



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 16 September 2003 at Groundwork, Birmingham.

Present

Moira Anderson	(MA)	DEFRA Biodiversity Policy Unit
Ian Angus	(IA)	Scottish Natural Heritage
John Box	(JB)	Atkins Environment (Chair)
Peter Cush	(PC)	Environment & Heritage Service
Dave Dawson	(DD)	GLA
Ian Douglas	(ID)	Manchester University
Chris Gordon	(CG)	East Midlands Region, Countryside Agency
Peter Jarvis	(PJ)	University of Wolverhampton
Peter Morgan	(PM)	Groundwork
Alan Scott	(AS)	Alan Scott Ecological Consultants Limited
Peter Shirley	(PS)	The West Midlands Wildlife Trusts
Matt Fry	(MJF)	CEH Wallingford (Secretary)

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies

Carolyn Harrison	(CH)	Mathew Frith	(MF)
Graham Leeks	(GJLL)	Pete Frost	(PF)
Grant Luscombe	(GL)	David Nicholson-Lord	(DNL)
John Robbins	(JR)	David Knight	(DK)
Richard Sharland	(RS)	Gerald Dawe	(GD)

JB welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Groundwork for hosting it.

Alan Scott was welcomed as a new member.

Matthew Wilkinson's departure from the Forum as John Handley's alternate was noted and he was thanked for his contribution, particularly to setting up the website.

Moira Anderson was welcomed as the new DEFRA representative, taking over from John Robbins. John was thanked for his contribution to the Urban Forum.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the February 2003 meeting were signed by JB as an accurate record.

3. UK MAB Award for Excellence (Led by CG)

CG reported on the status of the Award for Excellence, particularly following the Turnbull report:

(http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk/Publications/MAB_Award_Review_Turnbull.pdf)

The outcome of this discussion was:

- a) The Award needs to be developed over the next two years. If the Award does not have a distinct role by then, it should be wound-up.
- b) The benefits of the Award for the sites involved needs to be made clear to these sites and their local communities and local representatives
- c) The international dimension of the Award is very important and MAB is impressed by the idea of the Award
- d) The Award needs to be expanded to Northern Ireland and to Scotland
- e) There needs to be an Award site in every English Region
- f) We need a UK wide sponsor (the Green Flag Awards have been taken on by CABE which is only present in England and Wales)
- g) There is the possibility of HLF or NOF funds
- h) New nominations for Awards can be accepted
- i) The existing Award sites will be reviewed by Forum members. Four projects will be reviewed - the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust (by JB), Saltwells (PJ), Project Kingfisher (PJ) and the Jupiter Project (IA) - before the next meeting (December 2003).
- j) The Working Group led by CG will pursue possible links with the four country nature conservation agencies through the Urban Habitat Working Group.
- k) The possibility of UNESCO certificates for Award sites will be investigated.
- l) A broad strategy for the next 24 months needs to be developed with a concise work plan for the next 12 months
- m) The Award scheme will be reviewed again in September 2004 and finally in September 2005

Action 3.1: ID to request UNESCO certification from Peter Dogse.

Action 3.2: MJF to coordinate, with DK, sending of new EN report to Peter Dogse.

Action 3.3: PS to investigate possible HLF funds

Action 3.4: CG to draw up 24 month strategy and 12 month action plan

4. Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment (CABE) (led by PS)

CABE are a non-governmental public body working in the field of urban design. They have an offshoot organisation called CABE Space focussing on Parks and Public Spaces in towns and cities. John Rouse is Director of CABE. Julia Thrift is Director of CABE Space, with Dr Edward Hobson as Deputy Director and Head of Policy and Research.

CABE will be hosting the Urban Forum meeting in February 2004 at which John Rouse will be speaking.

PS provided a summary of the background and work of CABE and CABE Space. The importance of the organisation was noted as was the need to dovetail the work of the Urban Forum with that of CABE Space, particularly in their aims of setting 'Standards and Best Practice'.

Action 4.1: PS and MJF to put together guidance for the Urban Forum concerning dovetailing of work, etc. with that of CABE Space.

The possibility of MF representing the Urban Forum within CABE Space was also suggested.

Action 4.2: MJF to contact MF wrt representing Urban Forum within CABE Space. Information can be found from their websites below:

www.cabe.org.uk

www.cabespace.org.uk

Publications are available on the internet:

<http://www.cabespace.org.uk/4WIk-YgU4o2=HQ7BWedRPcw/publications/index.html>

It was noted that these could be difficult to print.

They are also available from:
CABE Space,
The Tower Building,
11 York Road,
London SE1 7NX

5. Progress on the Work Programme

A 6 month summary of progress on Work Programme projects had been sent around prior to meeting.

Planning for climate change in urban environments and *An assessment of the capacity of Local Authorities to undertake integrated management of greenspace networks* - ID to ask JH for progress on these projects.

Action 5.1: ID to ask JH for progress, MJF to be informed

Change in biodiversity in relation to climate change – PF looking for venue, etc.

Response of urban pest species to climate change – ID hoping to produce report for next meeting

Action 5.2: ID to produce report for next meeting

The Endless Village revisited - PS seeking funding – any suggestions gratefully received

Green corridors revisited – project to be removed from programme; DD to circulate document on spatial aspects of wildlife habitats when complete

Action 5.3: MJF to remove project from work programme

Action 5.4: DD to circulate publication

Review of social and community criteria for selection of local sites of importance for nature conservation – PF and DEFRA to discuss timing of seminar, Urban Forum money available (£1K provisionally allocated)

Why nature is good for you – ID produced interim report which was discussed

Additional projects proposed:

PJ offered to include some of his work on mapping ecological, social and environmental aspects of urban habitats with GIS as a tool for planners. Suggested review of state-of-the-art in this area, to be published in 12 months, link with DD.

Action 5.5: MJF to add to work programme

GD sent email suggesting inclusion of new project ‘Street Trees and Sustainability’ linking with a new project which will culminate in a conference at the end of 2004. This was agreed

Action 5.6: MJF to add to work programme, liaise with GD to find which topic to include this within, and what further support could be provided.

Developing the Award – CG had previously reported

UK MAB committee – Next meeting on 19th February 2004

Urban Biosphere Reserves – conference to be held in NY in October. Suggestions or comments to PF.

(<http://www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/cubes/events/ubs102903.html>)

Website – MJF reported on webstats (see link below), will find sites to compare ‘hit rate’ with and report. Other comments suggested website is good but needs to be kept fresh. MJF suggested use of automatic searches to produce list of new items on internet about urban nature and biodiversity.

Action 5.7: MJF to report further on website and to test web-search software

UF Finances - For 2003/2004 EN will provide £4255 (excl VAT) and CCW £2553 (excl VAT) (which is an increase from £2000). EN has been approached to increase their contribution to £5,000 for 2004/05.

6. Urban Forum finances

Dealt with within Item 5.

7. Website.

Dealt with within Item 5.

8. Matters arising

GJLL sent notice that the URGENT final event would be held at RICS in London on Thursday 4th December. List of speakers and contributions would be sent around as soon as finalised.

JB noted that MF had previously been on the UNESCO MAB Urban Roster and the MAB Urban Group, but that DK was to take over this role. The Urban Forum would like clarification of the role of the MAB Urban Group

Action 8.1: MJF to contact DK to find out role of MAB Urban Group

9. Any Other Business

- i. ID to liase with JH as to venue of next meeting in Manchester
- ii. IA to arrange venue for meeting in Scotland in May
- iii. PC to arrange venue for meeting in NI in December

10. Dates of Next Meetings

- 9 December 2003 – Manchester
- 25 February 2004 - London (CABE)
- 25 May 2004 - Scotland (location tbc)
- 15 September 2004 - Birmingham (location tbc)
- 7 December 2004 - NI (location tbc)

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Action 4.2: MJF to contact MF wrt representing Urban Forum within CABE Space.

Action 5.1: ID to ask JH for progress, MJF to be informed

Action 5.2: ID to produce report for next meeting

Action 5.3: MJF to remove *Green Corridors revisited* project from work programme

Action 5.4: DD to circulate publication

Action 5.5: MJF to add to work programme

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Outstanding Actions:

Review of Outstanding Actions from Feb 2003 meeting:	
Incomplete:	
5.2. MJF to add link from Urban Forum website to EN Green Roofs report and paper to publications list	Action point remains open.
6.1. MJF to keep forum up to date with finances	Ongoing
7.1 ID to send note on Millennium Assessment to MJF	Action point remains open.