



## Tees Valley Nature Partnership

### Tees Valley Nature Partnership stakeholder engagement workshop 27 March 2012

#### 1. Purpose of event

To involve all the existing partners of the Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership in the process of the development of the Tees Valley Nature Partnership. Specific aims were:

- To gather partners' views on the broad direction the TVNP should follow,
- To develop a shared vision for the TVNP and explore key aims, objectives and priorities,
- To start the process of developing a governance and structure for the TVNP partners to ensure a broad and relevant membership and remit,
- To ensure commitment, skills and expertise of partners' of the TVBP and the Tees Valley Environment Forum is transferred to the new partnership.

#### 2. Attendance

The meeting was attended by 27 people from 20 organisations.

Name	Organisation
Jeremy Garside	Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
David Tarttelin	Environment Agency
Malcolm Steele	Tees Valley Unlimited
Stephen Duncan	Natural England
Ben Ralston	NWL
Phil Roxby	Darlington Borough Council
Rob Lunan	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Vic fairbrother	Teesmouth Bird Club/Cleveland Naturalists
Deborah Jefferson	Hartlepool Borough Council
Graham Megson	North Yorkshire County Council/Teesmouth Bird Club
Beth Andrews	Tees Valley RIGS
Graham Clingan	Stockton Borough Council
Ruth Jackson	Natural England
Rachel Sparks	Forestry Commission
Anne Gladwin	Middlesbrough Borough Council
Robert Woods	INCA
Ben Lamb	Tees Rivers Trust
Katherine Pinnock	ERIC
Emma Birnie	RSPB
Anne-Louise Orange	Groundwork
Martin Allen	Wildflower Ark
Helen Herring	Wildflower Ark

Mike Leakey	Natural England
Toby Collett	RSPB
?	Hartlepool Borough Council
Sue Antrobus	TVBP
Clare Lowe	Lowe Projects

### 3. Pre meeting telephone survey

Telephone interviews with a representative proportion of current members of the TVBP were carried out using a set of open questions. The questions aimed to find out members current level of understanding of the transition to becoming the TVNP, to assess what is valued from the current TVBP, what changes they envisage will be made as part of the transition, together with the role they think the new TVNP should undertake and what they would like it to do. A summary report of the telephone surveys was circulated to participants before the meeting. This process gathered valuable information from partners/ that shaped the structure and level of the stakeholder event. It also acted as a catalyst for partners to actively engage in the process before the meeting as well as providing an additional communication mechanism for people who input their views and ideas.

### 4. Format of the event

The following agenda was followed;

Presentation 1: The developing Tees Valley Nature Partnership- where we are now and where we are heading - Jeremy Garside

Presentation 2: Your views distilled- feedback from telephone survey - Clare Lowe

Workshop 1: What are the key aspirations and priorities for our LNP?

Workshop 2: Defining a structure and governance for our LNP

Next steps

### 4. Summary of workshop discussions

#### The vision of the TVNP

The groups came up with strong ideas of what type of vision they would like. Key points were:

- *Needs to be a shared vision that provides a common purpose*
- *Needs a strong natural environment focus*
- *Needs to be straightforward and not jargonistic*
- *Be understandable by all*
- *Be inspiring to us and others*
- *Reach out to a wide audience*
- *Be relevant to other sectors*
- *Make reference to quality of life, economy, health and wellbeing*
- *Need not be a statement- could be a question*
- *Could tie in with a strap line*
- *Visions can seem unobtainable and too aspirational - a picture (visualisation may help)*
- *Concern about the word "nature" - don't want to be seen as too cosy or fluffy but about the natural environment in a holistic way*

Although we did not come up with a vision statement during the morning, these ideas will be used to assist the TVNP development group in shaping a vision/and or mission statement

### **What should be the 5 main aims and objectives of the TVNP?**

These were the key points raised, and also included ways of working

- *Achieve LNP status*
- *Build on current partnerships, keeping strengths and developing and broadening the partnership*
- *To engage new partners and create a shared vision*
- *Demonstrate the value of nature. This needs to be specific to different audiences and could be demonstrated with case studies. Examples of specific audiences were planners, LEP and businesses, health and wellbeing.*
- *Promote the quality of the natural environment of the Tees Valley to audiences outside our area (for inward investment or green tourism)*
- *Influence and engage a broad range of existing and new partners*
- *Collective working with other relevant partnerships*
- *Address negative perceptions of the Tees Valley's natural environment- demonstrate its natural assets*
- *Champion the natural environment and influence decisions that affect it*
- *Develop landscape scale working and projects*
- *Prioritise projects, in times of restricting funding to focus on what is needed most*
- *Establish priorities for partnership working, because the we cannot deliver every part of the new, broader agenda straight away*
- *Influence local planning at a strategic level*
- *Ensure early consideration of environmental issues from prospective developments*
- *Have a creative approach and look for new opportunities and ways of achieving positive benefits for natural environment*
- *The habitat and species action plans provided a strong focus for delivery, we need to keep and update them or bring their content together to provide a focus.*
- *Create a culture of environmental pride and caring, especially amongst young people*
- *Manage and monitor the changes to the natural environment in the Tees Valley in order to maintain its biodiversity.*

### **What are the 3 main priorities in the short term and in the long term?**

Not all groups divided theirs into long and short term so all are simply listed

- *Get LNP status*
- *Produce an engagement plan with who, what, and when*
- *Create and build up case studies*
- *Have some "shovel ready projects" ready to take forward for funding or to demonstrate quick wins*
- *Vital to have a strong stable partnership with expertise and knowledge that works collectively to achieve outcomes and have core staff*
- *Achieve commitment of new partners so that they "buy in" in terms of staff time or funding*
- *Demonstrate value of nature- let landowners know what they have and help them build on it.*
- *Produce a communication strategy*
- *Communicate value of natural environment to other sectors and find out about their needs, interests and priorities*

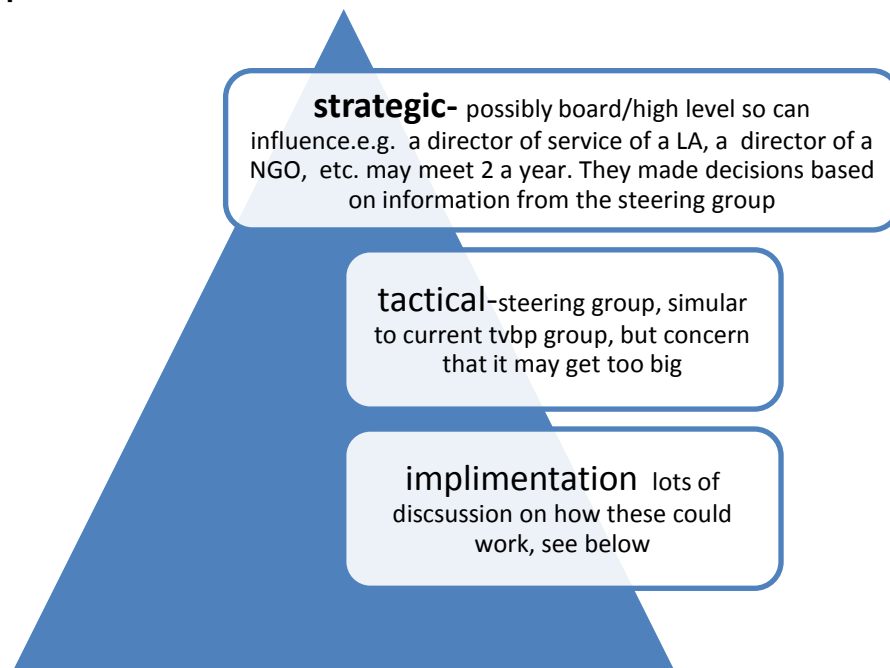
- *Audit what we have (in terms of environment and relevant plans / strategies)*
- *Carry on Local Sites Partnership work*
- *Have a launch event to showcase natural environment*
- *Have community event*
- *Develop landscape scale delivery projects*
- *Expansion of work to consider needs of people of all ages and background in accessing natural environment*
- *Recognition of significance of brownfield sites*
- *Establish processes of review and feedback so that LNP actions are monitored and the outcomes are reported through the partnership and externally*

### **Structure and governance of the TVNP**

It is particularly hard to summarise this workshop as many of the thoughts were in the forms of diagrams /drawings and there was a lot of evolution of ideas during the workshops.

Here is an attempt at a summary.

#### **Red group:**



- There was some discussion about the need for a board- was this layer needed? - however some people, especially those working for Local Authorities, said it was essential to have this buy in of senior people to enable support for partnership and work of the steering group.
- There was a lot of discussion around the delivery/implementation groups. The idea of having different groups for biodiversity, health, business etc was first discussed, then was felt to putting everything into “silos” and that biodiversity needed to run through all the groups so there could be a natural environment and health/wellbeing group, a business and biodiversity groups for example. People also really wanted to keep the wetland and coastal group and rural action groups- perhaps these could include wider socio/economic issues? A local sites group would be needed perhaps meeting only meeting once or twice a year. The NTNN could be a delivery group. As the number of groups suggested increased this raised concern that it was important

to create a workable structure, and that there wasn't enough people to attend all the different groups and that the administration may be too much and that the drive was for people to go to less meetings. Also the more groups meant that there needed to be excellent communication both with the steering group and the other implementation groups. It was suggested that each group would need a chair (not the partnership coordinator). They would report on the steering group and feed information both ways.

- Groups may not need to be static but task and finish groups on specific issues. However some groups would need to be static such as the local sites groups and perhaps what is set up can evolve as LNP develops, so the subgroups are fluid and meet changing needs. Other communication methods apart from meetings could be used as well.
- Essential- Annual Event as an opportunity for whole partnership to meet, share information, skills and also vital in binding the partnership with a common purpose.

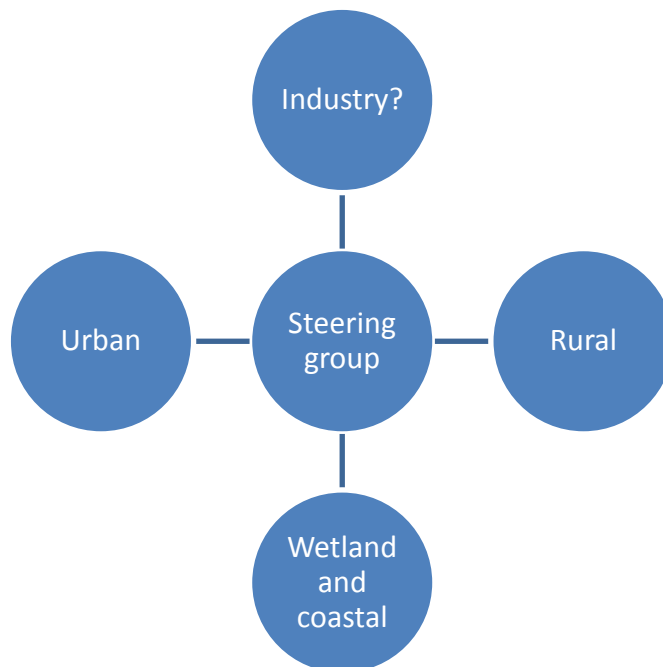
### Purple group

Strategy- What and why?

Tactical- Who and how

Operational- is the delivery, doing

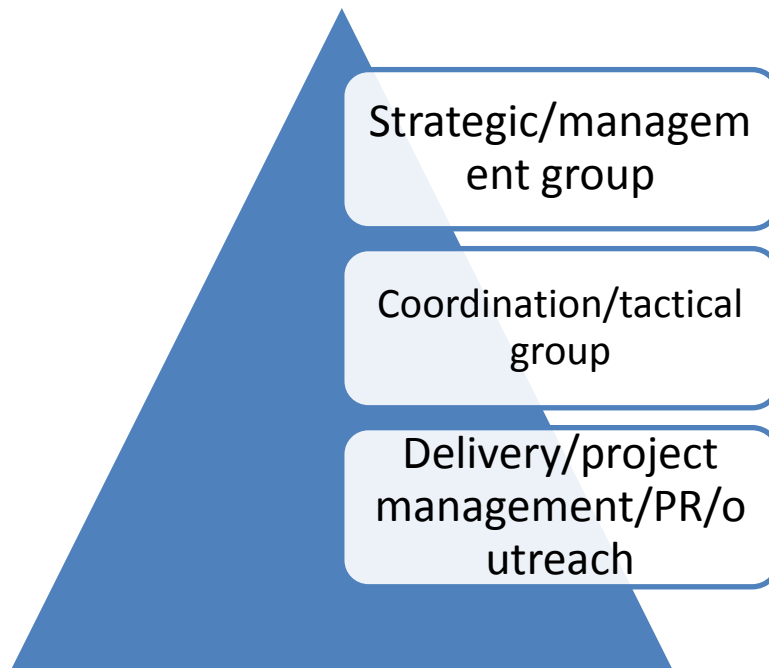
The group explored various models of structure and how they would work in practice draw and discussed various structures with the final one being illustrated below:



- Although this may look similar to what we have now these groups would take a more holistic approach to natural environment to wider issues. Each group would need a coordinator to drive the expansion and development of these groups to cover broader issues and engage new partners and this person would sit on the steering group.

- The question of how the people on the groups are able to feed into strategies and are able to express thoughts and ideas at a higher level was raised.

### Green Group



- Members of the workshop group mostly saw their roles as at the middle level, with a Management Group made up of higher level representation from the Local Authorities, LEP and Health & Wellbeing Boards.
- There was concern that a Strategic Group must represent the views of the partnership and be environmental champions rather than following those of the organisations from which they had come.
- There needs to be strong processes (Action Planning at the management level and Monitoring / Reporting at the delivery level) to ensure that the Partnership operates and doesn't become disjointed and ineffectual.
- The structure has to work so that people feel engaged in the wider partnership and feel that they are placed in the most appropriate position. Perhaps allowing flexibility at early stages, publicising agendas of different groups so people can opt in where they feel comfortable and effective.

### 5. Key outcomes to take forward

There was a high level of interest and support for a LNP in the Tees Valley, with all partner organisations expressing commitment to develop and widen existing local partnerships to embrace the aspirations that Defra have for LNPs.

There appeared to be a consensus that a LNP for the Tees Valley should have the following key features:

- Have natural environment is the core of the TVNP but that it communicates and engages with other sectors.
- Champion the value of the natural environment in the Tees Valley and work at a level that can influence other sectors.

- Develop a strong strategic role but also be a partnership that ensures that coordinated delivery for the natural environment takes place.

The structure of the TVNP should have three aspects, strategic, tactical and operational. Further development on the structure is required but it was generally considered that a management board, steering group and delivery groups will be required.

## **6. Post meeting work required**

The TVNP development group will take the ideas for the vision, aims and objectives, priorities developed in the workshop to create draft versions of the vision/mission, terms of reference, aims and objectives and outline work plan whilst taking into consideration responses from meetings with other potential stakeholders.

To create a strong sustainable partnership it is vital that communication with all stakeholders, both existing and new is maintained through the development of the TVNP. The workshop should be seen not as a one off consultation event but as part of a continuous dialogue with partners that will be maintained through the communication website.