

North West Local Biodiversity Recording Regional Review

Natural England

Brief

BE Group was commissioned by Natural England to review Local Record Centre (LRCs) services in the North West of England. LRCs collate and manage biological data. This is used to inform sustainable planning and economic development, as well as to improve understanding of climate change. The data is supplied to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) that was set up by Defra to promote biodiversity.

The project had four main objectives:

- Achieve the efficient and sustainable management of LRCs and biological data
- Promote consistent data collection and management
- Increase geographic and taxonomic coverage
- Raise awareness of biological recording, and increase its use in decision making.

LRC governance and structure, data standards and management vary considerably across the country. The project's overall aim was to maximise the potential of LRCs and their relationship with the NBN.



Activities

- Visits to each LRC
- Stakeholder workshops
- Data audits (taxonomy, coverage, application, etc)
- Management/structure/governance review
- Consultations with users and potential users
- Consultations with data providers
- Gap analysis
- Project identification and prioritisation
- Action plan.



Outcome

The five LRCs in the North West are well managed and governed. However, it is difficult to secure funding and they feel under-resourced.

They hold 3,299,545 species records, but lack habitat data. Potential users prioritise habitat data, especially relating to local wildlife sites, and protected species records.

The research and consultation exercise resulted in the generation of five implementation projects for the LRCs in the North West to take forward:

- Local and regional advocacy of the role of LRCs and demonstrating the value of LRCs to existing and new users
- Data request improvements
- Effective capturing of ecological survey data
- Directing recorders to local wildlife sites and developing the recorder base
- Efficient data submission.

