



TVNP Board Meeting

10.00 am-12.30 pm, 16 July 2013

Copy of Agenda, Minutes and Papers

Agenda

10.00 am-12.30 pm, 16 July 2013

Civic Centre, Hartlepool

	10.00 - 10.05	Welcome and introductions	
B/01.03.13	10.05 - 10.15	Matters arising from minutes	
B/02.03.13	10.15 - 10.30	Report of TVNP business	<i>(paper B/02.03.13)</i>
B/03.03.13	10.30 - 10.45	Taking forward the TVNP role in influencing strategic policies and plans	<i>(paper B/03.03.13)</i>
B/04.03.13	10.45 - 11.00	Natural Network and Opportunity Mapping Project	
B/05.03.13	11.00 - 11.30	Developing a long term plan for the Tees Valley Natural Environment	
B/06.03.13	11.45 -11.55	EU Growth fund	
B/07.03.13	11.55 - 12.05	Widening membership of the board	
B/08.03.13	12.05 -12.10	Ecosystem Services Conference/ Annual meeting	

Minutes of the Tees Valley Nature Partnership Board Meeting 16 July 2013

Present: Damien Wilson, Hartlepool Borough Council (local authority rep), Chris Watson, Groundwork North East (environment sector rep), Stephen Catchpole, Tees Valley Unlimited (economic sector rep), Doff Pollard, Tees Valley Rural Community Council, (community sector rep), Laurie Norris (agricultural/rural affairs rep), Ivor Crowther, Heritage Lottery Fund (funding sector rep), Jeremy Garside, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust (accountable body rep), Richard Hall, Natural England (Defra family rep), Susan Antrobus (TVNP Development Manager).

Apologies: John Mann, Teesside Environmental Trust (environmental sector rep).

B/01.03.13 Matters arising from minutes

The minutes were agreed with the following alterations on accuracy; page 1, line 34: substitute and for any, page 2 substitute up for p on line 25.

B/02.03.13 Report of TVNP business

(paper B/02.03.13)

A summary update on the work of the Partnership April - June 2013 was provided by SA. This covered items on the agenda and also included an update of the TVNP presentation to the Tees Valley Local Authority Directors of Place, the Environment Agency Challenges and Choices Consultation and Catchment Partnerships, developing working relationships with adjoining LNPS, update on Local Sites, Tees Valley Growth Ready Initiative. Tees Valley Food and Farming Network, North Tees Natural Network, River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership.

B/03.03.13 Taking forward the TVNP role in influencing strategic policies and plans

(paper B/03.03.13)

SA summarised the paper, covering the role of LNPs in the planning process, and updating on the development and work of the TVNP planning delivery group, which included a draft terms of reference. The report from the workshop for the Tees Valley Planner's was also presented. JG reported that the workshop was very successful in communicating and receiving feedback on the Tees Valley Natural Network and Opportunity Mapping (NNOP) but also in further developing strong working relationships with planning officers.

There was recognition of the challenges of a partnership which has a broad membership, in producing consultation comments on planning documents and having a suitable mechanism for managing responses. The terms of reference of the planning delivery subgroup were considered to be valid and the suggested mechanism practical with a recognition that the workload of the planning sub-group is high given the

timetable of Local Plans over the next twelve months. The terms of reference were adopted with the following additional reference suggested by SC and agreed by the board.

Section 3, Under Production of TVNP responses on consultation on plans and strategies; point 9 to read “Do policies promote the transition to a low carbon economy **and diversify the local economy.**”

There was consideration whether the TVNP could contribute to other strategic documents in addition to land use planning e.g. health and wellbeing. Whilst this was thought to be a valid role of the TVNP when viewed in the context of the Natural Environment White Paper and against the remit of LNPs set out by Defra, there was an awareness of the capacity of the TVNP and the need for focus.

There was discussion on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and that this is updated annually. It was agreed that there is a strong body of compelling evidence on the benefits of access to green space on reducing health inequalities. The effects on the natural environment of transport infrastructure developments was also raised as an area that the TVNP should look at, It was acknowledged that this could be covered in the TVNPs response to Local Plans.

Action 1: SA to carry out scoping study on TVNP for engagement with health and wellbeing sector for consideration by the Board.

Natural England and Environment Agency Triennial review in relation to local planning

RH provided an update. The Cabinet Office requires Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) to be reviewed every three years by their parent department. This review considered how Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) can continue to deliver the government’s priorities for the environment with improved resilience in the face of current and future environmental and economic challenges. The findings of the review were reported on the 28th June. The review concluded that the EA and NE should be retained as separate public bodies with separate purposes and functions, but that both bodies should continue to reform how they deliver their services to their customers and drive further efficiencies. RH reported that NE, EA and the Forestry Commission (FC) are increasingly working closely together. Of particular relevance are the following conclusions;

Conclusion 2: Building on recent progress, there are further opportunities for the EA and NE to work together proactively on their planning functions to communicate a coherent offer to developers and government organisations, so that they are better aware of the full range of services offered.

Conclusion 3: Working together to build on recent progress, the EA and NE should consolidate their planning advice processes in the best way possible in order to provide a seamless planning advice service to developers on environmental issues.

Conclusion 10: The leadership of the EA and NE should embed further changes across the two bodies to build on the ‘yes if’ culture, and develop a more pragmatic approach to how they engage with customers, whilst still delivering the necessary environmental outcomes.

RH also described a toolkit for LEPs that the three agencies have jointly produced and the Discretionary Advice Service that Natural England offers to developers. Board members requested web links to this information (which has been added at the end of the minutes).

The conclusions of the report will be implemented in the autumn, and will contribute to supporting the Government's ambition in streamlining the planning system, including a shift in culture to "solution focused outcomes."

B/04.03.13 Natural Network and Opportunity Mapping Project

SA provided a PowerPoint presentation updating the Board on the progress of the project. This covered the methodology employed to select natural network areas, the key ecological characteristics of each, consultation that had been carried out and the format and timetable of the resulting publication. There was discussion about the ecological value of the arc around Stockton/Darlington and Hartlepool. Although this area has very few protected sites the ecological data collected shows that it is valuable for populations of farmland birds and has small fragmented sites of species rich grasslands. LN considered this to provide a valuable rationale for promoting the benefits of small scale farm based improvements that could contribute to biodiversity in this area to rural landowners. This information will help in providing targeted local ecological advice to landowners. With the ending of the current agri- environment schemes there will be little opportunity for the next couple of years to explore that avenue although there are examples where other small local schemes in other areas have been beneficial. DP queried the lack of landscape area to the West of Darlington which appeared to be a very similar landscape to that area covering the border of Darlington, Stockton and Hartlepool. However, there is insufficient ecological evidence to support this at present, despite thorough research to back up the inclusion of this area. It was suggested that there should be discussion with the Durham "Three Rivers LNP" to look at this area in the context of the surrounding landscape in Durham.

Issues of data sharing and ownership were discussed. It was understood that the TVNP did not have permission to share all of the data that had been used in the project and that the partnership did not have the capacity to continually update the GIS layers. A comprehensive digital bibliography has been produced, giving the source and location of all data used and this approach had been supported by the planners at their recent event.

B/05.03.13 Developing a long term plan for the Tees Valley Natural Environment

Building on discussions from the last meeting, it was agreed that there is a need to clarify the scope and purpose of this plan. SA considered that there were two separate issues to address. Firstly, a long term plan for realising the vision of an improved natural environment in the Tees Valley, describing what this would look like and the opportunities to achieve it. This would provide a strategic framework for organisations to fit mitigation, habitat creation and restoration projects into. Secondly, the work plan of the partnership in terms of meeting its objectives e.g. influencing strategy, developing links with other sectors, raising profile of natural environment etc.

It was agreed The Opportunity Mapping work will provide for the basis for agreeing what an improved natural environment will look like and establishing the rationale for taking forward a ecological network approach. This could provide a focus on where key investment in projects/opportunities could be developed.

DP outlined the work that the FFRA network is carrying out on a Rural Economic Strategy and the need to strengthen the environmental section of this. She considered that there is high level of urgency required to meet the needs of the European Growth Fund Process and possibly a Tees Valley Leader Project otherwise this opportunity for investment will be lost. There was discussion on the timetables and processes.

DW pointed out the need for the plan to be medium to long term and covering a range of funding sources rather than simply a response to current European money. It was agreed that there was a need for a “natural environment infrastructure plan” to sit alongside TVU plans and for this plan to look at how investment in the natural environment can deliver projects that are focused on training, skills and employment. RH pointed out that the TVNP were the partnership in the Tees Valley who had the natural environment (biodiversity and geodiversity) at its core and that there was a need to assess what the TVNP wants to achieve for the natural environment and then to assess how this can be aligned with opportunities from other sectors/funders. The approach that the North East Environment Strategy adopted was to identify “what are the top asks”. He suggested that Board members compile their “top 10 or 20 asks for the natural environment in Tees Valley?” to build on the TVNP vision document.

It was agreed that within the next week Board members would submit a few paragraphs on what they consider the purpose of the plan to be and what they consider to be the top ten priorities in achieving an improved natural environment in the Tees Valley. This can then be used to assist the management group in developing a “natural environment infrastructure plan.” CW raised the role of the partnership as a strategic partnership and not a delivery organisation. This was recognised, with the plan providing a strategic framework for organisations to be able to align with.

Action 2: All: to produce up to one sheet of A4 on the purpose of the plan and the key priorities in achieving an improved natural environment in the Tees Valley.

B/06.03.13 EU Growth fund

SC provided an update on the European Growth Fund in the Tees Valley. The figures for the Tees Valley have been announced as £173 million, divided into £104M for the European Regional Development Fund ERDF and £69 M for European Structural Fund (ESF). This requires a 40% match. More guidance on match funding from the Government is anticipated to be published. There are twelve strands, eight of which have minimum spends. In addition there are two funds which have yet to have the amounts announced; these are the allocation of rural monies and a fund focusing on youth employment. The process now is that Tees Valley Unlimited are preparing its investment strategy by September and carrying out consultation, with finalised details by April 2014. TVU are working on measures of longitudinal outcomes of the funding as well as measurements of outputs, so that long term impacts of the funding can be measured and monitored. The focus is on jobs and skills. The most obvious route for the natural environment sector is

projects that contribute to training and increasing skills whilst delivering improvements to the natural environment.

B/07.03.13 11.55 - 12.05 Widening membership of the board

There are three remaining places on the Board, as outlined in the structure by the TVNP terms of reference. These are for representatives of the health and wellbeing sector, local academic institution, countryside access, recreation and tourism sector. DW is currently researching a suitable tourism rep. SA has been given some suggestions of possibilities from Teesside University. For health and wellbeing, because it is such a wide and complex sector it was suggested at the Directors of Place meeting that the TVNP provide an introduction to the partnership to the Local Authority Directors of Health and to explore representation.

Action 3: SA To explore links with Teesside University and bring back suggestions to the next board meeting.

Action 4: SA to progress with DoPs potential invitation to Tees Valley Local Authority Directors of Health meeting

Action 5: All to consider contacts in this section and send any suggestions to SA

B/08.03.13 12.05 -12.10 Ecosystem Services Conference/ Annual Meeting

The concept of ecosystem services is increasingly recognised in Government policy, research and delivery. There is currently a proliferation of networks, research and case studies that use a variety of methods. SA suggested that this could be the subject of the TVNP Annual Conference in 2014. This could be an opportunity to provide a training event for TVNP partners. It was agreed that this would be a good focus for the annual event

Action 6: SA to organise annual conference event for 2014 under the theme of Ecosystem Services

B/09.03.13 12.10 - 12.20 Any Other Business

Two matters from the Management Group were raised. It had suggested that the chair of the Management Group , David Tarttelin, might attend the Board meetings to share the work of SA in providing updates and feedback between the Board and Management Group. The Board agreed this would be an effective way forward. Secondly, there had been a query relating to the benefits of having a static chair over a rotating chair as was currently operated by the Board. Board members considered that having a rotating chair was beneficial because it shared the ownership and responsibilities of the partnership and that because of the diverse representation of the sectors on the partnership it was a more balanced approach than having a chair from a specific sector. It was agreed that the present arrangements would continue for the time being.

DW was thanked for chairing the meeting and providing the venue and refreshments

Arrangements for next meeting

RH offered to chair the next meeting on 22nd October at 10.00 am. SA will book Middlesbrough Town Hall as a venue for the meeting.

Additional information on triennial review and related issues

Provided by Richard Hall

The full report of the Triennial review can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209382/triennial-rev-ea-ne.pdf

The Local Environment and Economic Development (LEED) Toolkit has been produced by the Defra network (the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission) working in partnership with several Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Local Authorities and Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs). Aimed at LEPs, it offers an easy to use, technically robust way of systematically considering the evidence relating to the relationship between the economy and the environment to reveal both opportunities and threats, and to consider appropriate responses when developing strategic economic plans.

The LEED Toolkit has been piloted by the New Anglia LEP and Wild Anglia LNP, who found it highlighted important strategic and operational factors which required co-operation between local organisations, and helped to build good relationships. The LEED toolkit can be found here:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/LEP-citydeals/leedtoolkit.aspx>.

The Defra network offer the LEPs is prepared by the Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission and the Marine Management Organisation – the Defra Network in this context.

It looks at ways in which we can help facilitate and support sustainable growth and respond to localism. Our Offer builds on the potential to support sustainable growth by enhancing our service and using our resources, networks and expertise. We have set out a broad offer as the framework for a local discussion with individual Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and City Deals, including on Enterprise Zones. We recognise that every LEP and City Deal is different and we will want to tailor our offer locally. The specific components of the offer have not been costed and may not be available everywhere.

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/defra-network-offer_tcm6-35836.pdf

Natural England's Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) aims to help developers and consultants take appropriate account of environmental considerations at an early stage of proposal development, particularly relating to issues where Natural England is statutory consultee (for example designated Natura 2000 sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Marine Protected Areas and protected landscapes). This will potentially save the customer time and money in the planning process, whilst also securing good outcomes for the natural environment. The Discretionary Advice Service is principally available for developments under the Town and Country Planning Act, the Planning Act 2008, the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and development requiring its own Act of Parliament. It is available for pre-application and post-consent advice stages and at pre-determination stage, if certain conditions are met. Further details can be found here: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/das/default.aspx>



Board meeting paper B/02.03.13

Report of TVNP business and activity April - June 2013

1. Update on TVNP presentation to TV Directors of Place

Jeremy Garside and Sue Antrobus were invited to the TV Local Authorities Directors of Place meeting (8 May) to report on progress of the TVNP. An update paper was prepared and presented. Feedback was very positive with recognition of the value of joint working across the Tees Valley. The natural network mapping and Tees Valley Wild Green Spaces project was especially welcomed. Advice and contacts were provided for the health and wellbeing sector.

2. TVNP Strategic planning delivery group

This sub group of the Management group which is tasked with inputting into strategic Local Plans has prepared its terms of reference, established a mechanism of operation proactive work programme and delivered a workshop for Tees Valley Local Planners. This is covered more fully on the agenda item paper B/03.03.13

3. Tees Valley natural network and opportunity mapping project update

All of the data collation, entry and GI mapping of UK BAP priority habitat and species and designated sites has been completed and the landscape priority areas drawn up in consultation. Consultation of the pre publication drafts of the work has been carried out with local ecological specialists from the Tees Valley and local authority planning officers which will be taken forward for publication in September. In addition data from the project. was used to create a Biodiversity mapping and audit to support the River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership as a requirement of their stage two HLF application.

4. Vision document

The text of the vision document agreed at the last board meeting has been “designed up” as an interactive e-document which includes an ecosystem services model where users can access further information relevant to the Tees Valley. The finished product looks wonderful; however on testing there are some technical issues on speed of load up time when accessed via the internet and differences in appearances depending on the web viewer used. To remedy this document is currently being reformatted.

5. Environment Agency Challenges and Choices Consultation and Catchment Partnerships

Graeme Hull, Tees Catchment Co-ordinator at the Environment Agency presented information to the TVNP Management Groups (11 June) on the newly announced Catchment Partnership approach s and the Environment Agency Challenges and Choices Consultation with a view to engaging The TVNP. The **Environment Agency**

Challenges and Choices Consultation (22 June -22 December 2013). The TVNP Management Group considered this to be an important consultation to engage with as it provides an opportunity to influence the selection of key water management issues in the Tees catchment. To aid this process the Environment Agency will provide support is able to provide support in the form of a workshop to guide TVNP and partner organisations partner organisations through the process, which will be organised for the Autumn.

Catchment Partnerships- Defra are focusing on a catchment based approach and in May 2013 published: [Catchment Based Approach: Improving the quality of our water environment A policy framework to encourage the wider adoption of an integrated Catchment Based Approach to improving the quality of our water environment](#). As part of this policy self-sustaining Catchment Partnerships will be created. There are 83 catchments in England. Over 25 pilot Catchment Partnerships have already been established. To encourage collaborative working and a greater commitment to action, Defra are providing a fund for this financial year (2013-14) to recruit and train catchment partnership facilitators. Wherever possible, and with the agreement of stakeholders, Defra would like this role to be undertaken by eligible third party organisations. The TVNP Management Group considered that this was not a role for the TVNP especially as it is already a partnership and in addition the TVNP only covers the lower Tees. Where no organisation comes forward in a catchment area the Environment Agency will carry out this role.

6. Developing working relationships with adjoining LNPs

Effective methods for sharing information and ideas have been discussed with neighbouring LNPs to ensure effective communication and joint working on cross-boundary issues. The Tees Valley lies on the boundary of two “regional groupings/networks” of LNPs, organised by Natural England. These are a well established Yorkshire and Humber LNP & NIA Network and an emerging North East LNP network. The TVNP has been invited to take part in both networks.

7. Local Sites - annual single data returns

The TVNP Local Sites Group, chaired by Ian Bond, has prepared data on the management of Local Sites for the Local Authority annual Single Data returns (2012/13). There were no queries raised by the Management Group who ratified the data on 11 June acting as the Tees Valley Local Sites Partnership.

8. Tees Valley Growth Ready Initiative update

Environment Agency and Local Enterprise Partnership led initiative to develop ‘evidence products’ that will facilitate development 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.

Feedback from TVU on two EZ sites where we piloted some “opportunities and constraints” mapping – the draft documents were welcomed by TVU, as they gave insight on information, however we need to do more work to understand how such detail can be used constructively. For example, a consistent message from TVU is that delays to projects can be costly and reducing uncertainty about a site is very useful – so if there are some “risks”, what mitigation measures might be taken and at what time and cost? We have discussed how the information might be used at a less detailed, overview stage where language and presentation might be critical. The next stage of the process is for the Environment Agency to update the draft documents in light of the feedback, consider how we could approach the other EZ sites and check the level of our “asks” in terms of the opportunities.

9. Tees Valley Food, Farming and Rural Farming network

[The Tees Valley Food, Farming and Rural Farming network](#) joined forces with the North East and Yorkshire Rural Farming Networks and Defra to run an afternoon on 20th May on “Rural Development Programme: Ensuring Success” Jeremy Garside gave a short presentation on the TVNP.

10. North Tees Natural Network update

The North Tees Natural Network held a Community Workshop on 15 April at Teesmouth Field Centre. The purpose of the event was to;

- Share the North Tees Natural Network (NTNN) vision for the area
- Strengthen the relationships between existing NTNN partners and other organisations and communities in the area – with the aim of shaping projects and working together to achieve a shared vision
- Obtain the views and aspirations of the communities of the area for future initiatives

Attendees included representatives from community organisations, local town / parish councils, ward councillors, local businesses and industries, and organisations with an interest in environmental, education, heritage, recreation and access issues in the NTNN area. Through some workshop sessions delegates considered the following issues:

- What aspects of the nature / wildlife of the area would you most like to see enhanced and interpreted?
- What aspects of the cultural and built heritage of the area would you most like to see better understood and interpreted?
- What aspects of physical access into the area would you most like to see improved?
- How can we better work together to address these aspirations?

The NTNN partnership is taking forward the recommendations from the event which will identify some of the key actions and recommendations of the event

11. River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership

The RTR partnership is actively working on stage two application under the lead and management of Groundwork North East. This is currently involving developing detail to the project elements by partners and creating linkages, developing match funding applications by partner organisation. A consultation event 'Bringing the outside in' arranged to take place in Stockton library on the 27th August. As well as updating and consulting participants on the project, there will be activities and displays including bird box making, fly tying and insect identification and wider activities in line with the project delivery elements to be confirmed. This will mark the launch of the project taster days to be held as part of the comprehensive consultation exercise taking place throughout the autumn. A bid is to be developed to the Arts Council in partnership with Tees Valley Arts to provide memorable creative engagement. The project logo has been conformed and a website developed.

12. Natural England case study on Green Infrastructure - Wynyard Woodland Park

Wynyard Woodland Park is the subject of a Natural England case study on green infrastructure that will soon be available as a download document from the Natural England website.

<http://nepubprod.appspot.com/publication/11937244> It outlines how “Wynyard Woodland Park shows how green infrastructure can be used to effectively manage increased demand for green space in urban areas. It is an innovative example of how to turn the journey to the park itself into part of the outdoor recreation experience, while not only protecting but enhancing biodiversity through habitat creation for Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species.”



Board meeting paper B/03.03.13

Taking forward the TVNP role in influencing strategic policies and plans

1. Background

The government's key aspirations for LNPs is that they will operate at a local level to become an effective voice to champion the natural environment, influence local plans, strategies and policies to integrate the delivery of environmental benefits and services alongside economic and social benefits, and provide a strategic framework for local environmental delivery. Through the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) Local Planning Authorities have a duty to cooperate with their LNP. For example;

"Planning policies and decisions should be based on up to date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area.....working with Local Nature Partnerships where appropriate, this should include an assessment of existing and potential components of ecological networks."

And

"Local planning authorities should work collaboratively on strategic planning priorities to enable delivery of sustainable development in consultation with Local Nature Partnerships."

Over the last three months the TVNP has carried out significant work to take forward this element of the partnership's remit.

2. Establishment of TVNP strategic plans delivery group

A subgroup of the Management Group, containing members with expertise on local planning policies and procedures and green infrastructure planning, has been established. This group has developed an agreed terms of reference for its role (attached), a standard covering letter and a work programme with timetables for the production of a coordinated TVNP response on strategic plans that it is anticipated being consulted on. These are mainly Local plans but also include the Environment Agency's Challenges and Choices Consultation.

3. Workshop with Local Authority planners

The Tees Valley Nature Partnership (TVNP) held a successful a half day workshop at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park Centre, Stockton on Tuesday 25th June. This event was for local authority planners to explore with the TVNP practical ways of approaching conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment in the Tees Valley through local plans and development management. A copy of the draft report of the workshop is attached.

4. Action by board

1. To adopt or amend and adopt the draft terms of reference of the TVNP planning delivery group.
2. To consider the outcomes and recommendations of the workshop for the TVNP.
3. To consider if the TVNP should/could be playing a role in feeding into other strategic documents in addition to land use planning e.g. health and wellbeing.

