

- 3.10. The Management Group formally reported to the Environment subgroup of the Local Strategic Partnership through the Project Officer and through the Forest Enterprise representative (who chaired the LSP), although it would appear that this relationship declined in the latter stages of the Programme. To start with the Management Group met monthly, but meetings became less frequent in the last year of the Programme. The Group received reports from the Programme Officer, agreed the work programme, acted as a steering group for external contracts including the ongoing baseline studies and considered grant applications.
- 3.11. Despite the efforts made in the BOWS Phase to increase representation of local interests, there was ongoing criticism of the lack of communication of progress with the BOWS strategy. Although consultees praised the publication of BOWS Guide in 2004 (summarising the evidence from the baseline studies on 'What's Special') and the Final Event in March 2006 (to present examples of work conducted under the Programme), many consultees felt that there was inadequate ongoing communication, particularly from the BOWS Management Group. There appear to be three reasons for this.
- Firstly delays to the appointment of new Project officers meant that staff were not in place for a total of 12 months during the BOWS Phase to ensure good communication (covered further below).
 - Secondly, contractual disagreements with the business that had hosted a website during Phase 1 led to the hosting being transferred to the District Council. This did not become available publicly until the closing months of the Programme (from January 2006).
 - Finally, several consultees felt that the Countryside Agency became increasingly disengaged with the Programme during the second half of 2004 and first quarter of 2005 (perhaps due to the national re-organisation when the Agency's socio-economic responsibilities transferred to the Regional Development Agencies, and to a desire for local bodies to take more responsibility for overseeing the Programme).

Staffing

- 3.12. During Phase 1 the Programme met the costs of employing a project manager (staff grade S) supported by a part time project officer (grade H) from the Countryside Agency's regional office in Bristol. During much of Phase 1 the project manager was effectively full-time on the Programme.
- 3.13. During the first part of the BOWS Phase (to April 2005), the project was overseen by a project manager from the Countryside Agency's regional office, again supported by another member of Agency staff. From April 2005 to the end of the programme was managed by the Regional Development Agency.
- 3.14. It was intended that there should be a locally based full-time project officer in place throughout the BOWS phase, but in the event, the project officer was not appointed until February 2004. This person left to take a different post in August 2005. A replacement was appointed in October 2005 and stayed in post until the end of the

Programme. These project officers were based in the District Council office in Coleford, with the Council providing office accommodation and office expenses in contribution to the Programme. The project officer was managed on a day-to-day basis by the Council's community regeneration officer and worked closely with staff in the Council's Planning Department. These staff oversaw the delivery of the Landscape Strategy and Supplementary Planning Document, which were major outputs of the BOWS phase.

- 3.15. During the 'interregnum' at the start of BOWS, the Countryside Agency provided part-time cover from its regional office, supported by a part-time administrator, but this proved inadequate to maintain the momentum of the Programme during this ten month period and delayed some of the outputs of the BOWS phase.

Funding

- 3.16. The initial commitment of funding from the Countryside Agency to the first three years of the programme was £1 million. This was increased slightly during the period so that by the end of Phase 1, £1.1 million had been dispersed. A breakdown of this funding into the main outputs of Phase 1 is shown in **Figure 3.1**. Around a quarter of the total cost was spent on research defining the special qualities of the area (the Baseline Studies and the Future of Tourism study). 40% of the cost was spent on local regeneration work (the majority of this being the Local Grants Scheme) and almost 20% on administration (staffing and communication). The remaining 18% paid for local work by the Countryside Agency in one its national programmes, principally the Rural Transport Programme and Market Towns Initiative.

Figure 3.1. Breakdown of Programme costs in Phase 1

| <i>Out-turn cost to Countryside Agency April 2000 to March 2003</i> | <i>£' Thousand</i> |
|--|--------------------|
| Baseline studies | 240 |
| Landscape Character Assessment | 56 |
| Dean by Definition | 55 |
| Historic Landscape Assessment | 20 |
| Archaeological Survey | 45 |
| Biodiversity Survey | 60 |
| Preparation for Local Plan Enquiry etc | 4 |
| Local Regeneration Work | 475 |
| Local Grants Scheme | 170 |
| Environment and Rural Skills | 57 |
| Dean Oak | 28 |
| SRB 6 | 69 |
| Support for Farmers Markets | 25 |
| 'Future for Tourism' Study | 25 |
| Others | 101 |
| Mainstream Agency Programmes | 200 |
| Rural Transport Programme | 64 |
| Vital Villages (Including Parish Plans and Community Service Grants) | 33 |
| Local Heritage Initiative | 10 |
| Millennium Greens | 38 |
| Market Towns Initiative | 55 |
| Staff and communication | 197 |
| Total | 1,112 |

- 3.17. The Countryside Agency committed a further £400,000 to BOWS, spread evenly between the years 2003/4 and 2004/5. Because of the delay in recruiting and appointing staff, this funding was carried over to cover the extension of the project to June 2006.
- 3.18. Final out-turn figures were not available at the time of writing but a summary of expenditure to date provided by the District Council and Regional Development Agency is listed in **Figure 3.2**. These figures do not include expenditure on mainstream programmes in the District (such as the Single Regeneration Budget and Market Towns Initiative).

Figure 3.2. Breakdown of Programme costs during BOWS

| <i>Out-turn cost September 2003 to June 2006</i> | <i>£' Thousand</i> |
|--|--------------------|
| BOWS officer | 63 |
| Local Grants Scheme | 60 |
| Landscape Supplementary Planning Document | 30 |
| Key Wildlife Sites Survey | 7 |
| Parish Biodiversity Summaries | 13 |
| Additional support and promotional costs | 14 |
| Evaluation | 16 |
| Total | 203 |

- 3.19. The figures also do not include in-kind contributions by the District Council towards BOWS officer costs (£6,434 in 2004/05 and 2005/06), the time put in by Management Group members, other in-kind contributions from partners and communities.

CONCLUSIONS

- The way in which the Programme was managed, steered and staffed changed significantly between the two Phases.
- **Management:** At the outset, the overall direction of the Programme was determined by the Countryside Agency, with the Forest Regeneration Partnership providing advice on local delivery.
- Towards the end of Phase 1 an External Advisory Group was established. This became the BOWS Management Group which assumed a more direct role in determining the direction of the Programme, with the Countryside Agency gradually withdrawing from this commanding role.
- The Countryside Agency continued to chair meetings of the Management Group until April 2005 when this responsibility transferred to the Regional Development Agency (in line with the changed national remits of these bodies). The Countryside Agency played no further part in the Programme.
- Local representation on the Management Group was increased, but this issue was never fully resolved. Communication of the work of the Management Group to wider stakeholders was extremely limited, at least until the final months of the Programme.

- The Management Group reported formally to the Environment subgroup of the Local Strategic Partnership, but the strength of this link declined during the later stages of the Programme.
- **Staffing:** During Phase 1 the Programme was run by staff from the Countryside Agency's regional office in Bristol, who often used the Forest Enterprise office in Coleford as a local base. There was relatively little direct involvement from District Council councillors or officers in the running of the Programme, other than through representation on the Forest Regeneration Partnership (although officers were involved in several of the baseline studies and other project outputs).
- During the BOWS phase, the District Council became much more closely involved in the delivery of the Programme. The Council line managed and serviced the Project Officer and staff, particularly in the Planning Department, and took responsibility for delivering key outputs of the Programme.
- Delays in the appointment of the BOWS Project Officer, and their departure and replacement half way through this phase, meant that momentum was lost and activities delayed.
- **Funding:** The Programme has spent around £1.5M of funding provided by the Countryside Agency (latterly transferring to the RDA). Excluding expenditure in the District from the Agency's mainstream national programmes and the cost of the evaluation, the Programme allocated just over £1M, split between the baseline studies and their translation into policy (26%), local regeneration work (49%) and staffing and communication (25%).