
Tees Valley Nature Partnership

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	Primary contact	Additional contact
Name	Susan Antrobus	Malcolm Steele
Organisation	Tees Valley Wildlife Trust	Tees Valley Unlimited
Telephone no.	01287 636382	01642 524439
Email address	Santrobus@teeswildlife.org	Malcolm.Steele@TeesValleyUnlimited.gov.uk



Tees Valley Nature Partnership

Key

FFRATV	Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Network Tees Valley
INCA	Industry Nature Conservation Association
NYMNP	North York Moors National park
NTNN	North Tees Natural Network
TVBP	Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership
TVEF	Tees Valley Environment Forum
TVLAF	Tees Valley Local Access Forum
TVNP	Tees Valley Nature Partnership
TVRIGS	Tees Valley Regionally Important Geology and Geomorphology Sites
TVU / TVLEP	Tees Valley Unlimited (Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership)
TVWT	Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Partnership	TVNP

Q.1. Description of the proposed LNP

a. The geographical location and boundary of your proposed LNP.

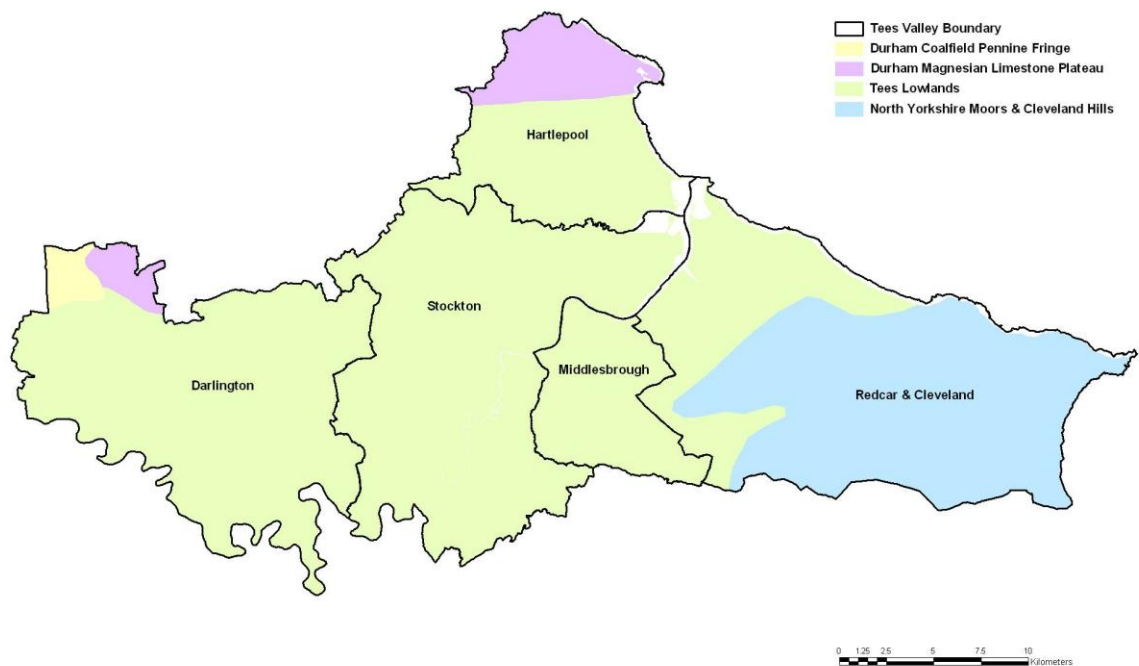
The Tees Valley administrative boundary has been selected for the proposed Tees Valley Nature Partnership (TVNP). This covers the five unitary authority areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar & Cleveland. The Tees Valley covers 800 sq. km and has a population of 650,000.

The TVNP area mainly falls into two Natural Character Areas - the Tees Lowland and the North Yorkshire Moors and Cleveland Hills. The southern edge of the Durham Magnesian Plateau and Durham Coalfield Pennine Fringe extend just within the northern section of the TVNP boundary.

The key landscape features of the area are;

- A meandering slow flowing River Tees within a broad low lying plateau of gently undulating predominantly arable farmland
- A heavily industrialised estuary dominated by large scale oil, chemical, steel and port related industries. Intertidal mudflats and salt marshes, and a network of freshwater wetlands, marshes and reed beds that provide available wildlife habitats of international importance. The Industrial areas are also characterised by distinctive calcareous brownfield habitats
- A heavily urbanised central area, with networks of green infrastructure, in particular the River Tees and beck valleys providing green corridors.
- An eastern plateau of rural character, which is predominantly pastorally farmed, with small fields surrounded by species rich hedgerows and grading into moorland habitats. This is incised by narrow steep sided heavily wooded beck valleys.

Proposed Tees Valley Nature Partnership Area



b. Your partnership's current membership and structure, including the level of involvement of the different members (feel free to use a diagram if it is helpful)

Full partnership

Through stakeholder engagement meetings and workshops the following organisations have been involved and have expressed support to be a member organisation of the TVNP.

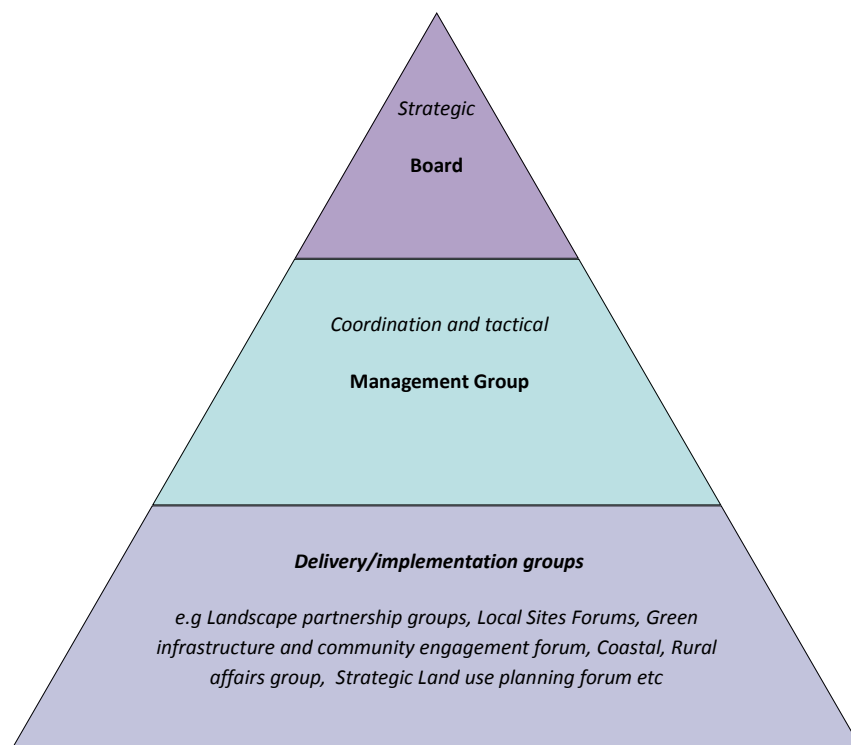
<p>Local authorities Hartlepool Borough Council Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Middlesbrough Council Darlington Borough Council Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council</p>	<p>Civil society organisations/Environmental Charities Tees Valley Wildlife Trust RSPB Groundwork North East Heritage Lottery Fund National Trust Woodland Trust CPRE Tees Valley Rural Community Council</p>
<p>Government arms length agencies Natural England Forestry Commission Environment Agency English Heritage</p>	<p>Local environmental organisations Middlesbrough Environment City Wildflower Ark Teesmouth Bird Club Cleveland Naturalists Field Club</p>
<p>National Parks North York Moors National Park</p>	<p>Local Environmental Record Centres ERIC North East</p>
<p>Universities/ Education/Learning and training organisations Teesside University University Of Durham- Stockton Campus Askham Bryan College Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme Princes Trust John Muir Trust</p>	<p>Business/industry/land use sectors Tees Valley Unlimited/Local Enterprise Partnership Industry Nature Conservation Association (INCA) Northumbrian Water Limited National Farmers Union Hartlepool Water Company Huntsman Tioxide Cleveland Potash Coast and Country Housing Ltd PD Tees Port (Harbour Authority)</p>
<p>Health, wellbeing and countryside recreation and access Tees Valley Local Access Forum Sustrans Mind Tees Valley Sport</p>	<p>Other local partnerships Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Network Tees Valley North Tees Natural Network North York Moors and Coast LEADER programme</p>

Early discussions between the membership of the Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership and the Tees Valley Environment Forum agreed that that the TVNP would both replace these two local partnerships, act as an umbrella structure for landscape-based partnerships in the Tees Valley and widen its remit to embrace other stakeholders as members. A TVNP development group was established in January 2012. The members of the group were selected by the TVBP and TVEF on the basis of their skills and knowledge and to represent a range of different organisations and skills. It is composed of the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, INCA, Tees Valley Unlimited, Environment Agency and officers from two of the five local authorities. This group has directed the work of the TVNP Development Manager to provide strategic direction for the developing partnership, to ensure wide and thorough stakeholder engagement in the development process and to develop support and engagement with key local decision makers.

Structure and governance

A draft term of reference for the TVNP has been developed. This contains the key objectives and a governance structure. This document is based on extensive consultation with a wide range of partners. The TVNP will be governed by a board, which will be serviced by a management group and delivery/implementation groups. The TVWT will act as the accountable body for the partnership. A partnership website will provide a vehicle for communication and members will have the opportunity to engage further through membership of the board, management group or via input to delivery and task and finish groups.

Conceptual structure of partnership

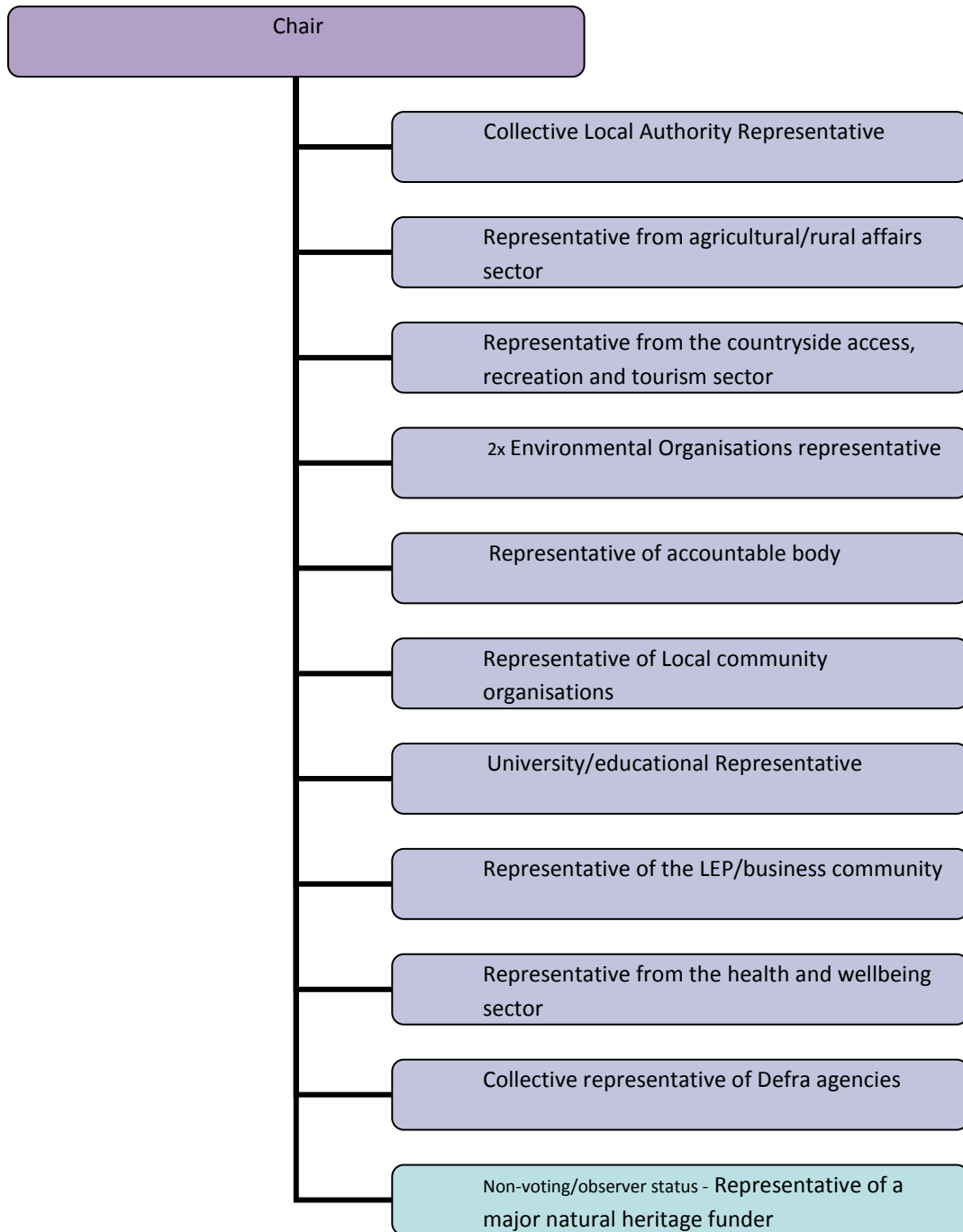


The TVNP will be steered by a representative Board. The Board will provide a strategic leadership and direction for the work of the TVNP. It will be responsible for the following roles:

- Defining the strategic priorities of the TVNP based on the aims of the Partnership
- To further develop the partnership by reviewing and developing the TVNPs strategic aims, ensuring that they remain relevant and reflect the views of the partnership and the local needs of the Tees Valley
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and performance of the TVNP to deliver integrated environmental benefits
- Champion the vision of the TVNP to ensure that this vision is communicated to wider decision makers across a diversity of sectors.

The Board will comprise of 12-15 members. Each representative will have multiple interests and will not be representing a single organisation.

Membership of the board will be comprised of the following representatives;



Q.2. We are keen to capture a summary of both what your ambitions are for an LNP in your area and an overview of the initial steps you plan to take towards it. Please:

a. Summarise what you feel the LNP role could mean for your area - what difference could your LNP make at a strategic level and how might it go about doing it?

Government recognised LNP status will provide exciting opportunities for organisations to work together to deliver a better local natural environment that will bring tangible benefits for the economy and quality of life for the people living and working in the Tees Valley.

Supported by the capacity building fund the TVNP Development Group has harnessed support from a diverse range of organisations, existing partnerships and forums to work strategically towards developing a shared vision for the Tees Valley's Natural Environment.

The process of engaging new partners especially in the economic, health and wellbeing, tourism and countryside access sectors is enabling the development of a partnership that will have broad skills. This will create an influential, credible, knowledgeable partnership that can work with other sectors to drive positive change for the Tees Valley's natural environment.

The vision of the partnership is for a rich and healthy natural environment in the Tees Valley to create a vibrant place for people to live, work and learn. The partnership aims to coordinate and strengthen local action to secure a functioning, sustainable and resilient bio-diverse natural environment to improve the health, well-being and livelihoods of people in the Tees Valley.

The key aspirations of the Partnership are;

- To be a strong unified voice to champion the local natural environment
- To influence local plans, strategies and decision making for multiple benefits
- To provide a strategic framework for local environmental delivery.

The TVNP will consolidate the existing local nature-based partnerships such as the Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership, The Tees Valley Environment Forum, North Tees Natural Network, and Stockton Green Infrastructure Partnership into one framework. The addition of other sectors into the TVNP will increase influence and broaden the skills base and so enable enhanced delivery.

Through stakeholder consultation the following aims were developed. These will focus delivery on the partnerships aspirations;

- Raise the profile of the Tees Valley as an attractive place to live, work or visit by championing the value of the natural environment
- Influence key plans, strategies and decisions on the natural environment and its value to social and economic outcomes
- 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 to restore ecological networks by developing landscape scale biodiversity enhancements that deliver integrated environmental outcomes, including supporting activities that help mitigate or adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Seek positive outcomes for both nature and the local economy by working with the Tees Valley Enterprise Partnership and the economic sector by providing objective ecological knowledge and expertise, advice and guidance
- Make positive contributions towards the health and wellbeing of local people by improving the local natural environment and increasing people's access to it.
- Work in partnership with local communities to ensure they have opportunities for learning, engagement, participation and decision making on their local environment

b. Provide a high level summary of the key actions you plan to undertake in the first 6 months if you become a Government-recognised LNP – ideally in a table / list of bullet points of not more than 2 pages.

Theme	Action
Partnership structure and working arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise terms of reference. • Complete process of establishment of board members, elect chair and set up the management group. • Conduct a skills audit / skills gap analysis of the partnership. • Establish delivery groups and their membership based on strategic priorities. • MoAs with member organisations in place.
Vision and strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a shared vision and strategic priorities for the Tees Valley natural environment • Develop a delivery plan to achieve measurable outputs for strategic priorities. • Contribute to Defra’s national environment objectives in the Tees Valley by working with local representatives of the Defra agencies to scope opportunities for joint delivery of schemes/projects
Landscape scale working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on work already undertaken for Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan and Green Infrastructure Strategy to map key natural assets and ecological networks. This will provide a knowledge base to inform local authority plans and underpin the development of landscape scale working • Establish shared priorities for the location and outcomes of landscape scale projects in the Tees Valley • Review mechanisms and opportunities for delivery of other elements of the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise communication strategy and build the identity of the partnership by; • Holding a launch event. • Developing the partnership communication website to create a comprehensive web based information resource on the Tees Valley natural environment for all sectors. • Promoting the publication of the vision and strategic priorities report as a means to engage other sectors and develop opportunities for joint working • Establish liaison mechanisms with other bodies and fora. • Establish mechanisms for cross boundary working

	with neighbouring LNPs
Championing and development work with Economic, health and wellbeing and Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a mechanism with TVLEP, Tees Industry Nature Conservation Association (INCA) and the Defra family to provide local ecological intelligence to inform economic development and strategic spatial planning, and demonstrate the benefits and opportunities provided by the Tees Valley’s natural environment • Champion the role of the natural environment and the role it plays to the local economy to local businesses and industry by working in partnership with industry and business networks and forums, e.g Tees Valley Business Club, Tees Valley Green Business Network, INCA, Local Authority based Business forums, and Teesside University • Produce a briefing note in liaison with the Health and Wellbeing Sector on the benefits of a functioning natural environment, and use it as a communication tool to stimulate greater joint working. • Undertake a review of current support and resources to support local neighbourhood community participation and volunteering for wildlife. This will inform a funding application for a Tees Valley wide initiative to engage with communities and provide sustainable support for greater participation in local environment projects
Input into Local Plans under NPPF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree, in consultation with the local planning authorities, a process for commenting on relevant local plans and other strategies
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding for coordination and servicing of the partnership. • Start delivery of the funding strategy with a partnership landscape funding opportunity mapping exercise. • Explore opportunities for greater collaborative working between partner bodies - avoiding duplication and maximising use of limited resources.

Q3. Describe any progress you have made towards developing, and/or how you plan to develop, a strategic vision for your area and how you plan to use your vision to inform your work and priorities

An agreed strategic vision will be fundamental in guiding the work of the Partnership. In developing and implementing the vision the Partnership will be looking to build on past successes as well as preparing to meet current and future aspirations. The Tees Valley is about its people (including a number of severely disadvantaged communities), its industry and the need for more jobs, and its

important (in some cases internationally important) natural environment. The vision should therefore cover the following;

- A rationale for the value of natural environment and the services and opportunities that nature provides
- The value of the Tees Valley's natural assets and their relationship with where people live and work
- An assessment of key challenges affecting the Tees Valley natural environment
- The key ambitions which will include priorities for restoration and enhancement of the natural environment at landscape scale and increasing the role of the environment in enhancing people's quality of life and delivering successful regeneration and quality of place.

The vision for Tees Valley Natural Environment needs to be one that is valued and shared by the partnership, to ensure ownership and commitment, and one that also supports the economic and social 'visions' for the Tees Valley. The TVNP development group has held discussions with key stakeholders about the vision and it formed part of the stakeholder workshops. A simple vision statement was agreed as

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

There is a consensus within the developing Partnership that the vision should include the following areas in its scope;

- maintaining and enhancing existing natural environment assets
- creating new habitats where appropriate to reflect local priorities for species and habitats, and in particular working alongside developers, local authorities and others to encourage new habitat creation as part of new development and regeneration schemes
- supporting the development of a green infrastructure network that not only helps to link disconnected habitats but also provides opportunities for enhancement, creation, better access, and mitigates for climate change
- providing a natural environment close to peoples' doorsteps; better opportunities for access can lead to health, educational, and cultural benefits
- a natural environment that contributes to the Tees Valley's 'quality of place' and supports ambitions to secure new investment and jobs
- working with communities and local people, ensuring that the natural environment contributes to 'quality of life'
- helping the natural environment to become more resilient to the effects of climate change
- supporting the transition to a green/low carbon economy (while protecting the natural environment); examples include environmental stewardship, helping with local food production, and the re-use of degraded land

The vision will build on strategic work on the natural environment already undertaken in the Tees Valley. In particular;

- Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan (Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership)

- Tees Valley Environment Statement 2011 (Tees Valley Environment Forum)
- Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy 2008 (Tees Valley Unlimited)
- Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy 2010 (Tees Valley Unlimited)
- North East Strategy for the Environment 2008 (North East Environment Forum)
- Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast European Marine Site Management Scheme 2009 (Habitats Regulations Relevant Authorities)

The vision will give the Partnership a strong unified voice and a clear shared focus. It will be used to drive the work of the Partnership by acting as:

- A communication tool especially with other sectors
- A basis for setting priorities and objectives and a framework for delivery and monitoring

Q.4. Describe how the individuals and organisations in your current membership reflects the range of skills, expertise, interests and level of authority needed to become an effective LNP and how you will address any gaps.

The membership of the TVNP will be composed of individuals and organisations that bring wide range of specialist skills, knowledge and expertise that will be required to deliver the broad aims of the partnership.

Area of expertise base	Expertise in current membership
Knowledge of local ecological resources and networks	TVWT, Wildflower Ark, INCA, RSPB, TVWT, Teesmouth Bird club, NYMNP, Defra agencies, Cleveland Naturalists
Ecological survey, monitoring, data and mapping	Wildflower Ark, INCA, RSPB, NE ERIC, TVWT, Woodland Trust, Teesmouth Bird club, Defra agencies, Cleveland Naturalists
Strategic green infrastructure planning	TVU, local authorities, Natural England, Groundwork North East
Green infrastructure delivery	Local authorities, Groundwork North East, TVWT
Land use planning policy and strategy	Local authorities, TVU, NYMNP
Rural policies, grants and programmes Rural issues, forestry and agriculture	Natural England, Forestry Commission Tees Valley Rural Community Council, NFU, NYMNP, Woodland Trust, CPRE
River catchment management	Environment Agency, Tees Rivers Trust, TVWT, NWL and Hartlepool Water
Coastal Management	PD Teesport, Local Authorities, Marine Management Organisation, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, Natural England, Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water, British Waterways, TVWT
Wider sector policy and strategy (e.g. economic, waste, transport, health)	Local authorities, TVU/LEP, Defra agencies, INCA

Wildlife and Countryside legislation	INCA, Hartlepool Borough Council, TVWT, Environment Agency, Natural England, , NYMNP
Industrial environmental regulation	TVU/LEP, INCA, Hartlepool Borough Council, Huntsman Tioxide, Defra agencies, Teesside University. NWL and Hartlepool Water, Environment Agency
Green technologies, low carbon economy	Teesside University, TVU/LEP, INCA
Funding applications and grant funding management on environmental projects	HLF, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Groundwork, RSPB, Middlesbrough Environment City, Wildflower Ark, NYMNP
Community engagement in local environment	TVWT, Groundwork, Wildflower Ark, Middlesbrough Environment City, local authorities, Woodland Trust, NYMNP, Defra agencies, Tees Archaeology, TVRIGS Local authorities e.g. partnership projects like Boro Becks
Environmental education	TVWT, Groundwork, MEC, RSPB, Teesmouth Field centre, local authorities, University Of Durham- Stockton, Askham Bryan College, Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, Princes Trust, John Muir Trust
Geology and geodiversity and industrial heritage	TV RIGS Group, NYMNP, Tees Archaeology
Countryside access and recreation	TVLAF, local authorities, TVWT, NYMNT
Climate change strategy and mitigation	TVU, local authorities, Teesside University/CLEMANCE
Habitat management, restoration and creation	TVWT, RSPB, Wildflower Ark, local authorities, Woodland Trust
Countryside access and recreation	TVLAF, local authorities, TVWT, NYMNT, Sustrains, Tees Valley Sport, National Trust
Health and well-being	Local authorities, Mind, Natural England, Walking Way to Health Partnerships, Coast and Country Ltd

The partnership has a particularly well-developed skills base and experience in the following areas;

Green infrastructure – The value of green infrastructure as an essential ingredient in rebuilding the local economy and creating sustainable and vibrant communities has been well recognised at a strategic level in the Tees Valley. The publication of the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy by Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (now TVU) and partners in 2008 was widely regarded as national pioneer of good practice for the strategic planning of green infrastructure and its value to economic regeneration. The strategy has created a framework for green space planning in local authorities, especially in Stockton-on Tees which has published its own green infrastructure plan (2011) with a delivery plan. The senior officers responsible for the project management of these strategies at TVU and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will be members of the TVBP management group.

Strong working relationships with economic sector - INCA has a track record over its 20 year existence of delivering benefits for both industry and the natural environment. INCA is a membership organisation which operates in Tees Valley on a not-for-profit basis. It has over 50 members including most of the major chemical, waste, and power generation businesses in Tees Valley, regulators, conservation organisations, and local authorities. INCA provides advice and support to help businesses meet regulatory requirements in development and operation. It encourages and facilitates the ecological improvement of industrial and commercial land holdings. Their work ranges from survey and advice on proposed developments, reports on the likely impacts on the natural environment as part of COMAH and IPPC submissions, habitat creation and land management. The HM Government publication "Report on the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives Implementation Review" (March 2012) cites INCA as an example of good collaborative working with industry. INCA is bringing this considerable expertise and industrial links to the partnership with their Director being on the TVNP's Management Group.

Tees Valley Unlimited as the LEP builds on more than a decade of successful local partnership work to lead and co-ordinate the development of the Tees Valley economy. Its membership of the partnership and representation at both Board and Management Group level will bring key intelligence and skills including demographic trends and modelling, economic strategists, transport planners, investment managers and strong links to businesses operating in the locality.

Community participation

The high level of urbanisation of the Tees Valley has resulted in a strong focus on involvement of communities in green space management with the provision of schemes and projects to actively engage people in improving their local environment. Environmental projects working in areas of multiple deprivation have created expertise in building community pride, developing skills within the community, and delivering regeneration schemes through the natural environment. These skills will be represented at board, management group and delivery groups level.

Ecological expertise

The TVBP, through developing and delivering the local TVBAP, has established a strong base of ecological expertise on the Tees Valley natural environment and experience of delivering habitat restoration and creation schemes. The full range of this expertise will be carried forward to the TVNP.

In developing the partnership, a wider range of relationships have been established within large organisations to ensure a range of skills and networking opportunities. Within local authorities and the Defra agencies, the partnership has been engaging with officers from different sectors to bring in wider knowledge and influence than was currently available to previous local partnerships. Within local authorities there are links with officers in planning, rights of way, economic regeneration, health and wellbeing and tourism, as well as countryside and green space teams.

For the partnership to be successful, it is vital that representatives from organisations can effectively disseminate information and expertise within their own organisations. We are currently developing mechanisms to assist this communication. The partnership is working hard to establish a culture of "what can I do for my partnership, rather than what will the partnership do for me", based on the successful supportive culture that the TVBP achieved.

There remains a need to bring in expertise and knowledge from the health and well-being sector, and also to widen contact within the local economic sector. These are both priorities for the first six

months of the partnership. We plan to develop this through local authority and TVU members on the partnership.

Q.5. Describe how you have involved and engaged, and / or how you plan to involve and engage, wider interests who may not be represented in your membership in your work.

The TVNP has established a broad membership base and will continue to engage with a wide range of cross-sector interests. It is recognised that it will not be practical for the partnership to actively engage with all potential organisations and interests all of the time. A communication strategy is currently being developed to ensure opportunities for engagement with wider interests. This will include;

- Development of a partnership website as an information resource with access portals for different sectors of interest
- The use of web-based and social media tools to communicate news and information
- The role of board members in championing the partnership within their sectors
- The role of all partnership members in communicating within their own organisations.
- Engaging with other networks to promote awareness and understanding of the TVNP.

The partnerships close working relationship with the Tees Valley Unlimited, Tees Valley Food , Farming and Rural Affairs Network, INCA and the Tees Valley Local Access Forum will provide access to a wide set of networks for broader communication. Communication at parish and community level will be developed through partnerships with neighbourhood services of local authorities and the partnership's planned Tees Valley Community Green start project.

Q.6. Describe any progress you have made towards establishing, and / or how you will establish, the partnership's credibility in the area and ensure it has the ability to effectively engage and collaborate with a range of local senior decision makers.

The TVNP development group, during the capacity building process, have used their extensive network of professional relationships to engage with senior representatives across sectors of key organisations in the Tees Valley to create opportunities for discussions. Their commitment to the developing TVNP and ability to speak confidently about the multiple benefits of a LNP for the Tees Valley has resulted in strong engagement by senior representatives and support to play roles in shaping the developing partnership. A detailed telephone survey by an independent communication specialist has recorded a high level of confidence in the developing TVNP and strong consensus in its planned role and activities.

Key engagement activities with senior decision makers to date/planned;

- **Tees Valley LEP**
There is a strong relationship with Tees Valley Unlimited, which has developed from an understanding of the value of the local environment by TVU based on their involvement in chairing the TVBP for the past 10 years and until recently hosting a climate change coordination and tourism development function. The Managing Director of TVU and other senior officers have been involved in shaping the terms of reference of the TVNP.
- **Local Authorities**

The partnership has engaged with the Directors of Regeneration and Environment of all five Tees Valley local authorities. This has been achieved through a presentation by the TVNP Development Group at a joint meeting. This resulted in discussions on the benefits of TVNP and future resourcing of the Partnership. As a result of this the Directors commissioned Hartlepool Borough Council to carry out a study investigating the opportunities for the Tees Valley Local Nature Partnership and the Tees Valley Local Authorities and TVU/LEP to work together. The report has been completed and will be discussed by the Local Authority Directors with the TVNP in June.

- **Business Community**

The partnership is developing relationships with Tees Valley industries and business forums through the extensive networks managed by INCA and the TVU .

- **Rural communities**

The existing strong relationship between TVWT and the Tees Valley Rural Community Council (TVRCC) has enabled the partnership to work closely with the developing Tees Valley Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Network that is hosted by TVRCC . The Chief Executive of TVWT is leading on the environmental aspects of the Network and chairing its environmental working group.

- **Local Strategic Partnership Groups**

Four members of the TVNP development group are also members of the Tees Valley Environment Forum. This forum will be merged into the TVNP once it is formalised. The forum is made up of the chairs' of the Local Strategic Partnership Environment groups in the five local authorities and as a result brings opportunities to engage with senior decision makers of the LSP.

- **Low carbon economy**

The TVEF engaged with Teesside University (Clean Environment Management Centre), Groundwork, TVU and others on tackling some of the key environmental challenges in the Tees Valley, including low carbon economy and climate change and culminating in a Tees Valley Environment Statement. These close links will help the TVNP explore potential economic opportunities around the natural environment and the move to a low carbon economy.

- **Health and Well-being**

The partnership is at an early stage of developing links with the Health and Wellbeing Boards. We are developing communications through the local authorities Directors of Service.

To enable TVNP to have the level of influence required to meet its ambitions for the Tees Valley's natural environment a high-level board is being established which will provide strategic leadership and direction and vision of the TVNP to ensure that this vision is communicated to wider decision makers across a variety of sectors. The board will be comprised of representatives of environment, economic, health and wellbeing and community sectors (Question 1 b). To carry out this function

the board members need to have the ability to represent and be accountable for the wider interests of their sector at Partnership meetings. The TVNP development group is working on populating the board structure with people who are able to carry out the function at the appropriate level. For example it has been agreed the representative for the 5 local authorities will be one of the Directors of Regeneration and Environment and that the representative of the Defra arms lengths bodies is likely to be Richard Hall of Natural England who has extensive experience of working on strategic environmental and regeneration issues in the Tees Valley. Ivor Crowther, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the North East, will be bringing his extensive knowledge of the grant funding sector.

Q.7. Describe any progress you have made towards ensuring, and / or how you will ensure, that the LNP has effective and accountable governance and decision-making processes.

The TVNP will be governed by a Board, which will be serviced by a Management Group and Delivery/Implementation Groups A draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Partnership has been drawn up by the TVBP development group based on discussions and workshops with current and potential Partnership member organisations. The ToR outlines the purpose of the Partnership, its vision, strategic aims, structure and governance. The draft has been communicated to the wider Partnership through meetings and via the TVNP communication website. Feedback has been positive. Mechanisms will be put in place to ensure good communication within all levels of representation of the Partnership. A key role will be that of a dedicated Partnership Coordinator who will manage communications and act as an LNP anchor point. Achieving effective communication and transparent and inclusive decision making whilst keeping the Partnership meetings streamlined will be focus of a discussion at a Partnership conference which would be held soon after the Partnership is confirmed.

Full partnership

Membership of the TVNP will be open to any organisation which is interested in furthering the work of the Partnership. The full Partnership will convene at an annual Partnership forum event. The function of the annual forum will be

- To review and celebrate the previous year's achievements of the TVNP and its member organisations
- To review the future strategic direction and work programme of the TVNP and its member organisations
- To enable partners to share knowledge, best practice and to network.

Accountable body

The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust (TVWT) will be the accountable body of the Partnership. This role will include

- Establishing and maintaining effective systems
- Administering and taking responsibility for funding including ensuring structural financial procedures
- Ensuring that funding resources are spent according to agreed plans and priorities
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems of auditing and monitoring spend
- Having the responsibility for employing any staff to carry out the coordination of the Partnership

Function of the Board

The TVNP will be steered by a Board. The Board will provide a strategic leadership and direction for the work of the TVNP. It will be responsible for the following roles:

- To define the strategic priorities of the TVNP based on the aims of the Partnership
- To develop further the Partnership by reviewing and developing the TVNPs strategic aims, ensuring that they remain relevant and reflect the views of the Partnership and the local needs of the Tees Valley
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and performance of the TVNP to deliver integrated environmental benefits
- To champion the vision of the TVNP and to ensure that this vision is communicated to wider decision makers across a diversity of sectors.

The Board will comprise of up to 12 members. Each representative will have multiple interests and will not be representing a single organisation. (*see structure in Q2*)

Processes and procedures of the board

- The Board will meet a minimum of twice a year to set strategic direction and monitor progress
- Meetings will be minuted and, where appropriate, action points will be identified with the individuals or groups responsible shown.
- The Board will elect a Chair and a Vice Chair on a biennial basis. Board membership will be for a three year term with two terms of office as a maximum.
- Secretariat will be provided initially by the TVWT.
- Where possible the Board will make decisions based on consensus and agreement. If this is not possible then decisions will be taken by a majority vote of the Board members, with the meeting Chair having the casting vote. For a vote to be quorate at least one third of the Board members must be present.
- The business of the board and decisions taken will be communicated on the Partnership website.

Management Group and delivery groups

The work of the Board will be underpinned by a Management Group. Its role will be

- To monitor, action and review progress against the Partnerships objectives
- To implement strategic decisions of the board by developing delivery mechanisms
- To support the board with knowledge, expertise and recommendations as required
- To provide a communication link between the board and the delivery groups to ensure effective working

Members of the Management Group will be drawn from existing Environmental Partnerships in the Tees Valley and new members from other sectors such a Health and Well Being to meet the broader aims of the Partnership

Membership of the delivery groups will also be from Partnership members. The number and remit of these groups will be fluid to meet the developing needs of the Partnership. It is anticipated that some of these will be able to function effectively as email groups. Others will be Task and Finish Groups.

Expectations and role of Board Members will be to

- Champion the work of the Partnership to relevant partners, organisations and networks
- Provide strategic input into the key decisions of the board relating to vision, strategic objectives and delivery plans

- Actively seek opportunities to influence the strategy and plans of relevant organisations and groups to further the aspirations of the Partnership
- Represent and be accountable for the wider interests of their sector at Partnership meetings
- Operate in an open, responsive and accountable manner that adheres at all times to high standards and ethics and governance of public life

The role of the Board Chair

The principal duties and responsibilities of the Chair will be to:

- Build support for the vision and aspirations of the Partnership by acting as an influential advocate
- Chair Board meetings, having regard for the agreed procedures of the Partnership, fulfilling these duties in a manner that is free of political influence or bias
- Represent the Partnership, acting as a spokesperson at appropriate events, forums and meetings
- Ensure a culture of mutual respect, partnership working and quality of opportunity for the Partnership
- Ensure that the views of the wider Partnership are represented and taken into account during decision making in order to deliver integrated benefits for the natural environment.

Q.8. Describe how your partnership plans to embed the value of the natural environment into the strategic planning and decision making of others, particularly the economic and health and wellbeing sectors.

The TVNP's vision will set out a series of environmental ambitions which are relevant to and supported by the economic and health and well-being sectors. This positions the LNP as partner in the challenge to improve life in the Tees Valley. A high level of engagement achieved through the capacity building period has seen growing support for an LNP particularly from the economic sector, with the Local Authority Directors of Environment and Regeneration and the Chief Executive of the LEP confirming their support for a Tees Valley LNP and their willingness to engage with it at a senior level. Continued engagement at this level will allow the TVNP to make an early and positive contribution to the development of strategic plans and decision making in these sectors.

One particular area of shared concern is the role of the natural environment in changing perceptions of the Tees Valley as a place to live, work and invest, especially to those external to the region.

Members of the TVNP have experience of an early and positive contribution to planning and decision making. The Report of the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives Implementation Review published in March 2012 includes a case study on the value of agreeing evidence requirements upfront concerning the £300m new container port in the Tees Estuary, saying "This pro-active engagement provided a degree of certainty on what constituted appropriate evidence and ultimately enabled the development to be approved without the requirement for further evidence to be provided." The Review also found that all stakeholder groups wanted to work within a culture founded on partnership working and focussed on efficient delivery and found good examples of collaborative working via private sector-led Industry Nature Conservation Association (INCA) partnerships in the Tees Valley. This approach is valued by the environment sector in the Tees Valley and the economic interests with which it recognises it must engage. It is by promoting this can-do attitude that the

TVNP believes it has opened doors to future engagement in strategic planning and decision making and is not seen as being an impediment to the area's economic regeneration and growth.

At the local level TVNP members are already working alongside developers and planners on Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments with two of the Tees Valley Local Authorities and are contributing to the development of all of the area's Local Plans. The LNP intends to take a pro-active role in supporting the Local Authorities' strategic planning by helping them to address objectives set out in the National Planning Policy Framework including "planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.." (Paragraph 114) and by setting out a "plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries' which will 'identify and map components of the local ecological network, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation". (Paragraph 117)

The Tees Valley LEP has already recognised the role that the TVNP could play in shaping and supporting activity in the area's Enterprise Zones, ensuring that green infrastructure is used to support sustainable development of the zones and that the potential for any positive biodiversity contribution is realised.

Health and well-being is an important issue in urban and rural deprived wards of the Tees Valley. The TVNP has recognised this as an issue in which it can make a valuable contribution. Work to date has focussed on the role of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments as a mechanism for raising the profile and potential of the natural environment's contribution in this area.

A number of projects have been undertaken by LNP members relating to health issues such as obesity and heart disease, but specific interest has been generated among health professionals in the Tees Valley by a research project that is being sponsored by a member of the LNP into the opportunities and benefits of "nature-based interventions" in tackling mental ill health.

Mental illness is a growing concern in the developed world with an estimated one in six individuals suffering from a 'significant' mental health problem and one in four experiencing mental illness at some time in their lives. Sufferers of anxiety and depression are commonplace and by 2020 it is predicted that depression will be the second most common cause of disability in the developed world.

The positive relationship between exposure to nature and an individual's health is continually being proved, yet while the concept is not revolutionary, it has yet to significantly influence the planning of public health and social care priorities. The research project has been approved by the NHS and is examining the benefits for mental health of conservation volunteering and building a case for refining projects and programmes so that they can be offered specifically to support people with mental health problems. Funding has been made available for a series of pilot projects which will allow the conservation sector to work closely with local commissioners of services for people with mental health needs.

Q.9. Describe how you see the LNP adding value to the range of other local projects and initiatives concerned with the sustainable management of the natural environment in your area, including any Nature Improvement Areas, biodiversity off-set pilots and catchment partnerships and other land management initiatives.

The LNP will add value to existing projects and initiatives by aligning plans and priorities to the shared vision for Tees Valley's natural environment. The prime offer of the LNP to existing partnerships and initiatives are the skills, expertise, interests and level of authority that can add value and give support to their work.

Currently there are no Nature Improvement Areas identified in the Tees Valley, although three landscape-scale initiatives are developing; the "River Tees Rediscovered" Landscape Partnership, the North Tees Natural Network and an East Cleveland Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area (IBDA). The first two of these have strong partnerships and good links to the industrial and business sectors, but may benefit from the LNP's links to wider communities and Health and Wellbeing sectors. East Cleveland has lower capacity to develop partnership working and the LNP will be valuable in assisting with the development of this capacity, with links to strategic planning and to rural economic issues through the Food and Farming Network.

Similarly, no Catchment Partnerships have been identified in the Tees Valley, although there is a strong partnership operating on Middlesbrough's urban watercourses; the "Beck Valleys". This partnership has representation from the Environment Agency, Local Authority, Water Company and the voluntary sector. There is an acknowledged weakness in working across administrative boundaries and the LNP should be in a position to ensure the good work of the partnership can extend into adjacent Local Authority area's to ensure benefits are realised over the wider river catchment.

Q.10. Describe the opportunities you see for funding the delivery of your aims, for instance by aligning and targeting local resources and sources of funding, and how you plan to support the running of the partnership.

To achieve the ambitious vision of the TVNP a there is a need to look beyond the limited sources of funding currently available for nature conservation objectives.

Funding multiple benefits of a healthy natural environment

A key element of the Partnership's funding strategy is researching opportunities to access funding from other sectors by demonstrating the role of a healthy natural environment and the ecosystem services it provides. Opportunities to improve green infrastructure linked to economic regeneration will be sought by close working with Tees Valley LEP and the local authorities. There are also opportunities to harness health funding, and the Partnership will explore opportunities with the health and well-being sector. For example the TVWT has a Mental Health and Nature-Based Intervention project researching the evidence base of mental health benefits of wildlife conservation volunteering. The project is designed to enable access to funding through health funding programmes

Maximising ecological benefits of agri-environment schemes locally

TVNP will provide local intelligence on ecological networks and demonstrate opportunities and priorities for landscape scale restoration and enhancement. It will work closely with the Defra agencies and the Tees Valley Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Network to maximise the value of agri-

environment schemes and catchment sensitive farming which will support landscape scale improvements for the Tees Valley

Delivering an enhanced natural environment through the planning and development process

Working within the new National Planning Policy Framework the Partnership will build on the work of the existing Biodiversity Partnership to shape local planning policy, to ensure the natural environment is given appropriate protection and to help deliver enhancements through the development process and Community Infrastructure Levy. At the local level, the partnership would support the integration of biodiversity objectives into local and neighbourhood plans.

Landscape-scale projects

There are significant opportunities for funding for landscape scale work through HLF's Landscape Partnership scheme. This is however a highly competitive process and is currently an oversubscribed scheme, with only the very best projects achieving funding. The application process to stage 1 has significant staff resource costs, which are currently difficult for applying organisations to bear. To underpin successful applications the TVNP should take the lead in providing ecological priorities and wider liaison with the wider heritage sector, in particular to develop a landscape partnership for East Cleveland and to support the River Tees Rediscovered application currently awaiting Stage 1 approval.

Delivering community engagement aims

To deliver the aims of supporting participation at the parish and community level in improving and caring for their local environment, the partnership is developing a £400,000 five year project "Tees Valley Green Start". The project's objective is to make sustainable biodiversity improvements to a selection of public green spaces throughout the Tees Valley by empowering local community groups to be actively involved in the planning and delivery of practical habitat creation and conservation projects. The legacy of the project will be increased biodiversity knowledge, skills and confidence within existing and new community groups to deliver long term development and management of green spaces in partnership with the relevant local authorities. Feedback from a pre-application to the Heritage Lottery fund has been favourable. A stage 1 bid is currently being written and sources of match funding investigated.

Cost-neutral green space improvements

Large capital investment is not always required to improve the natural environment. Significant improvements to the natural value of green spaces, both urban and rural, can be achieved by a change in management approaches and practices based on ecological expertise that can be cost-neutral or save money. For example Darlington Borough Council has reduced the management costs of amenity grassland whilst establishing biodiversity benefits. The TVNP plans to facilitate the sharing of Darlington's experiences of the practical challenges and issues of public perception with other local authorities to develop new ways of working that benefit maintenance budgets, local people and the natural environment.

A practical example of TVNP's approach to funding landscape scale environmental improvements is the restoration of woodland management at a landscape scale. During 2010-12 the TVBP undertook a detailed ecological condition assessment of the ancient woodland resource in the Tees Valley. This was funded by the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, the Forestry Commission and Natural England. The TVNP plans to translate the research into sustainable forestry management. This will be achieved by the following;

- Assisting the Forestry Commission to target EWGS funding to woodland landowners in the Tees Valley by providing data and information on management needs
- Supporting the economic woodland management by investigating opportunities for the development of the local wood fuel market with TVU, Forestry Commission and the Tees Valley Food, Farming and Rural Affairs forum.
- Applying for grant funding from landfill tax for the management of a number of key woodlands

Resourcing the Partnership

The TVNP consider that the funding of the administrative function of the accountable body (TVWT) and a coordinator to service the partnership is key to ensuring a sustainable partnership that can meet its ambitious cross sector objectives. The TVWT is able to transfer existing funding for the current TVBP Coordinator post to fund a TVBP Development Manager until September 2013. This will provide the new partnership with a secretariat role, enable continued progress on widening the membership and to develop the partnerships vision and working practices. Discussions have taken place with the Environment and Regeneration Directors of the five local authorities on the opportunity for creating a new memorandum of agreement to continue the role of the coordinator beyond September 2013. They recognised the need for joint support from all the Local authorities and its value for money. This is one of the subjects being addressed in a scoping report that Hartlepool Borough Council has undertaken on behalf of all 5 local authorities due to be discussed by the Tees Valley Directors of Place (Environment and Regeneration Heads of Service).

For an effective partnership many organisations need to have a strong commitment to contributing resources, in terms of staff time, to attend partnership meetings, and to work on communications and task and finish projects between meetings. This has a staff cost to all organisations and in particular non government organisations where staff costs are not core funded. Local authorities and agencies, in a climate of increasing pressure on staff resources, are also reviewing and rationalising attendance at meetings by their staff and travel costs across all sectors. It is therefore vital that the TVNP has effective meetings that meet the needs and benefit all of attending partners. The scoping report being carried out by the local authorities on the TVNP will also address issues of maximising efficiency and rationalising existing partnerships so that existing resources are focused and directed through the TVNP.

Tees Valley and a future TVNP benefit from INCA already having strong links including funding from the Tees Valley's Process Industry sector. This is a resource that is already in place and will enable objective ecological advice to be provided to the business sector from a proven and already funded partner organisation.

Q.11. Describe why your boundary is the most appropriate one for your LNP and why any overlaps are necessary. Please also tell us about what you have agreed with neighbouring LNPs about how you will work together, including how any overlaps will be managed or resolved.

The Tees Valley is acknowledged as a functional economic area, which is reflected in the travel to work patterns, retail catchments, housing market areas and the key economic sectors. TVNP boundary matches the administrative boundaries of the five local authorities. Although there are five unitary local authorities they work closely on strategic issues across all key sectors acting as a recognised sub region. The boundary also matches that of the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (Tees Valley Unlimited) and the Tees Valley Rural Community Council and the one of

Defra's Food and Farming Networks (Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Tees Valley). During stakeholder meetings there was complete consensus on the boundary of the partnership both within and outside of the Tees Valley, with no overlaps with neighbouring LNPs. However it is recognised that whilst the Tees Valley is a tight administrative and economic unit it is also part of wider landscape and ecological networks, with cross boundary natural processes illustrated by landscape scale projects and river catchment work. For example the River Tees catchments are shared with three other LNPs and joint working will be needed on the control of aquatic invasive species. Part of the North York Moors National Park is within the TVNP boundary and close liaison will be necessary with the North Yorkshire LNP.

Effective methods for sharing information and ideas have been discussed with LNPs in the North East and North Yorkshire to ensure effective communication and joint working on cross-boundary issues. Discussions to date have ranged from simply representation at neighbouring LNP's annual forums to a highly structured set of six monthly meetings and invitation to board meetings. Currently the TVNP would favour an approach that is not over bureaucratic or time consuming but has the ability to quickly identify and respond to relevant cross-boundary issues and the flexibility to adapt to changing needs. An example of this is the currently successful approach employed by the Tees Valley LEP (TVU) on cross boundary issues and the development of policies and projects. They have processes in place whereby specific areas which require joint working are identified annually and a mechanism has been established to take forward these areas of work with the appropriate partners.

Q.12. Describe how you plan to monitor and evaluate your work, including how you will know you are making a difference.

The TVNP will adopt a structured framework for monitoring and evaluating its work, similar to that used in organisations using a continuous improvement approach, e.g. the plan-do-check-act cycle.

Once the aims and objectives of the partnership have been agreed by the board, these will be developed into more specific sub-level tasks as part of identifying how they will be delivered, as previously stated in response to Q2(b) "Develop delivery plan to achieve measurable outputs for strategic priorities". Each of the tasks in the plan will ideally have a tangible or quantifiable measure that can then be used to monitor delivery but where this is not the case, alternative measures will be defined as best possible. This will be part of any "Task and Finish" group actions in their project programme for example. The Management Group will monitor, action and review progress overall and initially help with identifying key indicators or metrics as part of setting targets for the partnership's strategic aims and objectives.

The TVNP will look to use data and evidence to show it is making a difference but also at the development of a set of key local natural environmental indicators. These will need to be quantifiable and use data that is readily available across the Tees Valley.