The issue of lack of clarity on the relationship between LBAPs and UK BAP processes will be dealt with further in Chapter 7. At the present point in discussion, it seems a distinct possibility that the effects of this are most likely to have been negative; in the absence of clarity on process links, how could progress on the first LBAP function be meaningfully reported, evaluated or compared between LBAPs? We have noted the strong perceptions of lack of reporting which emerged from 3 iv) a) - whether through BARS or otherwise. Accurate assessment of LBAP action and target progress is not possible without reporting, and inability to monitor LBAPs would in itself be a failure of one of the six LBAP functions. What reasons might there be for a lack of reporting? The most obvious perhaps are issues of lack of time to report on large numbers of action listings, and the familiarity needed to navigate and use the BARS reporting system.

*Action listings* (an identified issue for research) was referred to in two statements, and there was some contrast in responses to each. Firstly, we have seen that response to 3 iv) b) showed that a large majority of officers agreed that long lists of actions show needs and can help draw in funding, but at the same time did not dispute that there has been lack of progress on many of the same actions. We have also seen that statement 3 iv) e) offered an alternative model for action listings, involving more flexibility for evolution of the LBAP over time (i.e. actions would be developed over time towards agreed priority objectives, rather than being listed in the LBAP with no guarantee of commitment or funding). This proposed alternative was supported by a large majority of officers. Does this contradict responses to 3 iv) b)? This would seem not to be the case, because 3 iv) b) responses referred to features of the *present* system, whilst those to 3 iv)

e) showed positive approval for an alternative. It can be suggested that these results provide part of a basis from which improvements to action listings might be discussed and developed.

Another potential basis for improvement in LBAP working has been provided by response to statement 3 v) a). This is in the form of majority officer respondent support for climate-change related work and mutually beneficial work for health and wildlife.

Perceptions of LBAP impacts on the local population, specifically on whether the LBAP 'enthuses and informs many local people' proportionally produced more disagreement than any other response (3. iv) c)). This can be seen as at least a partial assessment of officers' own organisations' effectiveness, and, where relevant, of their own effectiveness with the educational/awareness raising side of the process. In view of this, it is worth noting the possibility that there may have been some temptation towards more positive responses, especially when the 'spin' factor is taken into account. Whether this was the case or not, findings still show a mixed overall picture.

The remaining area from the semi-structured questions to be considered in the present chapter is the range of skills and work expected from LBAP officers (3. v) c)). What is the significance of the clear majority agreement that expectations on officers were high, and is this not the case in many work situations anyway? Whilst the latter may be so, there may be implications of this finding in relation to other areas in the present research, where findings show that experience of the process is variable, but that a number of significant overall problems seem to be emerging or being confirmed. If, in a background of lack of process clarity and lack of status, coordinators are in addition being put under pressure to cover too many specialisms - as quoted comments suggest - then there are likely to be effects on quality of work, on partners' perceptions, and on general credibility of the LBAP process as a result.

Discussion specific to the Officers' survey is completed at the end of Chapter 5.



## Chapter 5: Officers' Response: Open-ended Questions

For a record of full results, see Appendix vi.

### 5.1 Introduction.

Responses to these questions varied greatly in content and detail. For example, whilst some made general suggestions, others were focused on specialist areas. Where this was the case, these have been classed as 'significant sub-topics' within themes in Tables 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7 and 5.9. Sometimes single suggestions might combine elements of different sub-topics e.g. a suggestion that a *new awareness officer post be created* could be interpreted as being either a 'staff' or 'awareness' for classification. In this specific case, comments were counted under 'staff', as part of a sub-theme which included awareness. In other cases, a single suggestion might be split into two categories: e.g. a statement which covered 'continuity' noted that this continuity would apply to a lot of conservation and awareness-raising work; this clearly seemed to imply both *awareness* as well as *other conservation work* and was recorded under two categories accordingly.

Categorisation of responses into main themes and significant sub-topics was thus not an exact science, due to the nature of the responses. The choice of main themes for classification was an attempt to simplify a large mass of written material into more readily understandable tables.

In the tables which follow, there is an inevitable tradeoff between amount of detail and meaningfulness, but it is hoped that the classification adopted gives a fair idea of the main issues raised.

**Key:** In Tables 5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7 and 5.9, W = Results from Wales, E = Results from England. Totals given under main theme headings cover number of suggestions from each country classified as such.

### 5.2 Analysis of Results Material

#### 5.2.1 Question 2. i): You have £2 million for local Biodiversity work - what would be your first priorities for spending it? (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2)

Notes for Table 5.1: The numbers in brackets under significant sub-topics are intended to indicate popularity of given areas within the main theme, but totals under the 'Main Theme' heading need not be the sum of those under 'Significant Sub-topics'. This was because of the complexities of classification of responses outlined in section 5.1.

**Table 5.1:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 2. i) (Officers)

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
<b>Habitat Management</b> - 21 W, 8 E	Linking - W (3) Climate change - W (2) SINCs - W (3) Land purchase - W (4), E (3) Agricultural - W (2), E (1) Landscape-scale management - W (4) Support land owners - E (1) Support for sustainable heathland management - E (1) Urban Wildlife areas/ Greenspace - E (2)
<b>Staff</b> - 18 W, 8 E	More/ boost - W (16), E (6) Coordinator/ Implementation Officer and/ or Assistant - W (4), E (6) Ecological function - W (2) For habitat/ site management - W (3) Education, Awareness - W (3) Fundraising post - W (1), E (1) Community (e.g. support/ projects) - W (2), E (1) SINC (temp. post) - W (1) Better pay/ wages - W (2) Partnership support - W (1), E (2) For wider countryside work - W (1), E (1) Business-involvement officer - W (1)
<b>'Action'/ 'Projects'</b> - 8 W, 3 E	Projects - small grants to cover funding gaps, with simple processes - W (1) Big project funding, long-term - W (1) Projects, Incl. capital spending - E (1) Funding LBAP priority actions/ priorities - E (2) Long-term funding - W (1), E (1) LBAP implementation, Match funding - W (1) Develop income-generating projects - W (1)
<b>Partnership</b> - 3 W, 1 E	Partnership projects/ events - W (1), E (1) Revamp LBAP and partnership - W (1) Cross-LBAP joint work - W (1)
<b>Public/ Community</b> - 1 W, 3 E	Organise volunteers, incl. training - W (1) Work with community groups - E (1) Events - family - E (1) LBAP delivery - through support for action groups - E (1)
<b>Awareness, Education</b> - 5 W (other references included under Staff), 2 E	Awareness: Partnership Flagship project - W (1) Fund community/ schools awareness - W (1), Work with Schools - E (1) LA Staff training - W (1) New LNR with Environmental Education Centre - E (1) <i>(Table continued ...)</i>

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
<b>Survey</b> - 4 W, 4 E	Whole LA - W (1), E (1) Baseline - W (1) Phase 1 - W (1), E (1) Priority habitat assessment - incl. recommend improvements - E (1) Baseline of hedgerows countywide - E (1) Assessment of Wood pasture sites for management/ restoration - E (1)
<b>Others</b> - 3 W, 4 E	Site designation (e.g. LNRs) - W (2) Funding of coordination/ process - E (1) Planning LBAP re. climate change - E (1) Support LRC - E (2)

**Table 5.2:** Summary of Officers' Suggestions from Question 2. i)

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Habitat Management</b>	21	8	<b>29</b>
<b>Staff</b>	18	8	<b>26</b>
<b>'Action'/ 'Projects'</b>	8	3	<b>11</b>
<b>Partnership</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Public/ Community</b>	1	3	<b>4</b>
<b>Awareness and Education</b>	5	2	<b>7</b>
<b>Survey</b>	4	4	<b>8</b>
<b>Others</b>	3	4	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>96</b>

### 5.2.2 Comment

Wales: On the basis of classification of respondents' suggestions, thirty-nine of the sixty-three suggestions for spending specifically concerned habitat management or staffing issues. 'Action'/ 'Projects' (which need not exclude habitat management) were mentioned in eight suggestions and education and awareness in five, though it should be noted (for example) that several suggestions classified under 'staff' included employment of awareness officers. There were small numbers of other suggestions.

There were rather less suggestions from England - thirty-three being little more than half of the Welsh total. The makeup of suggestions is however relatively similar to the Welsh results; once again habitat management and staffing were the two biggest single areas identified for funding action under the given scenario, with other categories featuring less strongly.

The twenty-three English respondents taken overall did make a broad range of suggestions, a number of which were quite distinct from anything from Wales. It is possible that the latter responded with more ideas because of the research and survey being based in Wales, and being particularly Welsh-focused work.

Overall, over half of the suggestions identified for spending specifically concerned habitat management or staffing issues. 'Action'/ 'Projects' (which again need not exclude habitat management) were noted in eleven suggestions. Awareness/ education was listed eight times, but several suggestions classified under 'staff' included employment of awareness officers, illustrating once more that themes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Similarly, although references to Partnership and to Public/ Community categories seem low, mention or implication of these theme areas under staff shows a desire to deal with these areas by way of staff coverage. There were a number of 'other' suggestions.

Focus on staffing and the even larger number of suggestions specifically involving habitat management is obviously a result of a perceived need for more coverage of biodiversity. There seems to be a desire on the part of LBAP officers to achieve more 'on-the-ground' results through conservation management.

**5.2.3 Question 2 ii): If you were Leader and Chief Exec of your Authority, how would you change things for its input to the LBAP process?** (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4)

N.B. Slightly different wording used in England, to reflect the fact that Lead bodies are not always be local/ national park authorities (unlike the situation in Wales): If you were Leader and Chief Exec of your LBAP's lead body (normally Council or Wildlife Trust), how would you change things for its input to the LBAP process?

**Table 5.3:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 2. ii) (Officers)

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
<b>Staff</b> - 15 W, 5 E	<p>More - W  Coordinator/ LBAP Officer - W, E  Assistant - W  Ecologist/ Biodiversity Officer in Planning - W  External Funding Manager - W  <b>Education</b> - W  <b>Training Post</b> - W  Biodiversity Team/ Section - W  <b>Officer in each relevant department</b> - W  Permanent Post/ Long Term Security - W, E  Raise Pay - W  Full-time status/ FT Officer - W, E  Adequate staffing resources - E</p>
(Lead Organisation) <b>Integration</b> - 13 W, 8 E	<p>General/ comprehensive - W  High-level plans/ policies: Community Plan, Sustainable Development - W, E  <b>Of LBAP for Council-owned sites</b> - WPI/ Service Plan-driven implementation - W  <b>With enhancement, good practice, due regard</b> - W  <b>Adoption of ‘best practice’</b> - W  <b>Internal resource diversion for biodiversity</b> - W  Add biodiversity to job descriptions to ensure crosscutting commitment - E  To strengthen partnership - E  LBAP - crosscutting integration with policies/ contracts - E  Strengthen Planning enforcement - E  Through Biodiversity officer in planning team - E</p>
(Lead Organisation) <b>Training and Awareness</b> - 10 W, 4 E	<p>Members’ Training - W  All staff training - W  For implementation - W  <b>And legal compliance/ statutory duties</b> - W  <b>Internal promotion</b> - W  <b>Promotion as part of Sustainable Development</b> - W  Promotion - in council, to businesses - E  Training for LA Planners - E  Publicity - celebrate involvement - E  Knowledge and information sharing- E</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Table continued ...)</i></p>

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
(Lead Organisation) <b>Status</b> - 9 W, 8 E	Generally raise/ Boost priority - W, E Corporate Commitment (can name resourcing) - W, E With integration - W With funding e.g. for LA land management - W Set good proactive example/ Local Champion - W Fair weighting where conflicts of interest - W Raise LBAP status in Wildlife Trust > more widely indirectly - E Boost s./ effectiveness by funding (named themes) - E Boost public, politicians, senior management - E Relative to Rights of Way (team) - E
<b>Resources</b> - 5 W, 7 E	Protect/ Raise/ Adequate/ Begin budget - W, E Funding continuity - W Funding for implementation, including staff - W, E More Biodiversity resources - W Funding - survey - E Funding - council site management - E Funding - site defence from development - E Funding- would welcome more - E
<b>Other</b> - 4 W, 10 E	Land management - scrap no-purchase policy - W Protect LBAP listed 'non-designated' habitats in planning - W Recognition of wider benefits including for e.g. Health, Community - W Encourage Business championing/ links - W, E Change Lead partner from WT to the relevant county councils - E Launch LBAP - E Get <b>results</b> - translate theory into practice, setting example - E <b>Implementation</b> - priority for CC estate actions - E Allow time for crosscutting AP <b>implementation</b> - E Monitoring and evaluation - comprehensive - E Get Clarification - BAP Steering Group roles and functions - E Praise for council - E Don't know (lack of spare funds) - E

Table 5.4: Summary of Officers' Suggestions from Question 2. ii)

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Integration</b>	13	8	<b>21</b>
<b>Staff</b>	15	5	<b>20</b>
<b>Training and Awareness (Lead Organisation)</b>	10	4	<b>14</b>
<b>Status (Lead Organisation)</b>	9	8	<b>17</b>
<b>Resources</b>	5	7	<b>12</b>
<b>Other</b>	4	10	<b>14</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>98</b>

### 5.2.4 Comment

In Wales, staffing was the most common area where respondents would make changes within their local authority. Not far behind this came integration of biodiversity/ the LBAP with council work, followed by the closely related themes of training and awareness, and then status of biodiversity/ LBAPs within local authorities. Some specific resource/ funding matters and a number of other issues were also highlighted.

Classification of suggestions from English officers shows a different emphasis in make-up: 'Other' issues formed the biggest single group. Within this, there were some particularly noteworthy responses: for example, three dealt with LBAP implementation/ results, and one with monitoring and evaluation. One Wildlife Trust-based officer suggested moving LBAP Lead role from the WT to the relevant County Councils to ensure buy-in from the latter. One respondent noted that the council did 'pretty well', but would be open to more funding for biodiversity, whilst another responded 'don't know', in light of present cash shortage.

The next most numerous categories for suggestions were 'status' and 'integration' (eight relevant points each). It is noteworthy that one WT-based officer suggested boosting LBAP status within the WT. Resources was the third most numerous category for suggestions, followed by Staff, and lastly Training/ Awareness. Of these four categories, all but resources had proportionally fewer suggestions than those from Welsh respondents.

Looking holistically at the results, there is clearly a lot of material centered on perceived need for increased staffing coverage, greater internal integration, awareness, and a general rise in LBAP status. The following quotes give a flavour of comments on staffing and other resources issues:

1U - 'More staff resources to deliver biodiversity, i.e. full-time ecologist, biodiversity project assistant, environmental education officer and ranger service to manage wildlife sites.'

5R - 'ensure continuity of funding for both staff and capital projects.'

11U - 'Create a post of Biodiversity Officer in each department that has the potential to affect biodiversity...'

18U - 'Usual - adequate staff resources and budget ...'

19U - 'The BAP process would not be a priority until there was adequate funding for:

- Habitat and species survey work.
- Site management of council sites.
- Defending sites against unjustified development.

Only with these basics in place could an LBAP process be useful.'

Comments on the issue of Status included a number of short references to what are clearly held to be fundamental problems:

- 10Re - 'De-marginalize it ?? Not sure how'
- 2R - 'Mainstream biodiversity into other LA functions'
- 4R - '... raise awareness that all council staff have responsibilities towards biodiversity action'
- 6R - 'I would definitely put [the LBAP] higher up the agenda than it is now'
- 13R - 'Greater emphasis on biodiversity in the day-to-day work of the Authority (reinforcing stipulation in NERC Act to pay due regard to biodiversity-perhaps by making this a corporate objective?).'

(Note: Results were obtained a few months before the integration of biodiversity across the local government functions was given legal backing in October 2006, when the NERC Act came into force.)

Some responses included more specific details of how LBAP status within authorities could be raised:

20U - 'Ensure compliance with the targets and outputs of the BAP and process, through regular structured reviews of progress, commissioning of 5 yearly audits and evaluations of BAP and outputs ...'

26R - 'Ensure that Biodiversity/ Environment was a key theme of the Corporate Plan which in turn would make it more of a priority for Members and ensure its inclusion in other plans and strategies. Too much emphasis given on Economic Development throughout the Council and this is not balanced with environmental issues...'

28Re - 'Elevate conservation of the natural environment to a strategic priority vital to other aspects such as economic development. At present environment is waste and roads as these are the two "environment" issues that government pay close attention to via corporate performance assessment.

The LBAP process would then be the framework through which it would meet biodiversity objectives and targets. By having Performance Indicators (or other measures) in place this would also make this work more of a priority to ensure that adequate resources and funding is in place to achieve them.'

These responses reflecting perceptions of low status for LBAPs within lead bodies could easily be added to.

Taken overall, integration of biodiversity/ the LBAP with council work was the most common area where respondents would make changes within their local authority. Not far behind this came Staffing, followed by Training and Awareness, and then Status of biodiversity/ LBAPs within local authorities. Finally, specific resource/ funding matters and a number of other issues were highlighted.



**5.2.5 Question 2 iii): If you were First Minister of the Assembly, what would you do as top priority for LBAPs?** (see Tables 5.5 and 5.6)

(N.B. In England, question read: If you were Environment Minister, what would you do as top priority for LBAPs? (not included on ALGE Pilot)).

**Table 5.5:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 2. iii) (Officers)

N.B. As sub-topics reveal, classification sometimes has led to overlap of Themes - e.g. Staffing issues may mention *funding* specifically for staff. In such cases, the point made by respondents has only been counted once.

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
<b>Funding/ Resources</b> - 18 W, 6 E	i.e. Funding/ resources for ... Each LBAP, for key work - W Ring-fenced, for LBAP Officer and Ecologist in each LA - W Funding facilitation/ need for more accessible funds - W For LBAP process - W Need genuine WAG commitment to funding - W LBAP funding continuity for staff and projects - W Ring-fenced funding for LA biodiversity work - W Funding on par with economic regeneration - W WAG local input - W LA and business biodiversity integration - W Resources for CCW e.g. For LNR management/ processes, Staff. posts - W LRC resourcing - W, E Long Term delivery - E, Coordination, capital work - E To allow LBAP priority-driven action - E Implementation on the ground - E Projects - E
<b>Staff</b> - 8 W, 4 E	Ensure min. of Biodiversity officer and Ecologist in each LA - W Ring-fenced funding for two posts above and also Education and Admin. posts. - W BARS for Wales - new team to support - W Permanency - W LA Ecologists (with independent powers) - E Status and funding for coordinators/ managers - E LBAP coordinators - E
<b>Integration/ Status</b> - 8 W, 2 E	WAG integration and exemplary practice - W Full WAG commitment - W Policy integration of LBAP with emerging strategies - W Government organisations - LBAP commitment and integration - W Multi-sectoral integration of BAPs/ LBAPs - W Profile and awareness - raise through LBAP implementation, part of SD - W Raise status - W Integrate to environmental funding approval processes - E

	Make LBAP & UK BAP central to planning process - E <i>(Table continued ...)</i>
<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
<b>Legal</b> - 6 W, 2 E	Ensure LA NERC compliance - W Make LBAP implementation statutory - W Raise LBAP Legal Status - W Clear up conservation legal loopholes - W Ensure LAs' input to: Sect 74 list, SD, and UK BAP - W Consider legal underpinning for implementation - E LPA obligation to enhance biodiversity - E
<b>Habitat Management</b> - 5 W, 1 E	Through large-scale land purchase - W More development of agri-environment schemes for conservation, enhancement and recreation links - W Landscape-scale projects and action planning, Wales-wide etc. - W Green site management by LAs, incl. SINC network - W Urban Ecological Parks network for community involvement, raising biodiversity awareness - W Strategic Policy and Delivery - British/ English Ecological Network - E
<b>Other</b> - 7 W, 2 E	Ecological survey and monitoring; - W Welsh Biodiversity Strategy, with LA reporting on - W Effectiveness - clarify LBAP remit; - W LBAP guidance for BARS and LBAP review - W Set targets for public organisations to force to take b. seriously. - W Cross-sector links to economy, health, well-being; acknowledgment and awareness of biodiversity - W Facing limitations of community volunteers for LBAP delivery - W Govt. Policy - can both housing and habitat expansion be compatible in SE England? - E Habitat and Species Prioritisation with long term vision and funding - E

**Table 5.6:** Summary of Officers' Suggestions from Question 2. iii)

Theme	Wales	England	Total
<b>Funding/ Resources</b>	18	6	<b>24</b>
<b>Staff</b>	8	4	<b>12</b>
<b>Integration and Status</b>	8	2	<b>10</b>
<b>Legal</b>	6	2	<b>8</b>
<b>Habitat Management</b>	5	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Other</b>	7	2	<b>9</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>69</b>

### 5.2.6 Comment

In Wales, funding and resource issues were clearly the top category identified for greater WAG support. Matters relating to staff featured relatively prominently, with a number of respondents stating a need for WAG to ensure local authorities have posts to cover LBAP coordination and their (i.e. L.A.s') ecological function. Integration ideas were also prominent, and included WAG commitment to integration of biodiversity in its own operations. A number of legal issues were highlighted, as well as habitat management and some other matters.

Although the twelve English respondents gave less suggestions relative to their Welsh colleagues, the overall pattern from the themes identified was broadly similar. Funding/ resources, as well as staffing issues, both featured high on the list. Integration and status, and habitat management were proportionally less well represented. The one suggestion which was specifically habitat-focused involved planning and implementing a national habitats network.

Overall, responses covered a broad range of subject areas, reflecting the broader remit of higher levels of government (compared to local authorities). In contrast to perceived needs for LA input to LBAPs (question 2. ii) , Funding and Resource issues were clearly seen as being the top area where greater higher-level government support was most considered to be desirable. Over one third of suggestions were classified in this category. Responses included calls for resources directed specifically at action on the ground:

- 15R - '... - Ensure that there is long-term funding available through Defra/ Natural England to support LBAP delivery across the country;
- Institute a national policy and programme to deliver an ecological network (as has been done in the Netherlands).'
- 19Re - 'More funding but targeted funding to achieve results on the ground.'

The following comment is very forthright, and is essentially about a perceived need to both raise status of the LBAP process and increase resource backing accordingly:

8U - 'I would stop kidding myself that local biodiversity action will be delivered by volunteers and the "community". I don't expect them to deliver their own health service or their children's education so I won't expect them to deliver a healthy environment for Wales.'

Matters relating to staff featured relatively prominently, with a number of respondents wanting these higher governmental levels to ensure local authorities have posts to cover LBAP coordination and L.A. ecological function. Specific ideas for greater staff coverage included:

2Re - 'Ensure that every LPA has at least one full time, permanent ecologist and at least one full time, permanent LBAP officer.'

1U - 'Ring fence funding for a permanent LBAP officer in each local authority ... and county ecologist ... Establish a major biodiversity grant scheme for Wales to help implement targets within the LBAP ... Set up a BARS Development Team in Wales who will be responsible for maintaining BARS in Wales'

4R - 'Increase staffing levels – ensure each LA had a Bio[diversity] Officer and a Planning Ecologist'

5R - 'ensure continuity of funding for both staff and capital projects, the current sporadic nature of funding severely limits LBAP action.'

17R - 'Financially support full-time LBAP Co-ordinators.'

Integration/ Status featured third overall in level of responses. LBAP status included suggestions on the possibility of legal boosting. E.g:

6R - 'Give the LBAP more legal weighting than it has now, make it essential for all areas to have one and to employ officers to facilitate it and essential that it is incorporated into day to day running of local authorities and businesses and support that through provision of funding.'

4U - 'Make LBAP implementation statutory and provide the necessary resources to implement, monitor and review.'

15R - 'Explore the feasibility/desirability of making the implementation of biodiversity action plans a statutory responsibility ...'

### **5.2.7 Question 2 iv): If the LBAP and process were abolished, what would be the biggest losses to your area for biodiversity conservation?** (see Tables 5.7 and 5.8)

(N.B. Question was not included in ALGE Pilot.)

### **5.2.8 Comment**

For Wales, the most popular main theme for respondents' perceived benefits of LBAPs was in information networking and related areas. Other areas particularly highlighted included proactive and 'project' work, related to which was funding for biodiversity work (funding has been counted separately where specifically referred to). Responses relating to conservation focus and similar areas were relatively high at eight, whilst there were seven references to loss of staff for biodiversity work. Six responses referred specifically to partnership or related losses, and five to issues of biodiversity protection. There were a few miscellaneous other answers, whilst one respondent questioned whether there would indeed be any losses were the LBAP and process to be abolished, because much conservation work would be happening without the LBAP.

**Table 5.7:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 2. iv) (Officers)

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
<b>Information Networking and Related</b> - 15 W, 2 E	General Biodiversity Networking - W, E Central contact point for Biodiversity - W Information Sharing - W Between-partner communication - W Support, links to other organisations - W Local links - W Overview of current action - W Coordination effort - W Communication - e.g. helps joined up thinking - E
<b>Proactive and 'Projects'</b> - 9 W, 0 E	Proactive work (general) - W Coordination and identification of survey and project priorities - W Habitat management - linking - W End of projects with landowners - W Local value conservation actions - W 'Possibly' (N.B. not sure) joint working - W
<b>Focus and related</b> - 8 W, 5 E	Focus, work cooperation - W Species and habitat conservation focus - W Locally important species work and focus - W Key driver for change - W Shows LA commitment - W Continuity - for conservation work - W Raised credibility - W Listing of needs - W Coordination - E Working in concert - E Priorities focus (would be partly lost) - E Possible loss of direction - E Subliminal support from LBAP's existence- E
<b>Funding</b> - 7 W, 2 E	Loss of funding for biodiversity projects - W Funding lever (incl. for partnership projects and partners' work) - W Funding - loss of - W, E Funding lever (would be partly lost) - E
<b>Staffing</b> - 7 W, 0 E	Loss of officer post(s) - W (5) Loss of staff would hit planning in the Council - W Loss of ecological expertise - W Less local authority Biodiversity work - W
<b>Partnership and related</b> - 6 W, 6 E	General Partnership working - W Community involvement - W Organisations' and individuals' input - W Cooperation - W Financial cooperation (would be partly lost) - W Partnership working, synergy - E Discussion forum - E Partnership approach - E (Perhaps) Partnership working, esp. businesses (would be partly lost) - E

	Partnership development -E	(Table continued ...)
<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>	
<b>Awareness</b> - 5 W, 0 E	Local - W Awareness raising mechanism - W Public awareness and involvement events - W Positive awareness within L.A.s - W In relation to school and community work - W	
<b>Protection</b> - 5 W, 0 E	From development and poor management - W In planning cases - W Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) - W NERC legal framework - W Process for non-statutory protection. - W	
<b>Other</b> - 4 W, 3 E	Biodiversity itself - W Conservation philosophy - W Influence on landowners - W Moral support from meetings - W Status - loss of - E Reporting - E Planning links - E	
<b>Benefits denied/questioned</b> - 1 W, 2 E	Don't know - much conservation work would happen without LBAP. - W Nothing - E Probably none - E	

**Table 5.8:** Summary of Officers' Suggestions from Question 2. iv)

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Information Networking and Related</b>	15	2	<b>17</b>
<b>Focus and related</b>	8	5	<b>13</b>
<b>Partnership and related</b>	6	6	<b>12</b>
<b>Funding</b>	7	2	<b>9</b>
<b>Proactive and 'Projects'</b>	9	0	<b>9</b>
<b>Staffing</b>	7	0	<b>7</b>
<b>Awareness</b>	5	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Protection</b>	5	0	<b>5</b>
<b>Other</b>	4	3	<b>7</b>
<b>Benefits denied/questioned</b>	1	2	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>88</b>

### 5.2.8 (cont'd)

Proportionally, English respondents suggested rather fewer topics than their Welsh counterparts for this question. There were some further, quite marked differences in results between the two countries. Of the themes used for classification, 'Partnership and related' areas was the most popular, followed by 'focus and related'. 'Information Networking and related' came joint third with Funding. These both had only two suggestions. This is in contrast to the much greater emphasis on networking in Wales (the most popular theme here). As a response, funding was also rather lower than in Wales. Two respondents did not list any losses - one stating that there would be none and the other 'probably none'. There were no responses in a number of the theme areas (which were raised in Wales):- proactive and 'projects', staffing, awareness and protection.

Overall, the most popular main theme for respondents' perceived benefits of LBAPs was in networking and related areas. Relatively high in listings were conservation-work Focus (and related) and Partnership (and related). Another theme highlighted was funding and proactive/ 'project' work, (these categories can clearly overlap, and would total eighteen if counted together). Next, there were seven references to loss of staff for biodiversity work. Five responses referred to issues of biodiversity protection. There were a number of miscellaneous other answers, whilst three respondents denied/ questioned whether there would indeed be any losses were the LBAP and process to be abolished.

(Note: 1. *Awareness* could possibly have been counted in with *networking and related*, but has been included in a separate category. This is because where respondents mentioned 'awareness', this seemed to clearly refer to wider dissemination of information - outside the immediate partnership - than other references to networking - which were understood to be primarily based on sharing of information between formal members of Biodiversity partnerships.

2. *Staffing* was counted as a category in its own right, though clearly loss of staff implies loss of capacity to undertake work in other main theme areas.)

**5.2.9 Question 4: Do you wish to make any other specific or general comments?** (see Tables 5.9 and 5.10)

**Table 5.9:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 4. (Officers)

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
<b>Strategic Issues</b> - 12 W, 8 E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problem with LBAP complexity - W</li> <li>Scales of working for LBAPs - suggests more regional focus for habitat work - W</li> <li>- Need for more structure to LBAP process, practitioner-driven, whilst keeping benefits of local flexibility and variety; partnership approach is strong and needs reinforcing - W</li> <li>- Lack of bigger and national organisation commitment to LBAP disappointing - W</li> <li>- Need for more LA and government support, without which partnership is in danger - W</li> <li>- Desirability of WAG policing on Biodiversity conservation delivery - W</li> <li>- Need for Welsh Biodiversity Strategy, including mapping for habitat management opportunities - W</li> <li>- Habitat management and restoration - much more needed, most work now being on survey, monitoring and awareness. - W</li> <li>- Need for biodiversity to have a key role in SD - W</li> <li>- Need for understanding of value of biodiversity for ecosystem services and climate change adaptation - W</li> <li>- For better planning, need connection to power and decision- making, based on links to quality of life, health, well being, economic gains, SD and WAG strategies; Where are the [effective policy] links [being made] between these and LBAPs? - W</li> <li>- Importance of integration of biodiversity work with farming - W</li> <li>- Benefits of better between LBAP-officer communication e.g. to address common issues - E</li> <li>- More focus on HAPs, less separate county SAPs - E</li> <li>- LBAP partnerships - lack of legal status limits effectiveness - need to formalise, need Partnership building guidance - E</li> <li>- Problem:- generic issues in action plans: SINCs, LRC; Interpretation/ public involvement; much repetition - E</li> <li>- Favours action prioritisation - much more streamlined LBAP - E</li> <li>- Lack of ecological data to measure effectiveness. - E</li> <li>- New work from LBAP - questionable how much - E</li> <li>- BARS not fulfilling local needs. - E</li> </ul>
<b>Resources Issues</b> - 8 W, 4 E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General shortfall - W</li> <li>Shortfall for implementation - W</li> <li>- LBAP under-resourced in staff and funding - reflects relative lack of standing. - W</li> <li>- Lack of funding and support is barrier - W</li> <li>- ‘Greatest need’ is for more resources, including staff with job stability - W</li> <li>- Need for at least LBAP officer and planning ecologist - W</li> <li>- LBAP officer overstretched - W</li> <li>- LBAP officer forced to limit areas to agreed priorities. - W</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High staff turnover/ poor pay - E</li> <li>- Implementation problem - lack of resources, S.T. funding - E(<i>Table cont'd</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Main Theme -' with Number of References</b>	<b>Significant Sub-topics</b>
<b>Resources Issues (Cont'd)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need for resources, as <b>at present is a failed process</b> and are more effective ways to further conservation - E</li> <li>- Partnership limitations - funding, capacity, project officer, steering group already busy - E</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b> - 1 W, 1 E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling that survey response from <math>x</math> LA is not representative, as LBAP funding is temporarily relatively high there - W</li> <li>- Wants to improve LBAP effectiveness - E</li> </ul>
<b>Praise for LBAPs</b> - 5 W, 2 E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LBAP is a 'new edge' to conservation, mainly due to networking success and staff involved - W</li> <li>- LBAP has linked various players - W</li> <li>- LBAP awareness, local action - W</li> <li>- Local player activity praised - W</li> <li>- LBAP and process success at local level - W</li> <li>- Positive effects of LBAP - ground work and general progress, despite limited LA resources - E</li> <li>- Positive use of LBAP to resist development - E</li> </ul>

N. B. Some overlap between theme areas is acknowledged. Each point was counted under one category only. Some comments may contain a number of sub-points - these have been kept together for clarity and counted as one main point.

**Table 5.10:** Summary of Officers Suggestions from Question 4

Theme	Wales	England	Total
<b>Strategic Issues</b>	12	8	<b>20</b>
<b>Resources Issues</b>	8	4	<b>12</b>
<b>Other</b>	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Praise for LBAPs</b>	5	2	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>41</b>

### 5.2.10 Comment

This question was optional and the number of respondents lower than for other areas of the survey. Number of respondents were: Wales: twelve (out of twenty-six), England seven (out of twenty-three).

Being completely open, the range of responses was highly variable. Material did not always fit neatly into set categories, and was sometimes very specific and detailed.

For simplicity, responses were grouped under four headings: the first two are Strategic Issues and Resource Issues. Strategic issues are clearly matters relating to the running and status of biodiversity action (locally, and sometimes at greater scales), and generally relate to LBAP status and issues of improving effectiveness (often with specific suggestions). The last two categories of comments for this question are 'Other' and Praise for LBAPs.

In Wales, perceived need for more support from higher levels of government - particularly WAG (and WAG-funded bodies) was a number of times specifically noted or implied.

Some topics encountered in earlier questions were noted, such as ecological survey and resource limitations. Other ideas had not appeared before e.g. a call for more communication between LBAP officers to address common issues, rather than current duplication of work. Some suggestions were made for simplifying LBAPs: specifically to focus on HAPs rather than separate SAPs and streamlining the LBAP by action prioritisation. One respondent considered the LBAP, in the absence of sufficient funding, to be a failed process which was hard to justify giving limited time to. One noted limitations to present partnership effectiveness such as lack of funding and a steering group made up of already busy people, and another felt that some formalisation by way of legal status is needed as a basis to partnership effectiveness.

Response material from England was less proportionally than from Wales. Response make-up by themes was however broadly similar to that in Wales, featuring firstly strategic- and then resource issues, followed by praise for LBAPs, and lastly 'other' comments. Again, some of the most familiar subjects of earlier questions were noted, such as ecological survey and resource limitations.

Considering responses overall, strategic issues were noted most often, including perceived need for more support from higher levels of government (a number of times). Resource/ staffing issues have been noted often in reference to other questions, and the fact that they are raised once more underlines respondents' perception that this is a significant barrier to LBAP progress.

E.g.:

2R 'If a project with the wide range of partners, actions, community/business involvement and scope of the LBAP was a Social Services, Community or Education project ... it would likely have c.4 staff and a large budget!'

10U 'The LBAP is a useful driver for change in the Local Authority, however resources are not available to properly implement the plan and is still regarded as a periphery activity.'

Staff working conditions and consequent lack of long-term stability in post were noted:

6R 'But most of all, there needs to be more resources, most counties just have one person trying to do it all with virtually no budget ... And better incentives to stay in the job, wages are not great and most contracts are not permanent ... We need people that are going to stay in the job for a decent length of time ... it takes time to learn how to do it all effectively ...'

Pay was also raised in connection with partnership:

18R '...In my role there have been 5 officers in 6 years - difficult to build partnership in those circumstances! ... Pay for officers has been pretty poor ...'

The lack of solid constitutional standing for partnerships was also referred to:

20R 'The overall nature of LBAPs partnerships [is] one of not-incorporated organisations ( ... entities without any legal base) and this can have a negative impact to their function i.e. lack of partner organisation commitment to implementation, high turnover of members, etc. The only solution is to consolidate Partnerships by adopting some basic MoU and ToRs for all partners to sign up to...'

Comments included a feeling that partnership patience with the LBAP process may be about to run out:

4U '... without a tangible increase in particularly Local Authority (but also Governmental) support for LBAP implementation, we are in danger of losing some of our most effective and active members of the LBAP partnership, due to the consistent and frustrating lack of funding and support, which prevents positive action and progress.'

### Longer Statements

The question yielded some relatively long statements on a broad range of aspects of the process. Many comments relate to fundamental aspects of the process, and shed light on perceptions behind concerns over issues such as resources and status. A number of respondents began with a positive note about the process:

1U: 'LBAPs are extremely useful tools in terms of raising awareness about biodiversity and translating national targets into local actions on the ground.'

3U: 'The LBAP process has brought [a] new edge to the conservation of habitats and species, mainly through the networking and bringing together of like-minded individuals, and through the hard work of local authority LBAP/Ecology staff and other partner organisations.'

6R: '... the LBAP and the LBAP process has a lot going for it and I think there is a lot of good work coming out of it ...'

4U: 'I think that the LBAP process has provided an important vehicle for bringing together many local interested persons and groups, who previously may have [had] ... no real links to each other. ...'

These respondents then tended to qualify these statements with notes on fundamental problems with the approach:

1U: 'However ... there are too many actions to achieve and actions delivered are too piecemeal and small scale ... Also, the emphasis is usually placed on the overstretched LBAP officer to lead on the delivery of most of the actions.'

3U: '... much more on-the-ground habitat management and restoration work is needed.'

6R: '... However ... there is also a lot of scope for improvement. ... it would be very useful to have more of a structure to the process'

4U: 'I find it disappointing that some of the larger and or national organizations have shown little commitment to local biodiversity action and promoting, monitoring and implementing the LBAP in a consistent manner.'

Most of these respondents then gave specific notes on what would be needed to help resolve the perceived problems:

1U: 'I think the way forward is large scale collaborative projects (i.e. habitat restoration/creation and major events) between LBAPs, maybe operating at more of a regional level ...

I would also like to see a biodiversity strategy produced for Wales led by WAG. ... The strategy should be more of a working document ... containing spatial plans for the whole of Wales mapping out biodiversity assets ... and opportunities for habitat restoration/creation for each priority habitat.'

3U: '... things will only happen if there is a top-down approach to making the senior officers or politicians see the real benefits of biodiversity conservation – its links to quality of life, health, well being, economic gains, etc. ... where are the links to LBAPs and the partnerships working so hard at the local level, often without adequate budgets? ...'

6R: '... it would be very useful to have more of a structure to the process, but that needs to be looked at very carefully and determined by the people actually doing the work and should be very flexible ... part of the beauty of the LBAP process is that it allows all sorts of different projects to happen ... The partnership approach is a strong one and needs to be reinforced not lost. ...'

In the last quote above, 6R alludes to the lack of structure in the process, which has been apparent from consideration of original Guidance and Shaikh (1998). The key message behind much in these statements centres around LBAP status - a reflection of its position in the political agenda - and the level of resources granted to the process accordingly. The status issue is clearly

perceived to be at local and Welsh/ UK levels, but naturally, the higher levels are looked to for leadership. 2R asks:

‘Note on commitment from LAs[:] If LAs fail to deliver core services such as Education, libraries etc. they are brought to task by WAG – why not when failing to conserve biodiversity?’

Although we have noted positive strands in several responses, some respondents made no qualification of their frustration with the process. For 19U, resources/ funding is a main reason behind failure locally, but the local project officer also comes in for criticism:

‘The problem with ... BAPs ... is that documents are easy to produce but implementing them is impossible. Practical implementation ... is severely restricted by lack of resources and short term funding.

- The LBAP Partnership has largely failed to implement the ... Plan due to lack of funding, the lack of capacity to implement actions ... and an ineffective project officer.

Most members of the steering group have large workloads and are reluctant to commit too much time to a process which requires a lot of time and effort to sort out.

- BAPs are recovery plans for defined species and habitats and this partnership has no means of measuring their effectiveness ... since detailed ecological data is usually absent.

... In conclusion. BAPs may work well if there are resources for their implementation. In this area there are not and my increasingly limited time cannot be spent effectively in trying to prop up a failed process ...’

Criticism of the officers and staff running the process locally is very rare. One of the only other examples was provided by 15R:

‘- Even though the challenges faced by many LBAPs appear to be broadly similar, communication among different LBAP officers remains weak and there appears to be a tendency to reinvent the wheel in each county.’

The repetition of effort alluded to here is in fact widespread, and cooperation in writing plans and production of publicity material etc. would be one potential way to make better use of limited time and other resources, though cross-authority working would present different challenges.

A number of other areas of consideration were also raised in comments. The issue of ecosystem services was raised by 2R, perceiving failure at more than one level of government:

‘Most Local Authorities and WAG still do not seem to have grasped the fundamental value of the biodiversity resource in providing essential ecosystem services and its role in coping with climate change.’

The same respondent also referred to the importance of the agricultural industry in passing:

2R: ‘... The next 10-20 years will see massive changes in the structure of farming. Farming practices are the principle factor in biodiversity conservation ...’

The issue of the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy and the way in which this fundamentally shapes land-use over much of the countryside would seem to have been overlooked by respondents in general. The funding for particular uses of land which this provides is often in direct competition with conservation aspirations.

The position of biodiversity within Sustainable Development (SD) was raised by 9Ue:

‘During the 1992 Earth Summit Biodiversity was one of the key themes for ... Sustainable Development. However since then I feel it has dropped off the agenda and become a separate issue from the mainstream SD issues and not discussed as a key concern. ...’

The subject of sustainable development is, like biodiversity, often referred to in the wider environmental debate. Whatever progress may or may not be being made in the UK, the suggestion in this comment is that biodiversity has been marginalised within SD itself.

### 5.3 Overview of Open-ended Question Results

Table 5.11 summarises themes identified from open-ended questions, with importance weightings based on relative frequency within each theme. It was not possible to produce a meaningful summary of all themes for all questions added together. This was due to fundamental differences between questions and to each having been individually analysed for identification of themes emerging from responses. i.e. Themes were set within the context of the individual questions. E.g. *Staffing* as noted in question 2 i) was being referred to in a quite different way to staffing references for 2. iv). The theme *Integration and Status* for 2. iii) reflected what seemed to be a less clear boundary between these at a higher administrative level to that seen in responses to 2. ii), which could be more straightforwardly be categorised between (*Lead Organisation*) *Integration* and *Status*.

**Table 5.11:** Summary of Themes Identified by Open-ended Question, with Weightings for Relative Importance of each Theme within Questions (Officers)

Question	Theme	Times Referred to	Importance Weighting within Responses to Question
<b>2. i) Spending</b>	Habitat Management	29	High
	Staff	26	High
	Action/ 'Projects'	11	Mid
	Partnership	4	Low
	Public/ Community	4	Low
	Awareness and Education	7	Low
	Survey	8	Low
	Others	7	Low
<b>2. ii) Lead Priorities</b>	Integration	21	High
	Staff	20	High
	Training and Awareness (Lead Organisation)	14	Mid
	Status (Lead Organisation)	17	Mid
	Resources	12	Low
	Other	14	Mid
<b>2. iii) Government Priorities</b>	Funding/ Resources	24	High
	Staff	12	Mid
	Integration and Status	10	Mid
	Legal	8	Low
	Habitat Management	6	Low
	Other	9	Low
<b>2. iv) LBAP Benefits</b>	Information Networking and Related	17	High
	Focus and related	13	High
	Partnership and related	12	High
	Funding	9	Mid
	Proactive and 'Projects'	9	Mid
	Staffing	7	Mid
	Awareness	5	Low
	Protection	5	Low
	Other	7	Low
Benefits denied/questioned	3	Low	
<b>4 Other</b>	Strategic Issues	20	High
	Resources Issues	12	Mid
	Other	2	Low
	Praise for LBAPs	7	Low

## 5.4 Discussion

Much of the substantial amount of material in responses to open-ended questions is particularly relevant to the issues of resources, LBAP status, and strategic aspects of the process. Within these, responses have often been very particular in defining detailed aspects, in the context of the questions. The classification of these into main themes has sought an appropriate balance between generalisation and detail. What main findings emerge from this classification?

Time and again, LBAP resources issues appear in responses, pointing to unfulfilled potentials for action. The summaries of categories and figures for questions 2 i) - iii) and 4 in Table 5.11 reveal this quite strikingly. If Officers had access to substantial new funding, then habitat management, staffing, projects, awareness and survey would be where most spending would be directed. When put in imaginary positions of power, there was a strong trend to use this power to direct greater funding for the same named aspects of the process (e.g. staffing, habitat management, and training and awareness). There were also less specific responses directing more *funding/ resources* to biodiversity.

Perceptions of funding needs are comparable with some results from Reporting Rounds noted in Chapter 2 (Tables 2.7 and 2.11, for 2002 and 2005 reporting rounds respectively), although the range of response, being in officers' own words, was in some contrast with the more restricted categories used in the reporting rounds.

Issues of *status* and the related theme of *integration* of the LBAP across organisations' work areas were brought out from responses to 2. ii) - iii). Officers perceived the LBAP to be in need of raised status within lead bodies, and also in higher levels of government. Status is one of a number of factors which affect the degree of potential and actual integration of biodiversity within organisations. Commitment and backing at higher levels may be a prerequisite for meaningful change, helping lead to integration.

Status is relevant to other areas; The range of topics noted under 'Strategic Issues', (Table 5.9, covering question 4) are themselves often reflections of perceived lack of LBAP status. (Some strategic points underline or add to material in themes which emerged from other areas of the survey, such as BARS not fulfilling local reporting needs, and need for habitat management and restoration.)



Questions 2 i) - iii) and 4 were successful in drawing out much material on perceptions of LBAP needs amongst officers. It is also important to consider perceived LBAP benefits, and to this end 2 iv) sought to bring out perceptions of what would be lost if the LBAP process were abolished. Much of the material generated in response related to particular areas, of which information, networking, providing a focus for local conservation and for the LBAP partnership featured most often. In terms of frequency in responses, only after these did areas such as proactive, project work, funding and staffing appear. Biodiversity staffing has increased in many local authorities with the development of the LBAP process. The overall picture from open-ended responses seems clear-cut: Perceived LBAP benefits centre primarily around what might be termed the 'indoor' or desktop aspects of the work - centred around the communication of information amongst partnership members. The actual work of conservation on the ground features much less prominently, but the additional biodiversity staff coverage which the process has led to within councils should not be forgotten. These findings are comparable with Reporting Round results noted in Chapter 2 (Tables 2.5 and 2.10, for 2002 and 2005 reporting rounds respectively).

A summary overview of Officers' open-ended question responses more than anything reveals perceptions of much unfulfilled potential for LBAPs to achieve *action on the ground*, aggravated by lack of status. Having now considered Officers' survey material in some detail in the present chapter and chapter 4, it is important to bring this together in an overall consideration of the significance of officers' responses. In what ways do findings from open-ended questions relate to those of semi-structured statements?

The large amount of open-ended response material indicating resources and funding needs is consistent with there having been little or no progress on many LBAP actions (statement 3 iv) b) results, Chapter 4). Similarly, the frequent highlighting of need for more staff is consistent with indications from 3 v) c) that LBAP Officers can often feel overstretched. The lack of clarity over what LBAP coverage should be (3 iii) a)) has relevance to desire for funding and resources. The larger the coverage, the more resources will be required. Is the frequency of expression of desires for resources, associated rises in LBAP status, and the addressing of 'strategic' issues a reflection of over-enthusiasm, unrealistic wishful thinking, or the reasonable voice of workers who both understand and care about their subject? Reading of original guidance material clearly points to comprehensive coverage of biodiversity action within LBAPs (Chapters 1 and 2), and this is likely to have shaped the general background of high expectations for new action which the

process has encouraged, and of which long action lists have been an expression locally. Resources to achieve this level of coverage are not provided to LBAPs, and it could be argued that, though it is reasonable to expect more if LBAP remit is to remain that of the original six functions, it also seems that the LBAP process has itself engendered an element of wishful thinking by encouraging long lists of new actions (in HAPs and SAPs). These lists, and the process which generated them, are likely to have had the effect of raising expectations for new conservation work. Given that many of the actions were unlikely to ever find funding, this key manifestation of the process is at best questionable, but at worst highly flawed, because it has taken up resources and thus diverted focus from priorities.

The possibility of a temptation for respondents to be overly positive was considered in Chapter 4, in reference to positive response to 3 i) a). Do findings from open-ended questions add any new angles which help interpret this? It has been shown that whilst there was not a high indication that action on the ground is at the forefront of current LBAP success, *desire* and *need* for such action to be undertaken featured prominently in open-ended responses. This in fact further underlines the need to treat 3. i) a) with caution.

What overall key messages from the Officers' survey should be taken for consideration in the final discussion (chapter 7)? A 'typical' LBAP officer is likely to perceive the LBAP process in the following terms:

- There have been successes, particularly in networking, partnership, communication and the idea of local scale biodiversity focus. The LBAP has brought more biodiversity staff coverage to county councils.

BUT ...

- Levels of resources (staffing and funding) are not nearly enough to achieve conservation needs identified locally in LBAPs.
- LBAP status is too low, and biodiversity needs to be integrated into other areas, particularly relating to government.
- LBAP remit is understood to be very broad, but the relationship with the UK BAP process is unclear.
- Actions often show little or no progress, and there is so little reporting that meaningful evaluation of LBAP progress is impossible.

NEVERTHELESS, Officers are ...

- Working to do as much as possible of a broad remit
- Have insights and ideas about what could/ should be done to improve the LBAP process
- Would particularly like to see more habitat action on the ground

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## Chapter 6: LBAP Partners' Response

### 6.1 Numerical Response.

For Anglesey, twenty members responded (of an original thirty e-mailed). In all, a total of twenty one responses were obtained from the other five LBAP partnership areas surveyed. Overall response totals by area were as follows:-

Anglesey - 20  
 Brecon Beacons National Park - 2  
 Cardiff - 1  
 Ceredigion - 3  
 Pembrokeshire - 7  
 Snowdonia National Park - 5  
 Swansea - 3

Response rates from the other areas were low relative to Anglesey, where the author's position as local LBAP coordinator was probably a factor in securing response.

As with the Officers' survey, in order to ease analysis and also provide a level of confidentiality, each respondent was coded. Partners' codes were made up as follows:- for areas other than Anglesey, a lower case letter was used to signify area, using 'b' for Brecon Beacons, 'c' for Cardiff, 'd' for Ceredigion, 'e' for Pembrokeshire, 'f' for Snowdonia and 'g' for Swansea. All respondents were designated an upper case letter, to indicate which sector their organisation belonged to: 'N' was used for respondents from NGOs, and 'G' those from statutory, governmental organisations. Following the appropriate upper case letter, a number was designated to each respondent. Finally a 'v' was added for respondents who worked in a voluntary capacity (two in all).

Overall, numbers by sector were NGO: twenty-six (thirteen from Anglesey partnership and thirteen from other areas) and governmental: fifteen (seven Anglesey and eight from other areas).

### 6.2 Issues of Variability.

Respondents to the Partnership survey were involved in a much broader variety of working situations and degree of interaction with the LBAP process than those involved in the Officers'

survey, which formed a rather more homogenous group. The range of partnership member respondents went from managerial staff in statutory conservation agencies to volunteers from NGOs. This information is presented in Table 6.1.

The Partners' survey had a far more consistent level of responses for all statements and questions (other than question four, which was voluntary) than was the case for the Officers' survey (Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

### **6.3 Analysis of Semi-structured Results Material**

Presentation of summary results and comments (sections 6.3 and 6.4) follow the pattern taken in Chapters 4 and 5 for the Staff survey. For a record of full results, see Appendix viii.

#### **6.3.1 Question 1. General.**

Asked for basic information on name, job title and time in post, as well as which organisation respondents work for. A limited amount of basic material from results from this question (following coding) is presented in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1:** LBAP Partners' codes and LBAP Areas.

<b>Code</b>	<b>LBAP Area</b>
N1	Anglesey
N2v	Anglesey
N3	Anglesey
N4	Anglesey
N5	Anglesey
N6	Anglesey
N7	Anglesey
N8v	Anglesey
N9	Anglesey
N10	Anglesey
N11	Anglesey
N12	Anglesey
N13	Anglesey
G1	Anglesey
G2	Anglesey
G3	Anglesey
G4	Anglesey
G5	Anglesey
G6	Anglesey
G7	Anglesey
bN1	Brecon Beacons
bG1	Brecon Beacons
cN1v	Cardiff
dN1	Ceredigion
dN2	Ceredigion
dN3	Ceredigion
eN1	Pembrokeshire
eN2	Pembrokeshire
eN3	Pembrokeshire
eG1	Pembrokeshire
eG2	Pembrokeshire
eG3	Pembrokeshire
eG4	Pembrokeshire
fN1	Snowdonia
fN2	Snowdonia
fN3	Snowdonia
fG1	Snowdonia
fG2	Snowdonia
gN1	Swansea
gN2	Swansea
gG1	Swansea

### 6.3.2 Question 2, Presentation of Results.

A full record of partners' responses can be found in Appendix viii.

#### Key to Tables 6.2 - 6.14.

**An** - Anglesey

**O** - Other LBAP areas

### 6.3.3 Comment on Results by Statement: 2. i) (see Table 6.2).

**Table 6.2:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *Partnership* theme statements, 2. i), (Partners)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O
<b>2. i)</b>												
<i>a) The Local Biodiversity Partnership has proved to be a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new biodiversity actions and projects.</i>	3	3	11	12	3	2			2	2	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>5</b>				<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>	
<i>b) We would be more open to partnership work, if increased resources were available.</i>	8	7	7	10	1	1		1	3		1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>17</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>3</b>	
<i>c) Long-term project stability and job security for our organisation have to take priority over commitment to new projects with partners.</i>	4	5	8	7	4	5		1			4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>1</b>				<b>7</b>	
<i>d) New Partnership work takes up valuable time, needs consensus, and if successful usually results in temporary projects and employment.</i>	1	4	7	13	7	2	1		1	1	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>4</b>	



**a) The Local Biodiversity Partnership has proved to be a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new biodiversity actions and projects.**

Responses to the statement from both Anglesey and other areas were very similar. Agreement with the statement was high (nearly two-thirds), with only five respondents disagreeing. This could be used to give a positive message about the document and process.

Response to this statement from Anglesey at least was more favourable than had been expected. Here, very few projects have been specifically brought about as a result of the LBAP. An exception is some of the work done on Harbour Porpoise populations by Marine Awareness North Wales (MANW).

Response to this statement should be considered alongside other relevant material (e.g. response to 2. iv) c)) before conclusions are arrived at.

**b) We would be more open to partnership work, if increased resources were available.**

For Anglesey, this statement produced a greater degree of agreement than preceding statement 2. a) i.) on LBAP Partnership success.

Responses from other areas were similar, with clear majority agreement (over three-quarters), and little disagreement. One respondent (fN1) gave 'other' but noted that if funding were 'not too difficult to apply for or report on', then response would have been 'strongly agree'.

Overall, results seem to indicate an unfulfilled willingness for more partnership working.

**c) Long-term project stability and job security for our organisation have to take priority over commitment to new projects with partners.**

Over half of Anglesey respondents agreed with the statement, whilst only four disagreed.

There was again a similar picture in responses from the other LBAP partnership areas (but with a slightly increased minority who disagreed relative to 2. i) b)).

**d) New Partnership work takes up valuable time, needs consensus, and if successful usually results in temporary projects and employment.**

Responses from Anglesey show an even split between agreement and disagreement, with only four included under other categories. Responses from other areas, in contrast to Anglesey, were strongly in agreement. Only small minorities disagreed or responded in other categories.

dN1 and eG3 both seem to agree with the statement, but have responded 'don't know' and 'other' respectively. Both of these respondents seem to have objected to the way the statement was framed - feeling that it had a negative implication.

Overall results combine to show a majority of respondents were in agreement.

### 6.3.4 Comment on Results by Statement: 2. ii) (see Table 6.3).

**Table 6.3:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *Council* theme statements, 2. ii), (Partners)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O
<i>a) The County Council leads on local Biodiversity action by example and is thus a highly credible LBAP leader.</i>	3	1	6	10	6	2	4	2	4	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>3</b>	
<i>b) It would be worth investigating whether the LBAP process could be more clearly separated from County Council work.</i>	2	1	7	10	5	6	2	2	3	2	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>17</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>1</b>	

#### **a) The County Council leads on local Biodiversity action by example and is thus a highly credible LBAP leader.**

(N.B. Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia responded in reference to ‘The National Park leads ...’)

In Anglesey, just under half of respondents agreed, whilst slightly over one quarter disagreed. Overall opinion from other LBAP areas was broadly similar to Anglesey, but with higher numbers in both agreement (just over half) and disagreement also.

Where respondents had added comments, there were a number of references to lack of resources e.g.:

N5 (other): ‘... I’m not sure that IACC ‘lead by example’ on biodiversity, simply because of limited resources’;

Similarly, dN1 (strongly disagreed):

‘The relevant department of the county council is woefully under funded and under staffed for the job they need (and want) to do’.

There were a number of comments which point to perceived lack of involvement at higher levels within councils:

N11 (other): 'In terms of specific LBAP Action it is not clear to see the council's achievements ... It would be good to see more direct interest taken by county councilors in the LBAP and LBAP action carried out';  
N3 (disagreed): 'I believe the council have the power and influence to lead in a much more effective way'.

The combined picture shows slightly under half of respondents in agreement, with over one quarter disagreeing. The remainder - almost one quarter - either responded 'don't know or were classed 'other'.

**b) It would be worth investigating whether the LBAP process could be more clearly separated from County Council work.**

(N.B. Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia responded in reference to '... National Park work.')

There were broadly similar results from Anglesey and the other LBAP areas, and both subgroups were more in agreement than in disagreement with the statement. This gives a combined picture of slightly under half in agreement, and over one third of respondents in disagreement.

A number of respondents who agreed added comments of reservation about moving the process away from councils:

gG1 (agreed): 'But there is the danger that the LBAP will become lost and forgotten without the force of the local authority behind it';  
N13 (strongly agreed): 'LBAPs as independent entities can work well, but if this is just a way of the council shedding their responsibility it won't work';  
dN1 (agreed): 'BUT I think it is very important that the county council continue to lead'.

These comments show that, despite the modest balance in favour of investigating the area of clearer 'separation', this agreement in itself should not be taken as a vote of no confidence in current council input. The statement refers to an exploratory process - rather than implying whether a separation would be desirable or undesirable (nor stating what this could mean in practice).

### 6.3.5 Comment on Results by Statement: 2. iii) (see Table 6.4).

**Table 6.4:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *LBAP Document* theme statements, 2. iii) (Partners)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O
<b>2. iii)</b>												
<i>a) The LBAP is just about the right size and level of detail.</i>		3	14	6	5	6		1	1	4		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>1</b>	
<i>b) We actively use the LBAP to inform our conservation decision-making in the area.</i>	1	1	10	9	4	7	2	2	2	2	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>1</b>	
<i>c) Success in new action implementation tends to be with things that we would have done anyway.</i>	1	4	10	6	5	7		1	4	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>7</b>			
<i>d) The LBAP is more a reference list of who's doing what than itself setting the agenda for what gets done.</i>		2	9	9	8	6	1		1	2	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>18</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>3</b>	

#### a) The LBAP is just about the right size and level of detail.

In Anglesey, there was clear majority agreement - nearly three-quarters, with only one quarter disagreeing. Responses from other areas were relatively less in agreement, with under half agreeing and only slightly less disagreeing.

Comment by N7 (agreed) - on need for flexibility on actions. Comment would be consistent with using a computer-based system rather than a hard-copy format for the LBAP:

‘... I feel that it would be useful to add more species/habitats in the future or temporarily delete (put on hold) plans that may not be currently relevant. I feel it should be a dynamic document rather than something that it written once.’

Some respondents thought that LBAPs were not understood by the general public. e.g. N13 (disagreed), who saw simplification and interactivity as possible ways to improve Anglesey's document:

‘LBAPs tend to become "on the shelf" documents and Anglesey’s is no exception. I feel they need to be made more user-friendly, possibly lighter and more interactive, especially if they are to become better understood by the general public’.

eG4 (disagreed), also notes lack of understanding by the public and lack of usefulness in general, being also quite strongly critical at both the local (Pembrokeshire) level and of national guidance:

‘the LBAP has failed to engage with any individuals or organizations. It is barely relevant to the day to day work of any of the people working in nature conservation. It needs to be radically reviewed as does the national guidance for LBAPs, which is where it originated from in the first place. LBAPs generally are not useful and are not read and understood by most people, particularly the people making the decisions at national and local government levels.’

It should be noted that where respondents disagreed, there is usually no indication of whether perception favoured having a *larger* or *smaller* document. Sometimes opinions *were* given in additional comments. e. g. N5 argued thought that the Anglesey document should have more detail, gG1 that ‘Swansea LBAP is too big’.

Combined results show majority agreement with the statement and just over one quarter disagreeing.

(Ideas relating to simplification were sometimes made on responses to open question 3 ii), suggestions for LBAP improvement, see section 6.4.3).

**b) We actively use the LBAP to inform our conservation decision-making in the area.**

In Anglesey, there was majority agreement, though over one quarter disagreed. For other areas, agreement was recorded by slightly less than a majority, and there were only slightly fewer respondents who disagreed.

Overall, over half of respondents agreed with the statement, whilst a significant minority (over one third) disagreed.

A breakdown of responses according to respondents’ governmental/ non-governmental status categories produced the following:

Governmental:	Agree: 5	Disagree: 8
Non-Governmental:	Agree: 16	Disagree: 7

This pattern is consistent with a scenario where governmental organisations being more likely than NGOs to have decisions made outside the local level.

**c) Success in new action implementation tends to be with things that we would have done anyway.**

In Anglesey, there was a clear trend of agreement - over half having responded as such, though a significant minority (one quarter) disagreed. Three respondents (N5, N7 and N9), though agreeing, each comment on the LBAP's usefulness, e.g.:

N5: 'But the LBAP has been a useful supporting document';  
 N9: 'however [the LBAP] does help to prioritise resources and helps in getting projects underway.'

Results from other LBAP areas show only slightly different emphasis in that just under one half agreed, whilst over one third disagreed.

Combined results show that over half of respondents agreed with the statement, whilst over one quarter disagreed. The remainder stated that they did not know.

**d) The LBAP is more a reference list of who's doing what than itself setting the agenda for what gets done.**

For Anglesey, there was an quite even split in opinion here, with nine respondents agreeing and nine disagreeing (also, the respondent who gave 'other' indicated a mixture of agreement and disagreement). Other areas' results are slightly different, with a majority in agreement, and just over one quarter disagreeing.

Overall, the biggest grouping of responses was in agreement (just under half), whilst over one third disagreed.

There is a possibility that 'Disagree' responses may reflect belief in what the LBAP is *and/ or should be* from the point of view of certain players. These respondents tended to be from organisations which tend not to be frequently named for actions in LBAPs.

## 6.3.6 Comment on Results by Statement: 2. iv) (see Table 6.5).

**Table 6.5:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *LBAP Reporting and Results* theme statements, 2. iv) (Partners)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O
<b>2. iv)</b>												
<i>a) We report on BARS or to the LBAP Officer thus ensuring that progress on our actions is normally clear.</i>	1	1	5	4	4	8	1	2	4	4	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>7</b>	
<i>b) Although significant numbers of actions in the LBAP may show little or no progress, their inclusion shows what needs to be done, and can help draw in funding.</i>	7	6	10	12	2			1	1	2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>			
<i>c) The LBAP enthuses and informs many local people.</i>	2	1	5	7	3	6	4	2	5	5	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>1</b>	
<i>d) There is lack of clarity about how LBAP targets and action reporting stand in relation to national HAP and SAP management and steering processes.</i>	1	1	12	10	3	4			5	6		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>7</b>				<b>11</b>			
<i>e) It would be better to focus more on priority objectives with long-term flexibility for project decision-making, rather than including long lists of detailed actions with variable degrees of backing commitment.</i>	5	2	8	11	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>	

**a) We report on BARS or to the LBAP Officer thus ensuring that progress on our actions is normally clear.**

With six respondents agreeing and five disagreeing, opinion in Anglesey was close to being evenly split on the statement. However, there were similar numbers of responses of 'Don't Know' or 'Other'.

Disagreement was rather stronger in other areas (nearly half), and agreement less. It is known that BARS reporting had been particularly promoted in Anglesey, and these results may have been influenced by this.

There were a number of references to lack of use of the BARS system, e.g.:

eG4 (disagreed) 'we are not currently finding BARS to be a useful tool for reporting';  
bG1 (disagreed) 'The actual operation of BARS is unclear to us'.

The logistics of reporting action to many LBAPs could potentially present problems to many organisations; in the case of fN1 (other), lack of an NGO's capacity is noted:

fN1 (other): 'we report as lead partner and strive to keep LBAPs informed but not always successfully due to lack of capacity to deal with 24 LBAPs'.

Although organisations may agree to be listed under actions in LBAPs, they may not necessarily be resourced, motivated or committed enough to report on the same actions.

Overall, perceptions on this statement were fairly diverse. The combined figures show more disagreement than agreement, though there are significant minorities who responded 'don't know' or 'other'.

**b) Although significant numbers of actions in the LBAP may show little or no progress, their inclusion shows what needs to be done, and can help draw in funding.**

Results from both Anglesey and other partnerships show strong majority agreement - both yielding over three quarters here. Only small minorities disagreed.

Combined, results were overwhelmingly in agreement. The responses suggest that respondents do indeed see benefits in having detailed action listings, but equally indicate acknowledgment that there may often be little or no progress on 'significant numbers' of actions either.



**c) The LBAP enthuses and informs many local people.**

Anglesey respondents showed a marginally stronger overall expression of disagreement than agreement. The remainder - just over one quarter - indicated 'don't know' or 'other'. These results were quite closely repeated for other partnership area respondents, and thus the overall picture can be described in much the same terms.

There were an unusually high number of 'don't know' responses. This may be because some respondents did not consider that they had had enough contact with 'many' local people to agree or disagree with the statement.

There were a number of comments expressing doubts about the public face of LBAPs. E.g.:

N2v (strongly disagreed) 'I doubt that many people are aware of the LBAP outside those involved with wildlife conservation' (G1 - disagreed - made a similar comment).

Likewise, N7 (responded 'don't know'): 'I still wonder how many local people are aware of the LBAP and the BAP process in general'.

N13 (strongly disagreed): 'Although it can inform local people ... it suffers from formatting problems and needs to be produced in a simpler version ... to make them more accessible to the public'.

This last suggestion relates to the matter of balance between amount of material needed for conservation purposes and how much detail is appropriate in documents for the general public. There is the possibility of producing both technical and non-technical material to fulfill these different needs.

With a near-even split between disagreement and agreement, and a substantial minority of 'don't know' responses, reaction to this statement contrasted somewhat with that to 2.i) a) above. It would appear that perception amongst partners is that partnership agreement and delivery has been more successful than the enthusing and informing of local people.

**d) There is lack of clarity about how LBAP targets and action reporting stand in relation to national HAP and SAP management and steering processes.**

For both Anglesey and other partnership areas, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement, with only small numbers disagreeing. In both cases, one quarter (or just over) responded 'don't know'. This doubt may well reflect the fact that local partnership members would not necessarily be aware that there are issues around linking of local and UK processes.

In two responses, some ambiguity over use of ‘national’ in reference to both UK and Welsh contexts was noted.

**e) It would be better to focus more on priority objectives with long-term flexibility for project decision-making, rather than including long lists of detailed actions with variable degrees of backing commitment.**

In Anglesey, over half of respondents agreed. Only a small minority disagreed. Other partnerships’ results are very similar.

Combining all areas gives an overall picture of quite strong majority agreement with the statement. This provides something of a contrast to results from 2 iv) b), which attempted to shed some light on reasoning behind use of long action lists.

### 6.3.7 Comment on Results by Statement: 2. v) (see Table 6.6).

**Table 6.6:** Details of Multiple Choice Responses to *Other* theme statements, 2. v), (Partners)

Question	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O	An	O
<b>2. v)</b>												
<i>a) Local Biodiversity action would benefit greatly by focusing more on Climate Change-related projects (such as habitat linking) and mutually-beneficial projects for health and wildlife.</i>	1	2	8	7	6	6	1	1	2	2	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>5</b>	
<i>b) For us, most, if not all, important local conservation decisions are made outside the LBAP partnership and process.</i>	4	3	11 ½	7	1½	3	2	1	1	5		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>18½</b>		<b>4½</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>2</b>	

**a) Local Biodiversity action would benefit greatly by focusing more on Climate Change-related projects (such as habitat linking) and mutually-beneficial projects for health and wildlife.**

In Anglesey, there was more agreement than disagreement with the statement. A further four respondents indicated at least some sort of partial agreement, but actually gave responses in other categories: E.g. fN1 (responded ‘other’) states of the climate change element ‘in principle this is fine’, but considered the linking of health and wildlife work as:

‘[a] new in thing that funding is forcing environmental groups to consider ... this is politically driven and not necessarily best approach for biodiversity conservation.’

fG1 (disagreed) implies actual agreement with the climate change part of the statement, commenting ‘disagree on second part’. Likewise, dN1 - who actually responded disagree - states:

‘I think action driven by climate issues should be led by planning at a national level and the targets feed down that way if relevant. Benefits for health will come naturally with some projects but smack a little of funding-chasing ...’.

This respondent was clearly open to climate-change planning in particular.

A number of responses pointed to partial agreement and the fact that the statement referred to the two distinct matters of a) climate change and b) health. This included N1 and fN1, which both responded ‘other’. With hindsight, it may have been better to have presented two separate statements for comment, because a number of respondents clearly had different opinions on each.

These results were almost exactly repeated in responses from the other LBAP partnership areas. Combination of the two subgroups shows there is more agreement than disagreement on the statement, but not overwhelmingly so.

**b) For us, most, if not all, important local conservation decisions are made outside the LBAP partnership and process.**

In Anglesey, there was clear majority agreement, with a relatively small minority in disagreement. For other partnerships, the greatest single number of responses was in agreement, though this represented less than half of the group. Combined results show a clear majority in agreement, and relatively small minorities disagreed, responded ‘don’t know’ or ‘other’.

Some respondents seemed to imply that they saw the statement as being about involvement of the County Council or the LBAP Officer, though both of these themselves only form elements of the Partnership.

## 6.4 Analysis of Open-ended Question Results Material

(For record of full results, see Appendix viii.)

### 6.4.1 Open-ended Question: 3. i): You have £2 million for local Biodiversity work - what would be your first priorities for spending it? (see Tables 6.7 and 6.8)

#### 6.4.2 Comment

Overall, there were similar numbers of identified suggestions for the two parts of the survey (which also had overall similar numbers of respondents: Anglesey - 20, Other Areas - 21).

Ideas for spending varied, but there were specific theme areas that emerged. For Anglesey, projects involving specific mention of *habitat management* were suggested nine times (and could likely also have been included in work more generally noted by some other respondents e.g. N7's prioritisation and initiation of actions). Some respondents suggested specific habitats for focus, including heath, rhos pasture (a term used in Wales for purple moor grass and rush pastures), woodland and boundaries (implies hedgerows mainly). An individual species - the red squirrel - was mentioned for funding by name several times. Two responses included the setting up of Biodiversity teams of staff, and another noted staff funding in spending priorities. Funding of community projects was specifically named once (by N11, though would not be ruled out by some other respondents' ideas, such as G3), though another (N2v) noted greater involvement of local people. Schools and environmental centres were mentioned several times in responses.

Interestingly, only two respondents specifically mention spending the money with Partnership involvement. Some do not rule out such options within their suggestions, though there are others which either focus on specialist work which may imply mainly one organisation (e.g. red squirrel conservation work), or in the case of G5 specifically earmark the money for individual organisation priorities.

**Table 6.7:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 3. i) (Partners)

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other LBAP Partnerships</b>
<b>Habitat Management</b> Anglesey - 9, Others - 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landscape-scale habitat management.</li> <li>- Habitat management for important sites.</li> <li>- Link and expand protected sites.</li> <li>- Habitat improvement projects (with target species covered therein). Backed by careful planning and consideration of partnership benefits/ options. Careful evaluation and publicity of results</li> <li>- Habitat management: Target rhos pasture or other areas with funding gaps.</li> <li>- Land purchase for habitat management.</li> <li>- Heathland management.</li> <li>- Boundary management and creation</li> <li>- Woodland habitat management and linking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Habitat management for sustainability and connectivity</li> <li>- Habitat management for connectivity (climate change)</li> <li>- Plan habitat connectivity network, implement if funding allows (x 2)</li> <li>- Habitat connectivity management</li> <li>- Habitat schemes to address connectivity, future flooding, climate change</li> <li>- Wildlife corridor protection and creation</li> <li>- Thorough sustainable grazing management</li> <li>- Key areas, sustainable management of (x 2)</li> <li>- Ensure favourable condition for designated sites/ habitats (x 2)</li> <li>- Habitat management to maintain/ enhance sites</li> <li>- Land purchase to secure management</li> <li>- Habitat management, protection/ restoration (land and sea)</li> <li>- Habitat management on LNRs and SINC</li> <li>- Green bridges over roads/ motorways</li> <li>- 'Possibly' habitat creation</li> <li>- Research to develop options/ management actions</li> <li>- Work with landowners on habitat management</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership</b> Anglesey - 1, Others - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritise actions with partnership, and begin to undertake accordingly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Showcase partnership project, landscape or habitat-based</li> <li>- Fund voluntary group expertise</li> </ul>
<b>Schools</b> Anglesey - 3, Others - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Primary school biodiversity programme.</li> <li>- Education, local species book for schools.</li> <li>- Schools nature reserves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Projects with 'legacy' e.g. Education</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Table continued ...)</i></p>

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other LBAP Partnerships</b>
<b>Biodiversity Teams/ Staff</b> Anglesey - 3, Others - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up Biodiversity Team (including fund-seeking role)</li> <li>- Staff funding.</li> <li>- Fund Biodiversity Team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff, long-term contract staff-Staff, Biodiversity Assistant.</li> <li>- Staff for new projects, some of whom to be NGO-hosted</li> <li>- Get the right people</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Centre</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental centre.</li> <li>- Field studies Centre.</li> </ul>	
<b>Species Work</b> Anglesey - 3, Others - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Red squirrel work.</li> <li>- Red squirrel reserve.</li> <li>- Parapox research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Species research and resulting action work</li> <li>- Species work on rare Lepidoptera</li> </ul>
<b>Public/ Community</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More public and schools involvement in management.</li> <li>- Fund for community projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion/ education.</li> <li>- Publicity/ awareness raising</li> <li>- Projects with 'legacy' e.g. awareness, community involvement</li> <li>- Work with landowners on wildlife observation/ learning</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NNR access.</li> <li>- Site access for public</li> </ul>	
<b>Interpretation</b> Anglesey - 1, Others - 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NNR interpretation.</li> </ul>	
<b>Awareness</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness raising.</li> <li>- Influence 'hearts and minds', as many people as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with landowners on climate change impacts awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b> Anglesey - 5, Others - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feasible targeting.</li> <li>- Survey as needed.</li> <li>- Option to invest money and work with interest paid.</li> <li>- Sustainable spending</li> <li>- Spend on x organisation's BAP priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prioritise HAPs and SAPs and make strong action plans with control over management agreements, partnerships, land acquisition, community involvement etc.</li> </ul>

**Table 6.8:** Summary of Partners' Suggestions from Question 3. i)

<b>Number of Times Suggested</b>			
<b>Main Theme</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other LBAP Partnerships</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Habitat Management</b>	9	20	<b>29</b>
<b>Partnership</b>	1	2	<b>3</b>
<b>Schools</b>	3	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Biodiversity Teams/ Staff</b>	3	3	<b>6</b>
<b>Environmental Centre</b>	2		<b>2</b>
<b>Species Work</b>	3	2	<b>5</b>
<b>Public/ Community</b>	2	4	<b>6</b>
<b>Access</b>	2		<b>2</b>
<b>Interpretation</b>	1		<b>1</b>
<b>Awareness</b>	2	1	<b>3</b>
<b>Other</b>	5	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>67</b>

**6.4.2** cont'd

Results from other areas contrasted somewhat in that there was a quite markedly higher number of suggestions involving habitat management. At twenty, this theme formed over half of the total. Of these, seven specifically involve connectivity work, sometimes mentioned in context of climate change. Many of these suggestions come from partners working in areas such as Brecon Beacons NP, Snowdonia NP, Pembrokeshire (including NP), and Ceredigion. These include relatively large areas of upland semi-natural habitat, where generally low human populations and low agricultural values make larger-scale habitat management possibilities more feasible. Emphasis on habitat management in these responses may thus reflect perceptions of local potential.

Other suggestions, as with Anglesey results, have been classed under a number of broad themes, though the range of themes which emerged in analysis is narrower for the other partnerships than for Anglesey.

**6.4.3 Open-ended Question: 3. ii): Please give an example of how you would change the LBAP document to improve it.** (see Tables 6.9 and 6.10)

(Note: Some suggestions for improvements relating to *process* were also received in response to question 4, see Table 6.13 below).

**Table 6.9:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 3. ii) (Partners)

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other Partnerships</b>
<b>Illustrating of LBAP</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pictures - more</li> <li>- Photos - more</li> </ul>	
<b>Public-face of LBAP</b> Anglesey - 5, Others - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summary with photos</li> <li>- Break down LBAP for public</li> <li>- Public-friendly advice.</li> <li>- User-friendly to public.</li> <li>- Make into two parts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Public basic</li> <li>ii) Professionals' technical.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public legibility and how can get involved</li> </ul>
<b>Action plans</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More well known HAPs and SAPs for public.</li> <li>- More HAPs and SAPs; update.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review LBAP to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Link more to Welsh/ UK BAP</li> <li>ii) Update actions and reaffirm commitment</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Link more to Welsh/ UK BAP</li> <li>- Make SMART targets to help action review.</li> <li>-Develop habitat connectivity/ de-fragmentation</li> <li>- Less detail, more strategic issue focus</li> <li>- Less text but more project detail to back fundraising</li> </ul>
<b>Internet</b> Anglesey - 4, Others - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Web - ongoing consultation/ evolution</li> <li>- Make evolving web-based definitive LBAP (BARS could fulfill this).</li> <li>- Put LBAP on Web</li> <li>- Web-based.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work towards better LBAP/ BARS compatibility</li> </ul>
<b>Others</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need better implementation and communication (rather than changes to LBAP document)</li> <li>- Leaflet to landowners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't know (x 2)</li> <li>- Not needed</li> <li>- Look for suggestions outside 'the [LBAP insiders] club'</li> <li>- Better statutory body delivery</li> </ul>



**Table 6.10:** Summary of Partners' Suggestions from Question 3. ii)

<b>Main Theme</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other LBAP Partnerships</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Illustrating of LBAP</b>	2	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Public-face of LBAP</b>	5	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Action plans</b>	2	6	<b>8</b>
<b>Internet</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>
<b>Others</b>	2	5	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>

#### 6.4.5 Comment

From Anglesey, there were a number of suggestions involving more photos in the document (the 2002/03 LBAP having photos of habitats only, and black and white line drawings of species). There were also suggestions - not unrelated in aim - about presenting material in more user-friendly ways for the public, as well as including more well-known species and habitat action plans. One respondent suggested more habitat and species action plans in general.

A number of respondents suggested putting the material on the internet. (Note: the survey was carried out during a technical gap in web access.)

Suggestions from other areas tended to be based on what may be seen as more strategic LBAP issues, for example better linking to Welsh/ UK BAP, developing of SMART targets to help action review and focusing on habitat connectivity. One respondent noted a need to reaffirm organisational commitment to revised actions. Only one suggestion referred to improving public use by making the document more 'legible'. Web issues were noted only once, with a suggestion that implied working towards better compatibility between the LBAP and the BARS reporting system.

**6.4.6 Open-ended Question: 3. iii): If the LBAP and process were abolished, what would be the biggest losses to your area for biodiversity conservation?** (see Tables 6.11 and 6.12)

**Table 6.11:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 3. iii) (Partners)

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other Partnerships</b>
<b>Local Focus</b> Anglesey - 13, Others - 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus and direction.</li> <li>Possibly lack direction.</li> <li>- Focus (x 3)</li> <li>- Targeting and local focus.</li> <li>- See things through, with focus and measured outcomes.</li> <li>- Spending focus</li> <li>- Funding backing.</li> <li>- Local partnership</li> <li>- Local perspective</li> <li>- Local focus for common goals.</li> <li>- Conservation, public involvement in</li> <li>- Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local coordination</li> <li>- Local involvement</li> <li>- Local networks/ information exchange</li> <li>- Lack of direction</li> <li>- Partnership, including its operation and influence</li> <li>- Potential worthwhile collaborative projects</li> <li>- Conservation momentum</li> </ul>
<b>Communication and related</b> Anglesey - 5, Others - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact point.</li> <li>- Reference.</li> <li>- Advice and support.</li> <li>- Support</li> <li>- Isolation without LBAP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conservation awareness</li> <li>- Networking</li> <li>- Awareness of local work</li> <li>- Links between organisations and within Council</li> <li>- Public interface</li> <li>- Project knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Action Planning</b> Anglesey - 5, Others - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target and action setting and reporting.</li> <li>- Identify priority species and habitats.</li> <li>- Cover less popular species and habitats.</li> <li>- Management planning</li> <li>- Secure management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes in validation of work, including prospective projects</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b> Anglesey - 0, Others - 6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biodiversity Officer, x 6</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding opportunity</li> <li>- Funding lever</li> <li>- Less WAG Funding</li> <li>- Council funding</li> </ul>

		<i>(Table continued ...)</i>
<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other Partnerships</b>
<b>Council/ Political</b> Anglesey - 0, Others - 3		- Political support - Awareness amongst politicians and decision makers (but need improvement in process or will lose political support anyway) - Council buy-in [and] action
<b>Other</b> Anglesey - 2, Others - 2	- Hope - Don't know!	- Don't know - No

**Table 6.12:** Summary of Partners' Suggestions from Question 3. iii)

<b>Main Theme</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other LBAP Partnerships</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Local Focus</b>	13	7	<b>20</b>
<b>Communication and related</b>	5	6	<b>11</b>
<b>Action Planning</b>	5	1	<b>6</b>
<b>Staff</b>	0	6	<b>6</b>
<b>Funding</b>	2	4	<b>6</b>
<b>Council/ Political</b>	0	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Other</b>	2	2	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>56</b>

#### 6.4.7 Comment

(N.B. Comments on perceived losses can be taken to imply current benefits of the LBAP.)

In Anglesey, most response comments centered, either specifically or broadly, on the theme of *focus for local conservation* interest and action. Other perceived losses included *funding, support, target and action setting, reporting* and *hope*.

Results from other partnerships also included broadly similar comments on what had been two of the high scoring themes for Anglesey: i) *local focus*, and ii) *communication and related*. These themes were overall top in number of times referred to.

There were however, some distinctly different emphases in the other LBAP partnership areas, with many perceived losses suggested which were related to i) the loss of individual biodiversity officers, ii) funding, and iii) council/ political support. No responses from Anglesey had been classified into any of these three themes.

Perceived political support associated with the process was expressed by three respondents from different partnerships:

bN1: 'Buy in, action and funding from councils.'

eG4: '... significant gains ... have been made in bringing biodiversity awareness to politicians and the decision makers in government. However, if the LBAP process does not improve we will lose political support in any case.'

fN1: '... Loss of local political support ...'

Whilst most respondents listed at least one perceived loss in the event of the LBAP being abolished, three from each part of the survey gave no response (and two others 'don't know'). These may indicate that at least some partners might feel that the LBAP does not bring any particular benefits.

#### **6.4.8 Open-ended Question: 4: Do you wish to make any other specific or general comments?** (see Tables 6.13 and 6.14)

Response to this question generated far less material than that produced by officers (partners tending to make less comments here).

#### **6.4.9 Comment**

Most prominent for Anglesey, were a number of suggestions relating to processes/ practical action (which could be taken account of in review). From other areas, there were several comments praising the relevant local LBAP teams (Brecon Beacons and Swansea specifically).

The issue of raising status has featured quite prominently in Officers' open-ended responses, but status-related comments were sometimes made by partners. N8v considered present LBAP status to be less than ideal, but better than nothing:

'The LBAPs are cumbersome and not really enforceable; ... however, I can't think of a better way of doing it at present – at least we do have a document and some kind of plan!'

Not being 'enforceable' is understood to refer to not being able to guarantee that organisations undertake action for which they agreed to be listed in the LBAP (though where actions are statutory duties, they are enforceable through other means). The LBAP itself has no special legal standing to underpin its actions.

G1 was in favour of achieving actions amongst farmers and landowners, through targeting of best potential:

‘Less talking amongst “those who know best” and more actions on the ground with those who can actually deliver. Identify where the gains can be made (rather than ... wish lists) and go after them. Engage with your farmers.’

Certainly, these comments express a desire for action of the kind that many officers listed as being high in their priorities (Chapter 5).

**Table 6.13:** Theme and Sub-topic Summary for Responses to Question 4. (Partners)

<b>Main Theme - with Number of References</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other Partnerships</b>
<b>Process</b> Anglesey - 4, Others - 1	- More Partnership meetings. - Getting players together. - Justifying expenditure with appropriate plans. - Linking to UK and Welsh levels.	- Wants clarification of relationship of LBAP to Community Strategy
<b>Practical</b> Anglesey - 1, Others - 2	- Urges more action on the ground.	- Need to better encourage young people to take part. - Makes little use of LBAP because it ‘lacks mandatory action’. Use ‘dwindling’.
<b>Specialist points</b> Anglesey - 1, Others - 0	- On the Flower-rich Road Verges HAP.	
<b>General</b> Anglesey - 1, Others - 1	- Message that LBAPs have problems, but are worth having despite these.	- Disappointed with CCW on lack of knowledge sharing and lack of commitment to LBAPs.
<b>Praise</b> Anglesey - 0, Others - 3		- Praise for LBAP team’s commitment - Praise for local LBAP team, which is under pressure. - Praise for LBAP achievements since 1995: ‘huge amount of work’ including partnership projects and use in the planning process

**Table 6.14:** Summary of Partners’ Suggestions from Question 4.

<b>MainTheme</b>	<b>Anglesey</b>	<b>Other LBAP Partnerships</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Process</b>	4	1	<b>5</b>
<b>Practical</b>	1	2	<b>3</b>
<b>Specialist points</b>	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>General</b>	1	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Praise</b>	0	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>

There were some opinions on significant areas not covered in detail in other parts of the questionnaire.

An opinion was expressed by cN1v on the need to better get young people involved:

‘...Unfortunately active conservation work is still seen by the young as unworthy of time and commitment as it is not seen as trendy or “cool” ... Greater commitment is needed for education and inducements such as field courses in schools rather than sat at desks and PCs.’

fG2 has a positive perception of LBAP achievements:

‘Most LBAPs came into being post 1995. Within this fairly short time frame a huge amount of work (especially partnership projects) has been achieved and the process is still underway.’

The same respondent is also positive about use of LBAPs within planning, where biodiversity priorities can sometimes be used to help determine cases:

‘The adoption of BAPs within the planning process (and guidance material) has been a particularly noteworthy moment and has undoubtedly made a real contribution to conservation (as a carrot and a stick!).’

Some local authorities adopted LBAPs as supplementary planning guidance (SPG), but LBAPs were not originally written with this in mind, and such adoption can make updating LBAPs complicated within the lead body. Annex H of the Wales Biodiversity Framework now advises against adoption of LBAPs as SPG. (Also, changes to SPG would require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) , burdening LBAPs with a complex process.)

Some further positive feedback on the LBAP process was expressed by G5:

‘The LBAP process is a very useful way of getting people “round a table” and has been useful for an organisation like x as the well written plans and clear direction in BAP makes it easier to justify project expenditure etc.’

Positive comments of this kind have only rarely been expressed in the present survey, and compliment the networking/ communication benefits perceived by Officers and Partners’ response to 2. iv b) (justification of long lists of potential actions).

#### **6.4.10 Summary.**

A summary of results from Partners’ Open-ended Questions is given in Table 6.15

**Table 6.15:** Summary of Themes Identified by Open-ended Question, with Weightings for Relative Importance of each Theme within Questions (Partners)

Question	Theme	Times Referred to	Importance Weighting within Responses to Question
<b>3. i) Spending</b>	Habitat Management	29	High
	Partnership	3	Low
	Schools	4	Low
	Biodiversity Teams/ Staff	6	Low
	Environmental Centre	2	Low
	Species Work	5	Low
	Public/ Community	6	Low
	Access	2	Low
	Interpretation	1	Low
	Awareness	3	Low
	Others	6	Low
<b>3. ii) LBAP Document Improvement</b>	Illustrating of LBAP:	2	Low
	Public-face of LBAP:	6	Mid
	Action plans:	8	High
	Internet	5	Mid
	Other	7	High
<b>3. iii) Benefits</b>	Local Focus	20	High
	Communication and related	11	Mid
	Action Planning	6	Mid
	Staff	6	Mid
	Funding	6	Mid
	Council/ Political	3	Low
	Other	4	Low
<b>4 Other</b>	Process	5	High
	Practical	3	Mid
	Specialist points	1	Low
	General	2	Low
	Praise	3	Mid

## 6.5 Discussion

Discussion order follows that used for the Officers' Survey in chapters 4 and 5; Semi-structured statement responses are considered first, followed by open-ended questions. Findings from both parts of the Partners' survey are then brought together. Comparisons with the Officers' survey are made in the final Discussion, (Chapter 7).

There was strong majority perception amongst respondents that the LBAP partnerships concerned have been real catalysts 'for both agreeing and delivering new ... actions and projects' (2. i) a)), but also an even more strongly expressed feeling that partnership work is limited by lack of resources, as expressed through 2 i) b). A majority of respondents (twenty-six) felt able to agree to both of these statements. To these findings must be added two more of particular relevance to partnership performance: It was found that clear majorities thought that long-term job and project security within respondents' organisations came before new partnership projects (2 i) c)), and that new partnership work costed time and rarely led to long-term work (2 i) d)).

What overall picture of perceptions of partnership success can be drawn from these first findings? Considering Anglesey, the author is aware (through seven years as Anglesey LBAP coordinator) that examples of *agreement* and *delivery* of *new* actions and projects by the local Biodiversity Partnership are very limited. Yet, fourteen out of the twenty Anglesey respondents agreed with 2 i) a). In a literal sense, the author considers this to be an overly optimistic result (which is supported by response to 2 i) b)). Returning to the results from all respondents, if, however, work being done locally by individual organisations within the partnership is considered in total, then it is possible to arrive at a superficial impression that this is the product of LBAP partnership work. Results from 2 iii) c) tend to back this up: Here a (slight) majority of respondents agreed that success in new action implementation tends to be in action that would have happened without the LBAP. It is not known whether respondents from other partnerships were similarly optimistic in response to 2 i) a), but both anecdotal evidence from contact with coordinators, and response to 2 i) b) would indeed suggest levels of over optimism.

Statements 2 i) b) - d) have more detailed foci than 2 i) a). These statements sought to test opinion in connection to the practical operation of partnership working in relation to the individual organisations concerned, so that that responses would point to limitations in how far individuals think their organisation will go with the partnership concept.



A generalised understanding of findings from 2 i) can be suggested as follows: Even if appearing over optimistic, in a *general* sense partners wished to express goodwill to the partnership process and acknowledge that it has done some new work. However, when asked on more specific issue areas, partners expressed perceptions that lack of resources and inter-organisational competition often stand in the way, and that keeping the organisations going is a greater priority than partnership work. Why should an organisation share money and jobs with others, in cases where it could gain funding and run projects by itself? It is not suggested that all organisations take this attitude, but results do point to attitudes such as this being a factor in partnership psychology.

Partners' views on leadership track record were more positive than negative (2 ii) a)). There was a stronger tendency to be in favour of exploring more clearly separating LBAP work from council work (2 ii) b)). These two positions need not be incompatible with one another - exploration of options for improvement does not mean current arrangements being seen as a failure. Furthermore, greater separation from council work need not imply loss of leadership role (or lower status) of the LBAP within councils. Overall, the findings suggest that there is room for improvement, and to options being considered in the light of perception of limited satisfaction with leadership track-record.

Impact of the LBAP on local people is another area where respondents were asked to reveal their perceptions of success, specifically on whether the LBAP enthuses and informs many local people. We have seen that opinion was almost exactly split between agreement and disagreement. Considered overall, it can be suggested that this is indicative neither particularly of great success nor of great failure in this matter.

Majority feeling from 2 iii) a) was that LBAPs were 'about right' in length and detail. The significance of this finding is that there is little support for either greatly lessening or lengthening the present documents. Response to 2 iv) b) confirmed that respondents thought action lists show needs and can help draw in funding, though none disputed lack of progress on many actions either. In some contrast, response to 2 iv) e) showed a clear majority in support of a priority objective focus (allowing actions to be developed over time) rather than use of detailed action listings with no guaranteed support. There were fourteen respondents who agreed to both this and 2 iii) a). There is some inconsistency here, because the statements are somewhat at odds with one another. How can one say that LBAPs are the right length and detail and also that detailed action listings be substantially cut back (which would cut down LBAP length and detail)?

There is reason to question the extent to which implications of the two statements were being considered by these fourteen respondents.

A suggestion that LBAPs would benefit from more emphasis on climate-change related work and work that is mutually beneficial for health and wildlife was supported by the biggest single grouping of respondents. This suggestion could also be understood to imply potentially significant shifts in LBAP process and emphasis of work, and could be given serious consideration in a debate about the long-term future of LBAPs.

The issue of LBAP reporting is related to that of LBAP length because more actions mean a greater amount of reporting is required. Respondents were more inclined to admit that they were not reporting on their actions than otherwise (2 iv) a)). This finding should be considered as evidence for any debate on options for lessening LBAP length and/ or reporting burden. Another factor in deciding reporting priorities for some organisations may be the relationship between UK BAP processes and LBAPs. We have seen that results to 2 iv) d) confirmed that a majority of respondents felt unclear about this relationship. This finding is consistent with the lack of clarity in original LBAP and Lead body guidance material, as covered in Chapter 2 (including Shaikh's comments on this subject). Many respondents work for organisations which are involved in higher levels of the UK BAP process, which have their place on UK steering groups - or may be overall lead - for habitats and for species. They are still unsure about the process because, as chapter 2 showed, it has never been properly defined.

Consideration of degree of consistency in responses is again called for with responses to statements relating to LBAP *Use*. We have seen that for 2 iii) b), a slight majority of respondents indicated active use of the LBAP to inform decision-making locally, whilst for 2 iii) d), there was a stronger trend to agree that the LBAP was more a reference list than agenda setter. Also, response to 2 v) b) showed a clear majority view that in the organisations concerned, most/ all local decisions were mainly made outside the LBAP partnership and process. How consistent are these results with one another? Allowing for the possibility of lack of sufficient care in consideration of statements in responses is a possibility, but this need not be the case. Active use of the LBAP to *inform* decision-making is fully consistent with a view that the LBAP is more a reference document than agenda setter (reference documents are by definition meant to inform). The making of decisions outside the LBAP process can be considered compatible with these findings, given that 'LBAP partnership and process' (2 v) b)) is separate from the internal

operation of the individual partnership organisations. The results from these statements show a degree of reference to LBAPs for information, but the organisations concerned have decision-making processes and priorities apart from this. There is no indication of active decision making being made at LBAP partnership level.

Responses to the four open-ended questions provided much material in a number of important areas. Firstly, spending desires in response to 3 i) showed habitat management as the top single spending priority. This focus on conservation action ‘on the ground’ came well ahead of all other categories identified, and leaves no doubt as to where respondents thought resources should be prioritised. Spending on staff, education, partnership, species work, awareness and other areas came significantly behind. Some items relating to habitat management and LBAP process were also identified in responses to question 4, although these do not point to any one particular area or issue as having been neglected in the other, subject-specific parts of the questionnaire.

There were no outstandingly popular issues identified for improving the LBAP document in response to 3 ii). It was seen that a number of responses made suggestions for action plans, and a number referred to better development of LBAPs on the internet. Clearer inferences can be gained from response to 3 iii), on what would be lost were the LBAP process to be abolished. This revealed that *local conservation focus* and *communication* were the most widely perceived benefits of LBAPs. *Staff, funding* and *action planning* itself came somewhat lower than these. In a small number of cases, respondents referred to political status within local authorities as benefits, suggesting that biodiversity status has indeed risen to some degree with the process.

What do responses overall say about partners’ perceptions on the key issues of resources, status and LBAP partnership success? The strongest identified needs for resource prioritisation - for habitat management - can be considered alongside a strong feeling that lack of resources limit partnership work in practice, and a perception that current LBAP strengths lie in providing and focus for local conservation and in communication-related areas, rather than partnership. The identification of a range of spending priorities indirectly pointed to the issue of lack of status for LBAPs. Although most were willing to praise the LBAP partnership rather generally, it has been seen that on specific detail, partners tended to be more negative. This was further underlined in response to 3 iii), where local partnerships were barely touched on as LBAP strengths in any responses.

What overall key messages emerge from the present chapter? A 'typical' LBAP partner is likely to perceive the LBAP process in the following terms:

- There have been successes in giving local focus to conservation and in communication  
BUT ...
- Much of the potential for partnership working remains unfulfilled
- LBAP relationship with the UK BAP process is unclear
- Actions often show little or no progress, and reporting of actions is very limited (such that there is lack of knowledge of detailed LBAP progress)

NEVERTHELESS, he/ she ...

- Has insights and ideas about what could/ should be done to improve the LBAP process
- Would particularly like to see more habitat management on the ground

## **Chapter 7: Overall Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction.**

Having considered results from both the Officers' and Partners' parts of the survey separately in some detail, this final chapter looks at findings side by side, make conclusions and recommendations for the LBAP process.

The chapter is structured in the following order:

- Comparisons in Results between Officers' and Partners' Surveys
- Main Discussion
- Conclusions
- Critique of Work
- Recommendations

#### **7.1.1 Context**

Although numbers involved in the two surveys did not greatly differ from one another, the range of LBAPs for which perceptions were expressed did vary significantly. Officers were responding in reference to a total of around 45 LBAPs, including most LBAP areas in Wales, and one or more from all but one English region. Partners' responses were in reference to a total of seven Welsh LBAPs only, and almost half of these were in Anglesey LBAP partnership. The consequent degree of confidence in relevance of findings to Wales/ England scales from the two parts of the study is not consistent, being somewhat greater for officers' material.

### **7.2 Comparisons in Results between Officers' and Partners' Surveys.**

Comparative summaries of results from survey areas common to both Officers and Partners are provided in tables 7.1 - 7.6. These are mainly self-explanatory, though some brief explanatory notes are provided.

**7.2.1** Tables 7.1 - 7.3 (and associated comments) cover semi-structured statements from part 3 of the officers' survey, where these corresponded to (or were nearly the same) as statements from part 2 of the partners' survey.

#### **Key to Tables 7.1 - 7.3.**

**OS** = Officer/ Staff Survey (49 respondents)

**P** = Partners' Survey (41 respondents)

**Table 7.1:** Comparative Results from Officers (Part 3) and Partners (Part 2), Statements: 3/2 i a), ii a) and iii c).

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P
<b>i) Partnership</b> <i>a) The Local Biodiversity Partnership has proved to be a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new biodiversity actions and projects.</i>	4	6	25	23	7	5	1			4	12	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>48</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>17</b>	
<b>ii) Council</b> <i>a) The County Council leads on local Biodiversity action by example and is thus a highly credible LBAP leader.</i>	1	4	12	16	14	8	1	4		6	10	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>28</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>13</b>	
<b>iii) LBAP Document</b> <i>c) Success in new action implementation often tends to be with things that would have happened (/we would have done) anyway.</i>	3	5	14 ½	16	15 ½	12	3	1		7	12	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>30½</b>		<b>27½</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>12</b>	

**7.2.2 Commentary Notes: Table 7.1**

3/2. i) a) Majority agreement on the statement from both surveys, with only minorities disagreeing in both cases.

ii) a) There was a distinct difference in responses between the two surveys: officers were more likely to disagree than agree with the statement, whilst partners were more likely to agree than to disagree. No clear majority position in either group.

Combined results show slightly more agreement than disagreement, but with no overall majority.

iii) c) Officers were almost evenly split between agreement and disagreement (but slightly more inclined to the latter). Partners showed a slight overall majority in agreement, with rather less disagreeing.

Combined results show the biggest single grouping in agreement (though not an overall majority), and a significant minority in disagreement.

**Table 7.2:** Comparative Results from Officers (Part 3) and Partners (Part 2), Statements: 3/2 iv) a) - e)

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P
<b>iv) LBAP Reporting and Results</b>												
<i>a) Our Partnership members are reporting (I we report) on BARS or to the LBAP Officer, thus ensuring that progress on their actions is normally clear.</i>		2	5	9	12	12	13	3		8	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>14</b>	
<i>b) Although significant numbers of actions in the LBAP seem to show little or no progress, their inclusion shows what needs to be done, and can help draw in funding.</i>	6	13	21	22	4	2	1	1	3	3	3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>		<b>43</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>3</b>	
<i>c) The LBAP enthuses and informs many local people.</i>	1	3	11	12	11	9	5	6	1	10	9	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>10</b>	
<i>d) There is lack of clarity about how LBAP targets and action reporting stand in relation to national HAP and SAP management and steering processes.</i>	7	2	25	22	9	7			2	11	6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>47</b>		<b>16</b>				<b>13</b>		<b>6</b>	
<i>e) It would be better to focus more on priority objectives with long-term flexibility for project decision-making, rather than including long lists of detailed actions with variable degrees of backing commitment.</i>	8	7	26	19	4	4	1	2	4	4	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>45</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>11</b>	

### 7.2.3 Commentary Notes: Table 7.2

iv) a) There was a difference in perception between officers and partners: although both groups showed more disagreement than agreement with the statement, officers were in majority disagreement, with only a small minority in agreement. Partners were less likely to disagree and more likely to agree.

Overall, disagreement was the strongest single trend in responses.

b) Clear majorities of respondents (both overall, and as separate officers/ partners groups) in agreement with the statement. Only small numbers of responses in other categories.

Results for this statement should be viewed alongside those of iv) e) below.

c) Contrast between surveys: biggest single group of officers disagreed, though a significant number agreed, whilst as many partners agreed as disagreed (though there was a trend for more to disagree strongly than to agree strongly). Combined, there was more disagreement with the statement than agreement, though no overall majority position.

d) Both surveys showed overall majorities in agreement. Relatively small minorities disagreed.

e) Both surveys showed clear overall majorities in agreement. Officers' responses were more strongly in agreement than partners'. Only small numbers from both surveys disagreed.

**Table 7.3:** Comparative Results from Officers (Part 3) and Partners (Part 2), Statements: 3/2 v) a).

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Other	
	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P	OS	P
<i>a) Local Biodiversity action would benefit greatly by focusing more on Climate Change-related projects (such as habitat linking) and mutually-beneficial projects for health and wildlife.</i>	7	3	19	15	6½	12		2	5	4	11½	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>34</b>		<b>18½</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>16½</b>	



### 7.2.4 Commentary Notes: Table 7.3

v) a) Officers showed an overall majority in favour, whilst partners, though in an overall minority, showed more agreement than for any other category. Whilst a quite small minority of officers disagreed, there was a larger proportion of partners in this category.

Combined results show almost exactly half of all respondents in agreement. Less than one quarter disagreed.

### 7.2.5 Question 2 (Officers)/ 3 (Partners) (Open-ended)

Tables 7.4 - 7.6 show open-ended question results. They show where emphases in themes lay between the two groups surveyed. To be in more directly comparable form, a certain amount of reclassification has had to be made in some cases (noted where relevant).

**Table 7.4:** Summary Comparison of Themes identified from Responses to Open Question 2. i) (Officers) and 3. i) (Partners): *You have £2 million for local Biodiversity work - what would be your first priorities for spending it?*

Theme	Officers	Partners	Total
Habitat Management	29	29	58
Staff	26	6	32
'Action'/ 'Projects'	11	5	16
Awareness and Education	7	8	15
Public/ Community	4	6	10
Partnership	4	3	7
Survey	8	1	9
Others	7	9	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>163</b>

N.B. i) Officers' references to appointment of community officers counted under 'staff'.

ii) Some Partners' results from Chapter 6 have been reclassified here, for compatibility:

- '*Awareness and Education*' here includes listings from *Schools, Interpretation* and *Awareness* in Ch. 6.
- A suggestion listed under '*Others*' in Chapter 6, is classified here under *Survey*.
- Some items in '*Others*' here were originally listed under *Environmental Centre* and *Access* in Ch. 6.
- Five responses classified as '*Species Work*' in Chapter 6 appear here under '*Action*'/ '*Projects*'.

### 7.2.6 Commentary Notes: Table 7.4

Habitat management featured strongly in both surveys. Staffing was noted far more often by officers than by partners; the former made numbers of suggestions for more LBAP coordination (and related) staff, whilst the latter looked at the process from the point of view of individual

players. There was relatively frequent mention of action and projects by officers, with ideas relating to practical implementation. Such broad suggestions were not made by partners (though targeted species action was raised in this group). Suggestions in remaining categories showed concern for some key areas of LBAP functions (partnership, awareness etc.). Officers clearly linked these to staffing needs (either implied, or specifically; e.g. ‘*employ awareness officer*’). Suggestions for survey came mainly from officers.

**Table 7.5:** Summary Comparison of Themes identified from Responses to Open Question 2. iv) Officers, and 3. iv) Partners: *If the LBAP and process were abolished, what would be the biggest losses to your area for biodiversity conservation?*

Theme	Officers	Partners	Total
Communication, Partnership-networking and Related	17	11	28
Focus and related	13	19	32
Partnership and related	12	1	13
Funding	9	6	13
Proactive and ‘Projects’	9		9
Action Planning	2	6	8
Staffing	7	6	13
Awareness	6		6
Council/ Political		3	3
Protection	5		5
Benefits denied/questioned	3		
Other	5	4	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>144</b>

Note: a suggestion under *Local Focus* for Partners’ survey in Chapter 6 is listed here under *Partnership and related*. Two suggestions listed under ‘*Other*’ in the officers’ survey (Chapter 5) have been listed here under *Action Planning*.

### 7.2.7 Commentary Notes: Table 7.5

Responses from both surveys included many references to *Communication/ Partnership Networking* and also for *Local Conservation Focus*. Officers and Partners responded similarly in relation to loss of *Funding* and loss of *Staffing*. These two groups could also respond rather differently: Officers noted specifically *Proactive and ‘Projects’* as losses quite often, whilst partners did not suggest these areas so directly. Partners noted *Action Planning* process (and related) areas more, which officers did not often refer to directly (though these might have been implied under some of the focus

suggestions). Officers noted local biodiversity *Awareness* and *Protection*, in contrast to a lack of direct references to these themes from partners. Perceived losses relating to *Council/ Political* support were only suggested by partners, and then rarely. One of the most interesting contrasts is in references to *Partnership* losses, which were made fairly frequently by officers, but only once by partners themselves.

#### 7.2.8 Question 4.

**Table 7.6:** Summary Comparison of Response Themes: Open Question 4 Officers/ Staff, and Partners: *Do you wish to make any other specific or general comments?*

Theme	Officers	Partners	Total
<b>Strategic Issues</b>	20	8	<b>28</b>
<b>Resource Issues</b>	12	1	<b>13</b>
<b>Other</b>	2	2	<b>4</b>
<b>Praise for LBAPs</b>	7	3	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>

NB: For Partners, this table is based on reclassifications of some items for those which appeared in Tables 6.13 and 6.14 in Chapter 6: items under *Process* and *Practical* are classed under *Strategic Issues* here. Those classed as *Specialist Points* are classed here under *Resource Issues*, and those given as *General* come here under ‘*Other*’.

#### 7.2.9 Commentary Notes: Table 7.6

A range of strategic issues were prominent in responses from both surveys. Officers made a relatively high number of comments which specifically mentioned (or directly implied) shortfalls in resources. There were a small number of comments in praise of LBAPs.

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#### 7.3 Discussion.

Table 7.7 provides a summary of findings from the two main parts of the study, both separately and in combination.

This study began by looking at the history and nature of the LBAP process in Wales and England, with critical reference to relevant documents. This helped identify a number of issue areas for research. Questionnaires to cover these issues were drafted, piloted, refined, and used to survey representatives from two major stakeholder groups. These were: i) officers (LBAP

coordinators and staff in related roles, mainly in local authorities) and ii) partners within a number of LBAP partnerships. The two surveys were analysed and findings from each presented and discussed.

I shall now draw findings from the two surveys together through discussion, and attempt to show what can be learned overall in the context of the identified research areas. A lot has already been said in reference to findings in Chapters 4 - 6, and here I shall attempt to link the individual research themes together.

Both surveys, as well as the Literature Review, point to a lack of clarity about how LBAPs are meant to work in relation to the UK BAP. The 1998 Guidance Notes set feed-in to the UK BAP as the first of the six functions to follow. However, the key elements/ mechanisms which would make this local action feed to the UK BAP remained undefined or described. Were LBAPs meant to include all relevant local action to the UK plans? Results showed that this was the most common perception amongst officers. If so, then all partners would have to inform relevant LBAPs what relevant action they were doing, and report progress on that action. Lead bodies involved in the UK process were not given clear guidance on how they were to relate to LBAPs, and it was not clear what was required of them to help achieve this (nor indeed, whether this was definitely the actual goal). We saw in Chapter 2 how UK BAP UK habitat and species lead guidance basically pointed in general terms to the importance of LBAPs for the UK process. But there was no detail on how the LBAP and UK BAP processes would relate to, or compliment one another. If the guidance did imply (as suggested in Chapter 2) that leads were meant take the initiative in contacting LBAPs to help ensure that work within UK plans was indeed disaggregated between LBAP areas, this point is barely known to have been addressed any further in other documents at any time since, let alone resolved. Exceptions are the UK reporting rounds in 2002 and 2005, which showed that there is no comprehensive linking between UK leads and LBAPs. LBAPs have not been able to establish full knowledge of their local contribution to the UK process, and even the information on actions they do contain is generally not reported on. Both the surveys and the author's use of BARS confirm that the level of reporting (whether on the BARS system or otherwise), was limited, and this in turn makes meaningful assessment of LBAPs impossible.

The study has looked at the rationale behind the long lists of actions which appear in many LBAPs. The overall feeling that these show what *needs* to be done and can help draw in funding

**Table 7.7:** Summary of Main Research Findings

Research Area	Findings from Officers' Questionnaire (by relevant questions)	Findings from Local Partners' Questionnaire (by relevant questions)	Combined Findings from the Two Surveys (where comparable)
<p><b>Resources</b> - particularly funding for action implementation and staffing (for LBAP-related work).</p>	<p>2. i) Strongest needs felt to be for habitat management and staffing (well ahead of other categories).                      ii) Staffing (lack of), and other resource issues were often cited.                      iii) Funding/ resources needs often cited, also staffing needs.                      iv) Feeling that LBAP strengths lie in communication-networking, focus and partnership. i.e. more process related.                      3. i) b) Large majority felt lack of resources a factor which restricts partnership working.</p>	<p>3. i) Strongest need felt to be for habitat management (well ahead of other categories).                      iii) Feeling that LBAP strengths lie in focus and communication-networking, rather than material resources.                       2. i) b) Strong majority feeling that lack of resources limits openness to partnership work.</p>	<p>- Habitat management top perceived resources need.                       - Strengths seen in communication-networking                       - Lack of resources strongly felt to restrict partnership working</p>
<p><b>Status</b> - perceptions on issues relating to LBAP status/ lack of status</p>	<p>2. i) Funding needs implied feeling of lack of status.                      ii) Status-related issues cited often, many related to integration across local authorities.                      iii) Calls for improvements in areas related to LBAP status.                      3. ii) c) Clear majority indicate LBAPs not well linked to power in councils.</p>	<p>3. i) Funding needs implied feeling of lack of status.                      iii) Some perception that LBAPs have a certain standing locally, in terms of local political support and as local conservation focus.</p>	<p>- Funding needs implied feeling of lack of status.                       - Split in emphasis between perceptions of lack of power within councils, and the benefits of some local political support</p> <p><i>(Table continued ...)</i></p>

Research Area	Findings from Officers' Questionnaire (by relevant questions)	Findings from Local Partners' Questionnaire (by relevant questions)	Combined Findings from the Two Surveys (where comparable)
General LBAP <b>Partnership</b> success	<p>2. iv) Partnership seen as third greatest LBAP strength.</p> <p>3. i) a) Clear majority indicated that their Partnership had been 'a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new ... actions and projects.' But:</p> <p>b) A stronger majority felt that existing work and competition for funds etc. significantly limit partnership cooperation.</p> <p>c) Business, landowner and community group involvement quite often cited as being limited.</p>	<p>3. iii) Partnership barely seen as an LBAP strength by any respondents.</p> <p>2. i) a) Strong majority indicated that their Partnership had been 'a real catalyst for both agreeing and delivering new ... actions and projects.' But:</p> <p>b) A stronger majority felt partnership work limited by lack of resources.</p> <p>c) Clear majority feeling that long-term job and project security within organisations come before new partnership projects.</p> <p>d) Clear majority feeling that new partnership work costs time and rarely leads to long-term work.</p>	<p>- Contrasting perceptions of partnership as an LBAP strength.</p> <p>- Apparent perception of Partnership as new action catalyst needs to be balanced against stronger perceptions of resource limitations as a limiting factor for cooperation.</p> <p>- Perceptions of limitations in other areas relating to partnership work.</p>
Coordinating body (i.e. normally county council) <b>Leadership</b> track record	<p>3. ii) a) Opinion on leadership record split - but slightly more negative than positive.</p> <p>b) Very strong majority felt that staffing is a problem for input.</p> <p>c) Clear majority felt LBAPs not well linked to decision-making/ power in councils.</p> <p>d) Clear majority felt council work often come before LBAP partnership work.</p>	<p>2. ii) a) Biggest grouping - nearly half - felt leadership highly credible. Lesser minority disagreed.</p> <p>b) Biggest grouping - nearly half - in favour of exploring more clearly separating LBAP from Council work. Somewhat smaller grouping against.</p>	<p>- Mixed opinion on effectiveness of LBAP leadership locally - but more positive <i>outside</i> councils.</p> <p>- Responses tend to point to desirability of exploring clearer separation of LBAP and council</p> <p><i>(Table continued ...)</i></p>

Research Area	Findings from Officers' Questionnaire (by relevant questions)	Findings from Local Partners' Questionnaire (by relevant questions)	Combined Findings from the Two Surveys (where comparable)
Perception of what <b>LBAP Coverage</b> should be.	3. iii) a) Biggest grouping felt best practice is coverage of all local biodiversity action in LBAPs; sizable minority against.	2. iii) a) Majority feeling that LBAP documents 'about the right size and level of detail.' (Minority disagreed.) 3. ii) (Partly covered) Expression of feeling for more simplification; also some for strategic, Welsh/ UK BAP links.	- Mixed messages about whether LBAP coverage should be more, less, or the same.
<b>LBAP Use</b> in local decision-making in practice.	3. iii) b) Biggest grouping felt that use was low, but few the opposite (were also a variety of other responses).	2. iii) b) Slight majority stated active use of LBAP to inform their local decision-making. d) Slightly less than majority (but biggest grouping) think that the LBAP is more reference list than agenda-setter. 2. v) b) Clear majority stated that for their organisations, local decisions are mainly made outside LBAP partnership/ process.	- Mixed responses revealed limited use being made of LBAPs for local decision-making.
Degree to which <b>new action</b> is being generated by LBAPs (i.e. that would not have occurred without the process).	3. iii) c) Near-even split on whether new action would have happened without the LBAP or not.	2. iii) c) Majority implied that most new action implementation would have happened without the LBAP	- Significant expression of feeling that much action would have happened without LBAP
<b>Reporting</b> of LBAP action progress (particularly on BARS).	3. iv) a) Large majority indicated lack of reporting and thus uncertainty about progress on actions.	2. iv) a) Biggest grouping indicated lack of reporting; lesser minority that they did report.	- Biggest expression of feeling was that is a lack of reporting
<b>Action listings</b> - rationale behind long lists of actions, many of which show lack of progress	3. iv) b) Large majority did not dispute lack of progress on many actions, but felt lists show needs and can help with funding.	2. iv) b) Large majority did not dispute lack of progress on many actions, but felt lists show needs and can help with funding.	- Long-listing of some use, but lack of progress on many actions. (Table continued ...)

Research Area	Findings from Officers' Questionnaire (by relevant questions)	Findings from Local Partners' Questionnaire (by relevant questions)	Combined Findings from the Two Surveys (where comparable)
<b>Impacts</b> of LBAP on local people. i.e. On whether the LBAP 'enthuses and informs many local people'	3. iv) c) Biggest single grouping disagreed; a lesser, significant minority did agree.	2. iv) c) Almost exact even split in opinion between agreement and disagreement. (Lesser minority did not know.)	- Opinion divided on whether the LBAP 'enthuses and informs many local people'
LBAP targets and reporting in <b>relation to UK BAP</b> habitat and species action plan processes.	3. iv) d) Nearly two-thirds thought this relationship was not clear (small minority of opposite view).	2. iv) d) Over half thought this relationship was not clear (minorities either did not know or stated opposite view).	- Majority feeling of lack of clarity in relationship between LBAPs and UK BAP
Suggestion - <b>flexibility</b> in actions (with focus on priority objectives, rather than long 'wish' lists to which there may a lack of commitment).	3. iv) e) Large majority supported a priority objective focus, rather than listing of detailed actions.	2. iv) e) Clear majority supported a priority objective focus, rather than listing of detailed actions.	- Majority support for priority objective focus
Suggestion - desirability of <b>climate change-related work</b> and <b>mutually-beneficial work</b> for health and wildlife.	3. v) a) Majority support for joint working in these areas.	2. v) a) Biggest single grouping supported joint working in these areas, though less than half of total. A lesser, but significant, minority were against.	- Biggest grouping supported more climate-change and health-related focus
' <b>Spin</b> ' in formal/ official LBAP contexts.	3. v) b) Clear majority implied lack of critical openness relating to LBAP action process.	Not specifically covered	-
Range of <b>LBAP Officer skills and work</b> .	3. v) c) Clear majority feeling that expectations on skills and work were high.	Not specifically covered	-
<b>Other</b> Issues	4. Strategic and resource matters dominate, underlining <b>Status</b> and <b>Resources</b> as issues.	4. Strategic issues to the fore, underlining <b>Status</b> and <b>Resources</b> as issues.	Strategic issues most popular.



is also likely to be linked to perceptions of need for fuller coverage of local biodiversity conservation action, as outlined in original guidance. Both surveys showed perceptions that many of these actions show little or no progress.

Considered individually, these issues might appear to be ‘stand alone’ matters. How do they link together in any meaningful way? To recap, we have seen that LBAP functions and perception of what LBAP coverage should be, pointed to a ‘full’, or at least very comprehensive inclusion of local conservation action. To those involved in writing LBAPs, this would naturally have meant including relevant action already being done and new action. Many LBAPs were written with large numbers of resulting actions, but overall reporting on these is very limited, so that LBAP progress cannot be accurately assessed. This situation has occurred in the background of lack of clarity about LBAP relationship to the UK BAP. LBAPs included unattainable wishlists for actions, but also lacked full knowledge of the actions that were *really* being undertaken by partners in their areas. What basis was this for credibility? I believe that this is a key originating factor behind the mixed fortunes of LBAPs revealed in research findings. Both LBAP guidance and guidance for UK HAP and SAP leads was insufficient in not defining the integration it pointed to, and no subsequent documents nor initiatives have resolved this. Individual LBAPs tended to be dealt with only by local officers within lead organisations, and information on progress at LBAP levels has not been forthcoming because this was not considered a priority.

Participation at the local level seems to have happened separately from the UK process, and this has stemmed from the lack of clear guidance for LBAPs and for UK BAP Lead bodies. If Shaikh (1998) and Avery *et al* (2001) could see this, were not those who wrote the guidance material not also aware that the place of LBAPs in the UK process had not been adequately defined? Before returning to this point towards the end of this discussion, some consideration can be given as to why this situation may have arisen: A lot of excitement was generated by Rio, the subsequent development of the UK BAP, and initiation of the LBAP concept. The British conservation world may to a degree have been overawed by the newness of the BAP action planning concept, and the prospect of being involved in an inclusive, multifaceted process to safeguard UK biodiversity. The fact that UK BAP and LBAPs were ‘happening’ at all was to be rejoiced in, and seemed to be a breakthrough for conservation. Detail about actual operation was not given much attention by the many stakeholders named in the lengthy action plans which began to emerge. LBAP targets and action lists would (it was hoped) eventually help justify action funding, and local players were initially focused on this aspect, rather than being aware of

questions about the relationship of the LBAP to the UK process. After plan production, *achieving* action was given priority. Reporting was not given a great deal of thought in the first years of the LBAP process. As we have seen, in the event, long lists of actions have helped discourage reporting. Anecdotal evidence suggests that stakeholders find BARS overly complicated as a system. Also, the lack of any clear link between LBAPs and UK BAP processes mean that locally reported action has not been fed into UK plans, and this in turn has provided no incentive for UK lead bodies to encourage reporting of actions through LBAPs.

How do other findings fit into this scenario? The issue of *resources* is another area of key importance. Desires for more resources in the form of staff, and funding for conservation action, were very clear from the Officers' survey, whilst both Partners and Officers emphasised desires for new habitat management work. Finding and sustaining funding are long-term challenges in British conservation, and LBAPs were supposed to tap into what was available, and, also to tap into new funding sources if possible (e.g. businesses). Partnership success has been limited by insufficient resources to achieve many LBAP actions. As part of this, we have seen that stakeholders believe that *competition* for limited funding is a significant factor limiting partnership conservation work. LBAPs were encouraged to include large amount of actions which have remained unachieved; was it seriously believed that a lot of new funding would materialise as a result of the LBAP process? The materialisation of real new funding appears limited. Business involvement in LBAPs was perceived as being low in the part of the survey which covered this issue (Officers). Whilst central government funds some work listed in LBAPs, as do NGOs, it is the amount of *new* funding for new work that has been generated by the LBAP process that is critical - and findings show a lack of evidence for widespread significant new sources of this kind - but plenty of desire for new funding.

It appears clear anecdotally that action lists were written without knowledge of how much funding would be available, nor from what sources. LBAP guidance gave much encouragement for the listing of desires, without guarantees of their fulfillment. This approach can be both defended and criticised. In support, it can be argued that these lists do show what needs to be done and the fact that there is currently insufficient funding does not negate these needs (this view was expressed by Anglesey Biodiversity Forum in 2007 as a defence against cutting down actions and action plans). But it can also be argued that production of unattainable lists itself uses up limited resources, and because of being unrealistic undermines the credibility of the process. Long action lists have also made reporting and assessment of progress more daunting. It should

also be remembered that many respondents, including partners in particular, considered that much new action would have happened without the LBAP. This suggests that the extent to which the documents actually lead to differences in terms of new action is very limited.

Credibility in the process must also relate to LBAP status. We have seen many specific suggestions for raising status in the Officers' survey, and *resource* desires emerging from both surveys pointed to status in general being insufficient. A higher position in the political agenda might have meant more government funding (some of which could have been matched from other sources), greater credibility, and better buy-in from other groups as a result.

Returning to LBAP action listings, we have seen that two particular suggestions for change were received positively in general. The first suggestion was for focus on *priority objectives*, from which actions could be formulated over time, when appropriate funding and support was available. This would avoid long lists of unsupported action, but still show conservation needs (e.g. through target statements). The other suggestion involved more focus on climate change work and mutually-beneficial work for health and wildlife. These areas may find more political favour than biodiversity on its own (it can be strongly argued that climate-change proofing of LBAPs is essential in any case, to avoid misdirection of resources to work which may be vulnerable to effects of climate change).

Significant remaining areas should now be brought into discussion. Findings on leadership track record were mixed, and neither amount to condemnation nor ringing endorsement. There were, however, strong indications of lack of status and staffing coverage within councils from officers, and this was seen to be a limiting factor on progress for aspects of the process. Prioritisation clashes between council and LBAP work were noted from Officers' responses, whilst many Partners were in favour of exploring more clearly separating LBAP and Council work. It can be suggested from these findings that the issue of LBAP leadership should be openly reviewed and debated, with an aim of improving effectiveness.

Findings on Partnership effectiveness were also mixed. We have seen how most respondents agreed that their partnership had been 'a real catalyst for agreeing and delivering new ... actions and projects'. Isolated consideration of this finding would be unwise, as it was shown in chapters 4 and 6 how detailed focus on key related areas revealed a much less rosy picture. The initial positive response seems to be an expression of general goodwill to the process and the fact that

it has achieved something, rather than evidence for large-scale new action progress. The Officers' survey finding that there is pressure to be positive rather than negative in official contexts when referring to the LBAP process might also be a factor which influenced this response (though many officers were willing to criticise their actual employers).

It is clear that much of the material discussed so far points to rather serious and fundamental limitations in the LBAP process. There are also some positive findings. Nearly all respondents were able to list losses for local biodiversity conservation in the event of the LBAP being abolished. *Projects, funding* and *staffing* all featured in a number of responses. Many councils have increased biodiversity coverage by employing coordinators for the LBAP process. However, the themes most commonly cited in both surveys were in the areas of *communication/information-networking* and providing a *local conservation focus*. Officers considered *partnership* to be a top strength also, but partners nearly always failed to cite this. This raises a question of whether Officers may be overrating the success of the partnerships many coordinate (but the fact that the partners survey was rather more restricted in coverage means that we cannot explore this further in the present study).

Whilst acknowledging positive aspects of LBAPs, it is nevertheless very clear that there are a number of significant, fundamental areas where the process has been falling short. These include the perennial conservation issues of *resources, funding* and *status*. It would perhaps be facile to conclude that these should 'simply be better', but it is clear that there have been large gaps between action lists and reality. Priority actions do need to be funded, and where this is not happening should be addressed. However, the question of what actions are priorities is not itself necessarily clear - UK, Welsh/ English and local levels may have different views on this, and overall resolution of this matter takes us once again to the lack of coherence between the UK and local levels which has been referred to so often in this work. Resolution of this matter should be linked to a realistic and well defined remit, supported by appropriate status at the relevant political levels. Adequate funding to achieve priorities would be essential. It would also be hoped that it would lead to better use of existing resources in the LBAP process, for example through the shedding of non-priority action listings.

This study cannot claim to be the first to point to the lack of clarity on how the UK BAP links to LBAPs as a major problem. Shaikh's warnings in 1998 about this seem to have gone unnoticed by those able to influence development of LBAP processes. Had they been heeded, a more focused, efficient LBAP process could have resulted.

As we move towards final and detailed recommendations to improve the LBAP process, it is worth considering some possible reasons why original guidance was vague on such key area. Earlier in this discussion it was asked whether those who wrote the LBAP and UK BAP Lead guidance material were not also aware that the place of LBAPs in the UK process had not been adequately defined, and we return to this here. Firstly, there is the possibility that guidance was deliberately left ambiguous enough for different stakeholders to interpret in ways which made it acceptable to themselves. This would then mean that buy-in to the processes would be eased and ‘success’ in this area could be pointed to at an early stage, so justifying itself (e.g. to policy-makers and politicians). It may simply have been considered too challenging to get widespread agreement to start a new process in a more detailed or rigidly defined way. Alternatively, the lack of definition may have been an oversight, genuinely overlooked at the time, and not dealt with (nor possibly realised) over the years. This seems hard to believe given the involvement of so many organisations, though I have already speculated that local stakeholders were so excited by BAP processes that issues such as this ‘detail’ were not focused on. There may have been a mixture of factors at play. Initial vagueness helped secure buy-in from higher stakeholders, but the implications of this for those working at local levels were not thought out. Whether made consciously or not, the decisions that have led to the LBAP situation of today still effectively apply at the time of writing in both England and Wales. The only silver lining is perhaps Annex H of the Welsh Biodiversity Framework (2007). Being subject to revision at the time of writing in early 2008, it remains unclear to what extent the document will be implemented in the form described in Chapter 2.

The limitations in the LBAP process discussed are far from insignificant, and it would seem pertinent to ask how much longer can the current lack of clarity about relationship to the UK BAP go on; how long will large numbers of actions which are unreported remain in LBAPs and on the BARS system, and how meaningful is it to have a large number of local plans which cannot consequently be evaluated in any detail?

#### 7.4 Conclusions.

Table 7.7 showed that findings from the Officers' and Partners' surveys were not radically different from one another (but see 7.5 for critique notes on representativeness). Summary conclusions are listed for each research area in Table 7.8.

It was seen in Section 2.9.6 how Marren (2002) was somewhat skeptical about the BAP process (both UK and local implied), and wondered '... where this self-replicating mountain of plans may be taking us.' How far does the present study go to answer that concern six years later?

The LBAP process in Wales and England has produced mixed results. There is evidence for success in some areas, particularly including, for example, some progress in local awareness, and communication-networking. The process has helped provide a forum and means for focusing on local conservation. There are, however, severe limitations in LBAP process performance as it has existed to date. There are significant barriers to progress and a lack of clarity over the actual nature of the process, especially in its relationship to the UK BAP. Shaikh's basic message from 1998 on need for stakeholders to have a clear, common understanding still applies today. This has been a great limitation. A lack of reporting, whether through BARS or otherwise, has left LBAPs unable to evaluate their progress on targets meaningfully. There is evidence that new conservation action arising as a result of the LBAP and LBAP partnership working has been quite limited, despite there being no shortage of potential for new work (there being many unstarted or incomplete actions within LBAPs). A lack of sufficient new funding has limited new action, and production of long action lists used up limited resources which might have themselves been better focused on achieving action. This suggests that Marren was indeed right to be concerned about the level of paper and plan generation involved in BAP processes - the *means* to the end, rather than the end itself. Both stakeholders here - officers and partners - have time and again shown that it is on-the-ground conservation action that they want to achieve. Furthermore, there is evidence that much local conservation work done over recent years would still have happened without the existence of LBAPs.

Taken together, the overall conclusion from the findings of this study is that the LBAP process in Wales and England has been very limited in terms of success. A lack of clarity of how the process is to fulfill its functions, particularly in relation to the UK BAP, has meant that stakeholders at different scales, and in different geographical areas, have been working on LBAPs without cohesion. LBAP status has not been sufficiently high to better help ensure that

significant new areas of work could be undertaken in terms of new conservation action on the ground - which is the main desire of the stakeholder groups surveyed. Limited funding has also limited partnership cooperation.

It is concluded that the LBAP process could potentially have been a lot more successful than it has been to date. Establishment of feed-in to the UK BAP through defined processes e.g. with both disaggregated targets and actions, which were comprehensively reported on, would have enabled effective evaluation of progress at all levels. Even with the same funding limitations, a more realistic (i.e. less ambitious) set of expectations may have actually resulted in more new work being undertaken, because more time and energy would have been free to devote to action, rather than writing action plans. This wasted potential, stemming from failure to clarify the process through guidance is particularly ironic. The lack of reporting from stakeholders and consequent inability to evaluate LBAPs are part of this. These effects are also likely to have helped keep credibility and status low, undermining confidence in the process.

### 7.5 Critique of Work

The research study has focused on stakeholders' *perceptions* of the LBAP *process*. This is an important field for consideration as part of any holistic evaluation of LBAPs. Such analyses which consider perceptions and opinions of stakeholders do, by their very nature include elements of subjectivity. This subjectivity brings some limitations to the evaluation undertaken here; the importance of this subjectivity could have been restricted by simultaneously considering quantitative data on the *outputs* of LBAPs. However, even in the absence of such quantitative data, the research has clearly shown the need to ensure that the reporting of action occurs in order to generate the action output data upon which a more objective evaluation can be based. Given this general comment on the scope of the overall study, there are several other areas of the research which could be improved if a similar study were repeated in the future.

The Officers' survey produced a rather larger amount of response material than the Partners' survey. It would have been useful to have obtained more open-ended material from partners, to enable more direct comparison between the two surveys. For example, partners could have been asked questions 2 ii) and iii) about their priorities in hypothetical positions of power.

The Partners' survey would have been more representative if it had included some English LBAP partnership areas. An alternative approach of involving say five partnership areas from Wales and five from England would have both given more representation by area/ country, and

also would have been likely to have generated more responses overall, bringing the total for this survey nearer more in line with that of the Officers' survey. The resulting increased representativeness from carrying out these suggestions would increase the level of confidence upon which partners', and therefore overall findings were based.

Partners' responses were nearly half from Anglesey; whilst this was as a result of the research being linked to the author's work as Anglesey LBAP Coordinator, it further lessened the degree of likely representativeness in this part of the survey, and desirability of obtaining more responses from other areas.

As a possible refinement to the Officers' survey, it would have been possible to restrict respondents to those actually undertaking LBAP coordination, rather than including respondents who were county ecologists or worked in other related roles. This would have focused responses more on those working more directly with LBAPs (although many county ecologists line-manage LBAP coordinators, and might themselves add a dimension to comprehensiveness). Such a concentration of focus might arguably have been more useful for gaining insights into some areas of LBAP coordination.

Although there has been a focus on using Welsh and English material, it would have been more comprehensive to have included Scotland and Northern Ireland, and thereby use perceptions of experience in these other parts of the UK to inform findings and conclusions. Perhaps more significantly, the work has not included any studies of experience in other countries' approach to local biodiversity work. Although the decision to restrict the work to Wales/ England/ UK was made on the basis of background research, which did not yield any other LBAPs overseas, there would be insights to be gained from study of ways in which other countries have been implementing their biodiversity commitment arising from Rio and any specific local foci, and whether these are more or less effective at achieving conservation aims.

## **7.6 Recommendations**

### **7.6.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

If stakeholders are to continue to invest goodwill and limited resources in the LBAP process, there must be more effective evaluation and honest debate about how LBAPs can best help conservation in Wales, England and the UK, and there needs to be readiness to adapt the LBAP process. This requires courage and decisiveness at many levels, but crucially needs to be initiated



and acknowledged by the Wales, England and UK Biodiversity Partnerships, and by those who write policies and decide on priorities and agendas for conservation at UK, Welsh and English levels.

The key recommendation is that **the relationship between the UK BAP and LBAPs be definitively clarified**. This needs to be achieved in context of **confirmation of what LBAPs should be covering**. Are they indeed to be comprehensive, covering all existing biodiversity action, or local gap filling only? This issue is of key importance, and its resolution would set the parameters on which other recommendations could be covered. At the appropriate time in moving towards fulfilling key recommendations, a thorough process of **action prioritisation** should be carried out, to form the basis of coherent, SMART action schedules for LBAPs. These should then be **funded**, encouraging partnership work where beneficial through direct funding to LBAP partnerships. By tying funding to the reporting of progress on BARS, and by the raising of status of the process which carrying out recommendations would bring, it would then be possible to evaluate, and consequent input to the UK BAP.

These recommendations could not be carried out as short-term exercises. Stakeholders should therefore be consulted and their experience used to help develop recommendation proposals in detail. The role of Welsh and English levels needs to be defined, in the context of devolution. In considering ideas for change, it is essential that key stakeholders *at all levels* carefully consider practical implications of proposals, and what they will mean to those who work with them. Basic questions should be asked: Is the process clear and will it be understood in the same way by all? Are the links between UK BAP and LBAPs clear? Can the things proposed be done? These should all be discussed in an attempt to reach consensus. A more open and constructively critical process is required to enable the LBAP process to be more clearly defined, more measurable, more realistic and most importantly, more effective in achieving local biodiversity conservation action. A transparent development process to bring about these recommendations would signal a new start to this end.

Table 7.8 below lists recommendations in relation to research areas as the basis upon the process can begin. Table 7.9 outlines areas of the recommended consultation in relation to LBAP functions. Finally, a number of limited changes can currently be made to existing LBAPs. These are covered in section 7.6.3 below.

**Table 7.8:** Overall Research Summary Conclusions, Recommendations and LBAP Consultation Process Recommendations

Research Area	Summary Conclusion	Recommendations
<b>Resources</b> - particularly funding for action implementation and staffing (for LBAP-related work).	1. Significant resources shortfalls in LBAP process 2. Need to better target existing resources on priorities	- Define essential priorities and ensure sufficient funding for LBAP input - Ensure that resources are devoted to <i>achievable</i> work. - Use priority ratings to enable better targeting of existing resources.
<b>Status</b> - perceptions on issues relating to LBAP status/ lack of status	LBAP process has relatively low status on political agendas at local, Welsh and UK levels	- Increase political and statutory agency support, and back with the actioning of other recommendations
General LBAP <b>Partnership</b> success	New work limited by resources. Felt to be more successful by officers than by partners.	- Consider direct funding of LBAP partnerships, to encourage new partnership work (on basis of Priorities) - Ensure effective means of evaluating partnership success. I.e. Through assessment of reported actions on BARS.
Coordinating body (i.e. normally county council) <b>Leadership</b> track record	Mixed. Officers more critical than local partners. Staffing and status limitations acknowledged.	- Informed consultation on options for more separation between lead bodies' work and LBAP work (for example, on the basis of a suitable study report.)
Perception of what <b>LBAP Coverage</b> should be.	Overall, comprehensive coverage favoured.	- Firstly, aim to gain consensus from consultation on LBAPs should include all local biodiversity work towards UK BAP, OR, alternatively only local 'extras'. - Define relationship of LBAPs to UK BAP, following debate and consultation.
<b>LBAP Use</b> in local decision-making in practice.	Overall use seems limited; much is as reference.	(Use would rise following action on other recommendations, and the rises in clarity and status credibility they promote.)
Degree to which <b>new action</b> is being generated by LBAPs (i.e. that would not have occurred without the process).	Really new action seems to be rather limited.	- See <i>resources</i> recommendations; new actions to arise from effective funding of identified priorities.  <i>(Table continued ...)</i>

Research Area	Summary Conclusion	Recommendations
<b>Reporting</b> of LBAP action progress (particularly on BARS).	LBAP action progress often under reported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarify amount of reporting required in light of <i>LBAP Coverage</i> outcomes.</li> <li>- Ensure agreement for sufficient reporting to assess progress, e.g. by making BARS reporting a claim condition for exchequer conservation funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Action listings</b> - rationale behind long lists of actions; are these being progressed?	Long list rationale confirmed, but frequent lack of progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define LBAPs on basis of Key Priorities and Targets, from which flexible actions evolve, rather than producing detailed action lists without funding. (BARS allows printouts of actions and progress at any time.)</li> </ul>
<b>Impacts</b> of LBAP on local people.	Impacts are limited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aim of increasing impacts locally to be part of first <i>resources</i> recommendation above (prioritisation)</li> </ul>
LBAP targets and reporting in <b>relation to UK BAP</b> habitat and species action plan processes.	Relationship generally thought to be unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See <i>LBAP Coverage</i> recommendation</li> <li>- Agree and clarify relationship to UK process, and ensure understanding by all parties, through appropriate new Guidance documents</li> </ul>
Suggestion - <b>flexibility</b> in actions (rather than long 'wish' lists)	Priority objective focus has wide support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See <i>Action listings</i> recommendation above</li> <li>- LBAP on BARS evolves, and is not produced in separate electronic or hard copy versions.</li> </ul>
Suggestion - desirability of <b>climate change-related work</b> and <b>mutually-beneficial work</b> for health and wildlife.	Widespread support for more work in these areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider move to greater map focus for LBAPs, for connectivity network planning.</li> <li>- Identify mutually-beneficial priorities and resources</li> </ul>
' <b>Spin</b> ' in formal/ official LBAP contexts.	There tends to be an overemphasis on successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage more balance, with openness on shortfallings/ negative aspects of process. Governmental agencies to set example.</li> </ul>
Range of <b>LBAP Officer skills and work.</b>	Generally agreed that demands on coordinators are high.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use priority clarification process to better focus officers' work (see <i>resources</i> recommendations above)</li> </ul>
Other Issues	Tended to further underline <b>status</b> and <b>resource</b> area shortfallings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consultation to consider what other issues may be important and what steps might/ should be taken.</li> <li>- An LBAP e-forum with sections for coordinators and partners would engender debate and sharing of experience etc.</li> </ul>

**Table 7.9:** LBAP Consultation Recommendation Areas as Specifically Linked to LBAP functions.

<b>LBAP Function</b>	<b>Recommendation Areas for LBAP Consultation</b>
1. Action towards UK Habitat/ Species Targets	Clarify in what ways LBAPs link to the UK Targets and how they relate under actions. e.g. How are existing statutory agency actions to be covered in LBAPs?
2. Habitat/ Species Targets (locally appropriate)	In association with function 1 recommendation above, where UK and local priorities overlap, consider how local targets are to relate to UK processes.
3. Partnerships (development of)	- Consider direct funding of LBAP partnerships, to encourage new partnership work and raise credibility of LBAPs by ability to achieve new action on the ground.
4. Awareness	Consultation to include evaluation of awareness effectiveness and would aim to improve where possible.
5. Conservation Opportunities, full Consideration of	Given the impracticality of achieving this, consider changing this function, whilst allowing flexibility to become involved where appropriate.
6. Monitoring	Ensure effective monitoring of LBAPs on the basis of agreement on other functions, particularly 1 and 2. All exchequer-derived conservation funding to be conditional on reporting through BARS. All statutory agencies play agreed reporting roles. Consider means to encourage better BARS reporting from NGOs.
All Functions	Consultation to allow for changes in functions in light of debate and resulting consensus aimed for. Key area: Is LBAP to include all local conservation work, or gap filling only?

### 7.6.2 Recommendations for Local Practice, under Existing Potential.

Although not an alternative to the strategic review and other recommendations above, areas where LBAPs can make changes under the existing system can be considered. The following includes references to those developed for Anglesey and presented at the March 2007 Anglesey LBAP Forum. Further details of outcomes from this Forum are included in Appendix ix.

**a) Habitat and Species Targets, b) Action Plans and c) Individual Actions** - Partnerships have flexibility to set targets and the numbers of action plans and individual actions within LBAPs. It would theoretically be possible to simplify an LBAP by setting basic targets, and lessening numbers of action plans and actions to enable better resource focus and facilitate reporting. (Although recommendations were made, all of these are linked to requirements under guidance for the first two LBAP functions; although it was recommended that number of action

plans and actions be significantly lessened, the partnership members were in favour of keeping both plans and actions as a reflection of what needs to be done.)

**d) Reporting: Definitive LBAP on BARS** - Develop the LBAP on BARS and not produce another hard copy (agreed for Anglesey).

**e) LBAP and Climate Change** - To make climate change adaptation a main focus for the LBAP (agreed for Anglesey).

### 7.7 Further Research

It was acknowledged in 2.4 that detailed information on outputs would ideally form the main basis for evaluation of LBAPs; their ability to generate biodiversity outcomes needs to be measured and assessed if a thoroughly balanced, informed evaluation is to be made. For this reason, it is in the field of measurable data where there is the greatest need for further research (including for example figures in terms of areas or lengths managed or restored etc. under different habitat). Such research would have to obtain the kinds of detailed data for action which is at present very largely lacking on BARS, nor otherwise has been gathered by coordinators to show comprehensively the degree to which progress has been made. Some suggested options which could be followed are:

- Focus on a limited number of LBAPs and contact partner organisations which were allocated action to obtain detailed data on action outputs. LBAPs could be chosen to represent a variety of circumstances such as rural, urban, national park area, and also across the whole of Wales and England.

- Focus on a limited number of habitats and/ or species and seek information on the degree to which actions for these has been implemented in as many LBAPs as possible, but ideally all which included these as action plans (or parts of action plans).

- A study which attempted to cover both of the above to focus suggestions would help gain both the depth and breadth of coverage which could form a more robust base on which to proceed with evaluation.

Any studies of the kinds suggested above would have to be clear about what is being measured; the present study has pointed to a degree of uncertainty in the minds of many stakeholder/players about what LBAPs are meant to cover, which is likely to have influenced the ways in which LBAPs were written. Researchers seeking objective evidence should thus be mindful of the need to ensure that they compare like with like.

In terms of the coverage of stakeholder' perceptions, there is an ongoing need for independent studies of this kind which seek to evaluate government-derived initiatives. If changes were made to LBAP processes in coming years, similar surveys could be carried in time as part of an evaluation and assessment process, and compared against present findings. (Statements and questions might need to be added to or modified.) As well as covering stakeholders at the coordination and action end of LBAPs, study of perceptions from key staff in UK Lead BAP organisations and those involved in policy thinking and guidance (e.g. from a) Wales, b) England and c) UK Biodiversity Partnership Groups) would enable a more comprehensive critique of some key areas.

In line with 7.5 above, another area where further research would compliment present findings would be to obtain data from partners covering a broader range of LBAPs areas, particularly to include a variety from partnerships in England, but also to investigate some other areas of Wales. With reference to the present study, this would be with the aim of producing more representative findings about partners' perceptions as well as enabling more comprehensive comparison of results from the two surveys. It would also be useful to obtain Partners' responses to open-ended questions not covered by partners in the present survey. This would include what partners' priorities would be in positions of power: 2 ii) and iii) in Officers' survey.

The large amount of comments generated by the Officers' survey could be analysed in more detail, possibly used as a basis to test opinion on some new subjects raised therein, and to explore topics not specifically covered in the present research. For example, the place of biodiversity in local sustainable development agendas. Material from Question 2 iii) could be used by WAG to evaluate perception of government performance in Wales.

A similar study for Scotland would enable comparison of perception between countries, which could be used to help outline areas of best practice and areas of weakness in operation. Approaches in other developed countries could also be investigated further. Background

research indicated that there is not a comparable local BAP system in operation anywhere else, and a better understanding of alternatives from evaluation and comparison of experience in some other countries could be another key to improvement (this might include a study of any differences in approach adopted in the recent development of LBAP processes in some parts of the Irish Republic, including the Dublin LBAP of 2007). Such studies should look at the relationship of local biodiversity work in relation to greater scales such as regional and national, and attempt if possible to highlight areas of success and overall best practices for biodiversity conservation. They would also ideally include enough hard data on outputs to be able to allow balanced, objective evaluations to be made.

A number of recommendations in Table 7.8 involve taking steps which imply further study, and include the possibility of looking into some of the issues raised by respondents which were not covered in the present work.

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*Guidance Note 2: Developing Partnerships*

*Guidance Note 3: How Local Biodiversity Action Plans relate to other plans*

*Guidance Note 4: Evaluating priorities and setting targets for habitats and species*

*Guidance Note 5: Incentives and advice for Biodiversity*

LIAG

The following two documents form later additions to this guidance:

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N.B. This report was based on very limited data gathering, and lacked both detailed coverage and evidence. It noted lack of resources and considered LBAPs to be too large, but missed key issues such as the question of breadth of LBAP coverage. Attempts by the author on several occasions to obtain information on progress (if any) on its recommendations since publication (from Scottish Biodiversity Group support staff) were unsuccessful. The document has not been reviewed in the main text for this reason, and because of the low quality of coverage and evidence base.

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List of main LBAPs Consulted (numerous other LBAPs were looked at in part on BARS):-

Brecon Beacons, Caerphilly, Ceredigion, Cheshire, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Snowdonia, Swansea, Wrexham.

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