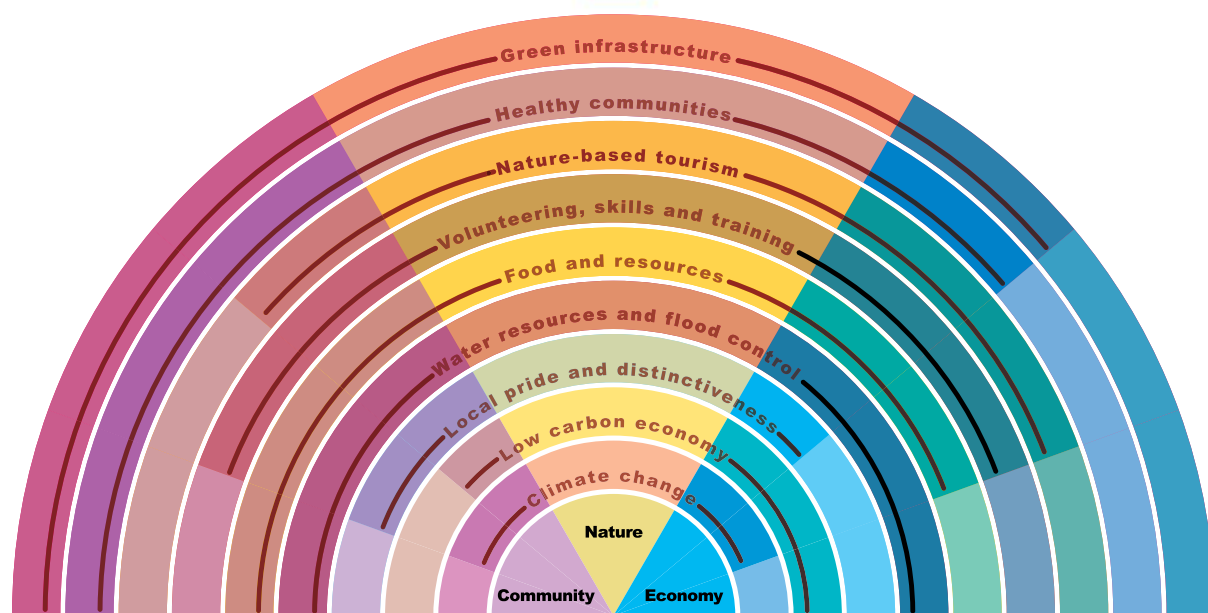




The Tees Valley Nature Partnership is a new Local Partnership that brings together a wide range of partners working to promote co-ordinated decision making between social, economic and environmental concerns, and integrating the delivery of environmental benefits and services alongside economic and social objectives.

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Ecosystem Services that our natural environment provides

# VISION

## Our vision

A rich and healthy natural environment in the Tees Valley that sustains a vibrant place for people to live, work and learn.

## Our economy, environment and society are all interconnected

Nature, people and industry have lived alongside each other in the Tees Valley for many years. The area is now diversifying its economy, attracting investment and regenerating its neighbourhoods and communities.

The rich natural assets of the Tees Valley form a vital part of our quality of life, with a healthy high quality natural environment providing the foundation to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing.

The Tees Valley, like the rest of the UK, faces many challenges in securing sustainable economic growth, maintaining vibrant healthy communities, and safeguarding and improving environmental resources. There is growing recognition that nature does not represent a constraint to economic success, but can be an asset. The challenge is how to utilise our natural environment to help our economy flourish, while also developing an economy that recognises the need to value and protect that natural environment.

Ecosystem Services refer to the vast and varied ways that the natural world, its biodiversity and its constituent ecosystems, are critically important to our well-being and economic prosperity. Natural resources (such as food, timber and water) and functioning natural systems (such as healthy, fertile soils; clean water and air; and a regulated climate) are vital support services for our wellbeing and security. We also value them in less obvious ways: contact with nature gives pleasure, provides recreation and is known to have a positive impact on long-term health and happiness.





## Structure of the Tees Valley Nature Partnership

The Tees Valley Nature Partnership was formed in 2012 and brings together environmental organisations, local authorities, government agencies, and the health and wellbeing, and business sectors. A board that provides strategic leadership, supported by a management group and delivery groups.

### Our key aspirations are:

- To be an effective unified voice to champion the Tees Valley's environment;
- To influence local plans, strategies and policies to integrate the delivery of environmental benefits and services alongside economic and social benefits, and
- To provide a strategic framework for local environmental delivery

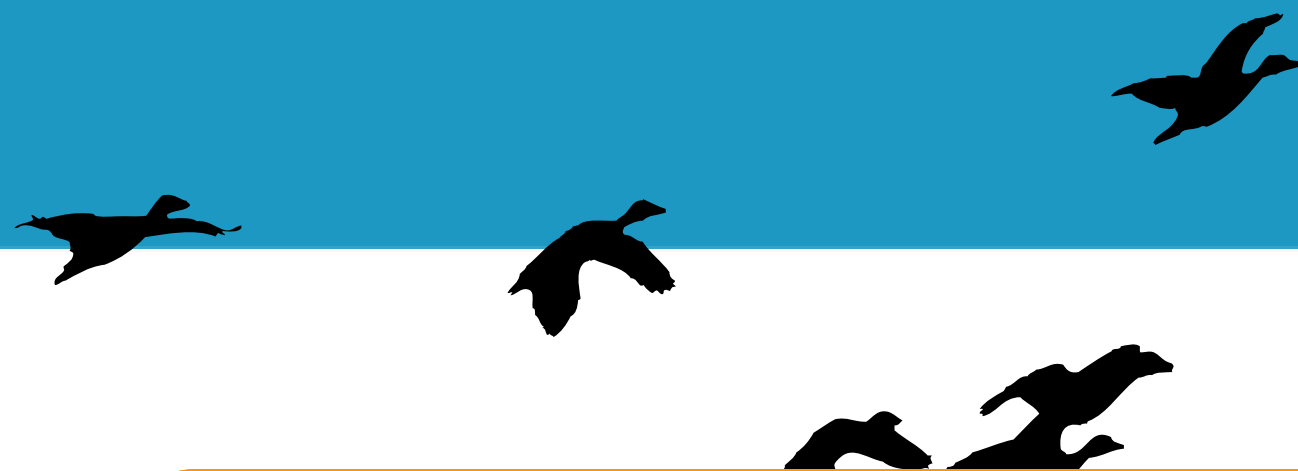
### Priorities for the Partnership

Following stakeholder consultation during the first half of 2012 a number of key priorities have been identified for the Partnership:

- Raise the profile of the Tees Valley as an attractive place to live, work or visit by championing the value and contribution of the natural environment through strong leadership, advice and support
- Contribute to the preparation, review and implementation of local plans and strategies, and influence local decision making
- Continue to work to protect and enhance the geodiversity and biodiversity of the Tees Valley ensuring the conservation, restoration and creation of key landscapes and habitats
- Work at a landscape scale to restore and deliver robust ecological networks that demonstrate a wide range of environmental, social and economic outcomes, including mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change
- Seek positive outcomes for both nature and the local economy by working closely with the economic sector by providing objective knowledge, expertise and advice
- Make positive contributions towards the health and wellbeing of local people by demonstrating the opportunities that better access to and use of the natural environment can provide
- Work closely with local communities to ensure that their views are reflected in the activities and priorities of the Partnership, and that they understand the opportunities offered by the natural environment on their doorstep.







### Tees Valley's Natural Assets

**An estuary of contrasts** - as well as being the location of nationally important port and chemical industry, there coexists a mosaic of inter-tidal and wetland habitats, including extensive mudflats, sand dunes, salt marsh, grazing marsh and saline lagoons that are internationally important for wading birds.

**Coastal and rural splendour** - in East Cleveland, extensive stretches of heather moorland habitat and open rolling farmland with small field sizes with a dense network of species-rich hedgerows. This is intersected by long steep sided beck valleys clothed in ancient semi-natural woodland with scattered remnants of lowland meadow leading to coastal cliffs which are part of the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast.

**Vibrant urban wild spaces** - an extensive well managed green infrastructure including country parks, river and beck corridors, parks and recreation grounds, allotments, churchyards and school grounds, which provide attractive places where people can experience wildlife on their doorstep.

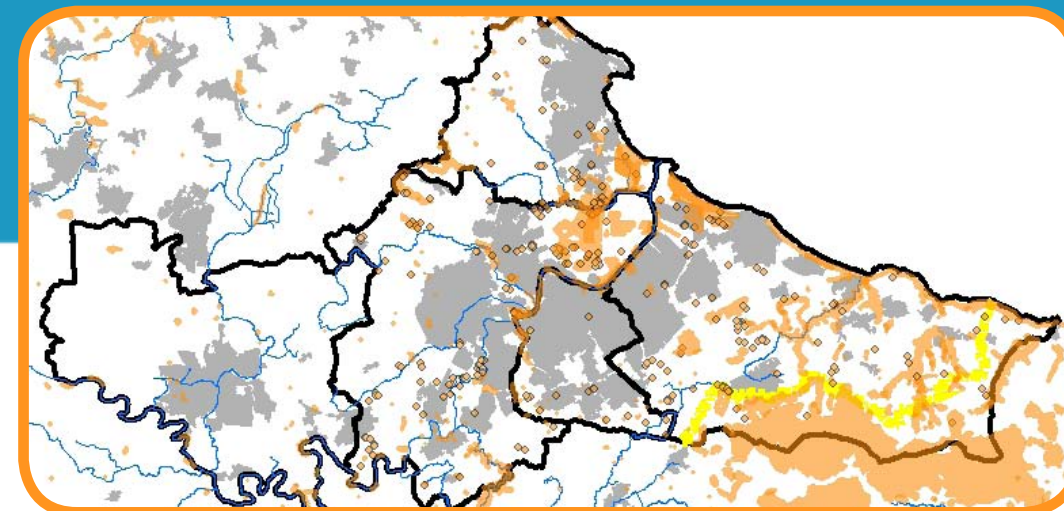
**Meandering River Tees** - defining the character of the area, the River and its tributaries are important wildlife corridors. The beck valleys in Middlesbrough are a regional stronghold for water vole, harbour seals breed at the river mouth and otters are now found throughout the Tees catchment.

**Surprising brownfield specialists** - a product of the areas industrial heritage; where weathered blast furnace slag, used for reclamation of coastal and estuarine areas, a specialised flora has developed which supports grayling and dingy skipper butterflies, and is a habitat for mammals such as brown hare, birds such as the grey partridge and skylark.



## Current Partnership activity

- **Natural Network and Opportunity Mapping** - an exercise to map components of the local ecological network, wildlife corridors and the stepping stones that connect them to identify areas for landscape scale habitat restoration or creation; an immediate use of the project will be to provide the local planning authorities with up to date information on the environment and ecological networks, helping them to develop appropriate policy responses in their local plans



- **Creation of a Landscape Partnership** - River Tees Rediscovered, whose goal is to bring back into focus the river's unique characteristics as well as celebrating its history and helping rekindle a sense of pride in the river, its heritage and surrounding communities. The partnership, led by Groundwork North East, has secured a Heritage Lottery Fund earmarked first-round pass of £1,990,000, in 2012, including £99,500 of development funding, through its Landscape Partnership programme.



- **Development of a five year Tees Valley Wild Green Places initiative** - to increase appreciation and understanding of the natural heritage of public open spaces and provide opportunities for local community and youth groups to develop skills to record and care for this heritage. The project was awarded a first round pass and development grant from Heritage Lottery Fund in March 2013 to develop a stage two application for the £760,000 project. The legacy of the project will be the increased biodiversity knowledge, skills and confidence within local communities to deliver long term development and care of wildlife in green spaces in partnership with local authorities.



- **Tees Valley Growth Ready project** - an Environment Agency and Local Enterprise Partnership led initiative to develop 'evidence products' that will facilitate new investment with speed and confidence while at the same time influencing developments to protect and enhance the environment. The project also involves mapping spatial growth priorities and overlaying these with Defra environmental information to identify potential areas of constraint and opportunity. While designed to support economic investment, the evidence and mapping exercise offers opportunities to maximise potential for biodiversity and natural environment improvement.