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Local Geodiversity Action Plans: sharing good practice workshop

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Introduction

Local Geodiversity Action Plans provide a new and effective route to achieving geoconservation. Importantly they involve a wide range of groups, organisations and individuals in agreeing priorities and actions for geodiversity and can make more effective use of the limited resources available.

This research report shares good practice to guide those initiating a Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP). It examines the common features of emerging LGAPs and provides case studies of the six LGAPs reviewed at the workshop.

What was done

In December 2003 English Nature brought together those active in LGAP development for a one day workshop. Six LGAPs were reviewed (Cheshire Region, County Durham, Leicestershire and Rutland, North Pennines AONB, Staffordshire, Tees Valley and Warwickshire) all then in an advanced stage of development or shortly to be agreed and published. The workshop closed with a discussion on the essential features of an LGAP.

Results and conclusions

LGAPs establish an on-going process that sets clear aims and objectives, with measurable targets, for local geoconservation. Whilst each LGAP is tailored to suit the variation of local geology and will therefore differ in detail, LGAPs share a common approach and underpinning philosophy: the conservation and enhancement of geodiversity.

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Essential features of a successful LGAP include:

1. A well defined geographical boundary.
2. A range of partners that cover the geographical range of the LGAP and the variety of interested groups.
3. Aims and objectives with clear targets and actions for geoconservation. Typically these include:
 - A geodiversity audit of sites, information and skills.
 - Communication and education initiatives to promote geodiversity.
 - Influencing local government plans and planning guidance to protect sites.
 - Clear goals for the conservation and management of geological sites, natural processes and the geodiversity of our landscape.
 - Resources (money and people) to sustain the future momentum of the LGAP.
4. Wide consultation to ensure that all views and local priorities for geodiversity are taken into account.
5. Funding to achieve the LGAP objectives.
6. A process to measure achievement against targets and to help the LGAP evolve by setting new targets

English Nature's viewpoint

English Nature supports the LGAP process and believes LGAPs provide a good mechanism for achieving geoconservation at a local / regional level. It has been widely agreed that a national overview could help emerging LGAPs share their knowledge, provide good practice guidance, establish common standards and help the process to gain wider acceptance within the conservation and planning communities. As part of English Nature's support for the LGAP process an e-mail communication network 'Mind the LGAP' has been set up and a website created to share information and promote good practice. English Nature also intends to create a framework for a national geodiversity action plan.

Selected references

BUREK, C., & POTTER, J. in press. Local Geodiversity Action Plans: setting the context for geological conservation. *English Nature Research Reports*, No 560.

ENGLISH NATURE. 2004. *Local Geodiversity Action Plans – sharing good practice*. Peterborough: English Nature

Further information

Further information and advice on LGAPs can be found at
<http://www.english-nature.org.uk/special/geological/lgap>.

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www.english-nature.org.uk