



## TVNP Management Group Meeting

10 am, 11 June 2013 at Billingham Beck Country Park

### Agenda

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**10.00-10.05**      **Welcome and introductions**

**M/01.02.13**      **10.05-10.15**      **Actions and matters arising from last meeting**

**M/02.02.13**      **10.15-10.25**      **Report from Board meeting**      *(board minutes and papers)*  
Update on the TVNP board meeting 16 April 2013.

**M/03.02.13**      **10.25-10.35**      **Tees River catchment**

Graeme Hull, Tees Catchment Co-ordinator at the Environment Agency will be introducing himself to the partnership to introduce the Environment Agency high level Challenges and Choices Consultation which will run from 22 June to 22 December 2013 and which provides the TVNP with the opportunity to influence what the key water management issues are in the Tees catchment. He would like to explore how he could assist the partnership in that consultation. He will also explain the 2014 consultation on the draft 2<sup>nd</sup> revision of the Northumbria River Basin Plan and raise the broad outcomes from the Catchment Pilots which set out to 'facilitate working jointly at the catchment level, in a way that improves ownership and maximises the role of civil society to deliver Water Framework Directive and related environmental outcomes'.

**M/04.02.13**      **10.35-10.50**      **TVNP Programme for influencing strategic plans**  
*(paper M/04.02.13)*

Update from Malcolm Steele from the TVNP Strategic Planning subgroup, including draft terms of reference and forecasted Influencing strategies programme for discussion and adoption.

**M/05.02.13**      **10.50-11.05**      **Annual single data returns for Local Sites**

*(paper M/05.02.13)*

The Local Sites group have prepared reporting data on the management of Local Sites for the annual single data returns (2012/13). This is presented for ratification by the Management Group. In addition outline proposals for a programme of Local Site Surveys will be suggested for discussion.

**Coffee and cake break**

**M/06.02.13      11.20-11.40      Long term plan for Tees Valley Natural Environment**

Discussion and decision on how we take forward a piece of work suggested by the TVNP board to develop a strategic plan on what we want an improved natural environment to look like and how to achieve it.

**M/07.02.13      11.55 - 12.15      TVNP and EU growth Funding for the Tees Valley**

*(paper M/07.02.13)*

Update from David Tarttelin, supported by a paper from Jeremy Garside, on the process of the funding in the Tees Valley and the role for TVNP involvement for discussion and taking forward

**M/08.02.13      11.15 - 12.30      Short updates and information exchange**

*(paper M/08.02.13)*

A summary paper has been prepared to provide an opportunity for questions, query or discussion if required.

**M/09 .02.13      12.30      AOB**

**Meeting close      12.40**

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## Minutes

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**Attendance:** David Tarttelin (Environment Agency), Helen Herring (Wildflower Ark) Richard Pow (Forestry Commission), Malcolm Steele (TVU) Sarah Scarr (Hartlepool Borough Council), Phil Roxby (Darlington Borough Council), Phil Jones (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council), Anne-Louise Orange (Groundwork North East), Bob Pailor (Industry and Nature Conservation Association), Amanda Miller (RSPB), Anne Gladwin (Middlesbrough Council), Sue Antrobus (TVNP), Graeme Hull (Environment Agency)

**Apologies:** Jeremy Garside (Tees Valley Wildlife Trust), Graham Clingan (Stockton Borough Council), Nick Brodin (Natural England), Rob Brown (TV Local Access Forum).

### **M/01.02.13            Actions and matters arising from last meeting**

Action 1: Done

Action 2: Done

Action 3: Done, and meeting took place

Action 4: Done, workshop will be on 25 June and is fully booked

Action 5: Done, covered in agenda

Action 6: DT to send to INCA when the project is at next stage.

Action 7: Done, Letters have been sent

Action 8: Done-on agenda

Action 9: Started, on agenda

Action 10: Done

Action 11: Done, on agenda

Action 12: In progress

Action 13: Done, update appeared on TVNP website

Action 14: Done, update in agenda paper

Action 15: Done, on agenda

Note: AM expressed that the RSPB would like to get more involved with the TV Growth Ready project, DT to send further information as the project develops.

It was agreed that there was a need for meeting minutes to be signed off without waiting until the next meeting. This will be achieved by SA sending a draft out and giving a two-week window for any amendments. It was also requested that were any actions/specific transfers of information that these could be highlighted in the covering email.

### **M/02.02.13            Report from Board meeting            (Board minutes and papers)**

The papers and minutes of the TVNP Board meeting 16 April 2013 were presented with a summary provided by SA. The Board approved the text of the TVNP vision document and the terms of reference. The main focus of the meeting was the agenda items on development of the TVNP work programme and the item on the role of the TVNP in the EU Growth Fund. The Board considered that the four elements/work themes presented were the correct ones and met the aims of the partnership.

1. Championing the role of natural environment
2. Clear knowledgeable voice for natural environment
3. Opportunities for people to experience access and enjoy natural environment
4. Partnership working for an improved natural environment

The board considered that the development of a work programme needed to be based on a long term strategic plan (covered in agenda item M/06.02.13).

A discussion took place on the role of the board and further work that needed to be carried out to widen membership of the Board to include health and wellbeing and recreation/tourism sectors. It was noted that the Directors of Place are assisting the TVNP in developing links with Health and Wellbeing Boards to take this forward. It was agreed that support could be provided to the board by having, when needed, presentations from Management Group members on specific agendas which would further strengthen the link between the workings of the Board and Management Group. A suggestion was also approved of offering a field trip for the Board to provide an opportunity for them to get engaged in some of the current challenges and opportunities and to provide a more informal format for them to develop as a group. AM queried the wisdom of having a revolving chair and that whilst this had the benefits of sharing the work load and ownership it had disadvantages in terms of leadership.

**Action 1:** SA to assess interest of Board in the provision of a field trip/induction.

**Action 2:** SA to raise discussion with Board members, on the chairing arrangements of the Board.

**Action 3:** DT to provide additional support to SA at Board meetings to maximise link between the Board and Management Group.

### **M/03.02.13            Tees River catchment**

Graeme Hull, Tees Catchment Co-ordinator at the Environment Agency introduced himself to the partnership and talked about his role and two significant topics - Catchment Partnerships and the Environment Agency Challenges and Choices Consultation.

As the Tees Catchment Co-ordinator his role is to focus on achieving an improved water environment through collaborative partnership working.

**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. Further detail on the allocation of funding will be provided on 22 June. It was agreed 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. It was indicated that the Tees Rivers Trust/Groundwork may be interesting in this role. Where no organisation comes forward in a catchment area the Environment Agency will carry out this role. The consultation workshops carried out by Groundwork NE and the Tees Rivers Trust with communities and businesses is being collated and will be published as a Tees Valley Catchment Study that will be used to help inform the Tees catchment planning.

**Environment Agency Challenges and Choices Consultation** - this will run from 22 June to 22 December 2013 and provides the TVNP with the opportunity to influence the selection of key water management issues in the Tees catchment. There was discussion on the role of the TVNP and it was considered an important consultation to feed into. GH is able to provide support in the form of a workshop to guide TVNP partner organisations through the process. It was also noted that BP is a member of the [Northumbria River Basin Liaison Panel](#) as an industry representative and AM is a member of the [Flood and Coastal Committee for Northumbria](#).

### **M/04.02.13            TVNP Programme for influencing strategic plans**

*(paper M/04.02.13)*

MS summarised the work that the TVNP Strategic Planning subgroup have produced a document which sets out a draft terms of reference and forecasted influencing strategies programme (see accompanying paper). There was agreement of the importance of the TVNP role in this area especially in looking at cross-boundary ecological networks. It was noted that the workshop for planners on 25<sup>th</sup> June was fully booked, with attendance by planners from each of the five local authorities. This should provide a good opportunity to discuss the work that the TVNP is carrying out on the mapping of ecological networks. AM considered that some tweaking may be needed to address the issue of how the TVNP response to strategic plans can be differentiated, in some cases, from the responses from individual member organisations. A standard covering paragraph has been drafted by the subgroup to address this.

**Action 4:** AM to feed in discussion on further amendments from RSPB on covering letter if required.

## **M/05.02.13            Annual Single Data returns for Local Sites**

*(paper M/05.02.13)*

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

The selection of Local Sites in the Tees Valley was based on some very rigorous surveys through a programme of local authority funding with additional data from a series of TVBP habitat and species projects, carried out by the Wildflower Ark, with funding from HLF and Natural England. It was agreed at the last Management Group meeting that it is imperative to ensure that the work of the TVNP and the local planning authorities is based on accurate and up-to-date ecological information. The Local Sites Group has been considering a programme of how this can be achieved. They have suggested that rather than look at all the Local Sites within a local authority at one time a more rational approach would be to take a Tees Valley wide approach by assessing the frequency at which habitats and sites should be resurveyed in order to establish a programme. For example ancient woodlands are less likely to need resurveying than early succession habitats or the more mobile species.

**Action 5:** Local Sites Group to progress this and produce a costed plan for re survey to enable the Management Group to explore potential funding avenues.

## **M/06.02.13            Long term plan for Tees Valley Natural Environment**

Whilst recognising the ongoing work that the TVNP is doing in establishing itself, the TVNP Board has outlined the need for the TVNP to have a long term strategy for achieving its vision of an improved natural environment in the Tees Valley, with a starting point of what this improved natural environment would look like and a framework for achieving this.

A discussion took place on what approach should be taken to carry this out. For example is about documented current and future planned action or developing more holistic ambitions in the form of a framework of outcomes but not being prescriptive of the mechanism of achieving them? . It was considered that we needed to get away from the terminology of a strategic plan. There is a lot of strategic planning in the TVU and local authority Green Infrastructure documents that can be used to inform this and the work that is being carried out by the natural network and opportunity mapping will also be a valuable tool in informing this. It was recognised that will not simply about producing an action plan but identifying what are the long term priorities for the natural environment and the role of TVNP and its partners organisations. The important question was asked on who is the audience for this? Is it to direct the partnership or an outward facing document to align work of other sectors. The issue of resilience was also discussed.

**Action 6:** SA to request further clarity from the board to enable a mechanism to take this process forward.

## **M/07.02.13            TVNP and EU growth Funding for the Tees Valley**

*(paper M/07.02.13)*

As arranged at the last Management Group meeting, David Tarttelin and Jeremy Garside met with TVU to be briefed on the European funding process in the Tees Valley. DT provided an update. The Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have been given the role of managing Growth Funds from the European Union from 2014. There remains a high level of uncertainty on the role of the LEPs in the funding and details of the funding and what it can be used for. It is anticipated that the Government will clarify this with additional information on 26 June. The Tees Valley LEP (Tees Valley Unlimited) has given the task of developing its Structural and Investment Fund Strategy (SIFS) to its Investment Panel – an important group which is closely aligned to its Leadership Board. As a result of the meeting the TVNP have been invited to have representation on the TVU's Investment Panel. The results of the first meeting are outlined in the accompanying paper prepared by Jeremy. A discussion followed on the funding and it was recognised that these will be centred on economy, work and growth and that natural environment opportunities are very limited. There are no natural environment themes; however there is scope for using the natural environment as a tool or mechanism for delivering these benefits such as training, place making etc. It was recognised that this will be an economic-led initiative and that environment elements need to be presented in that "language" and on the themes that the TVU identify.

It was recognised that as a partnership, we have yet to evolve a mechanism for electing representatives and it is not even clear whether this is a role for the Management Group or Board. As an interim measure (and given the tight timescales and absence of any other proposal) the Investment Panel chose to appoint DT as TVNP's representative with JG as deputy. In addition with the complexity of European funding, the speed at which responses will be required and the range of issues and opportunities that will arise, representation should not be left solely to the efforts of the individual attending the Panel meetings. This could be achieved through a working group and members were asked to consider if they would wish to be part of this, and if so to contact DT or JG.

### **M/08.02.13          Short updates and information exchange**

*(paper M/08.02.13)*

A summary paper was prepared to provide an opportunity for questions, query or discussion. This was felt to be useful and should be adopted for future meetings.

### **M/09 .02.13          AOB**

**Environment Agency habitat creation targets** - The Environment Agency is seeking assistance from LNPs and others in meeting their ambition of the creation of 10,000 ha of BAP habitat in the North East and Yorkshire by 2020. This is for creation only, not restoration or management of existing BAP habitats. Jim Heslop at the Environment Agency is managing the project. There were requests for further clarity especially on the issue of whether all BAP habitats are involved or just water related ones, and if the latter, the definition of these habitats. Also raised were questions on the process for application and selection of work. It was acknowledged that this is going to be a challenging target for the Environment Agency to meet.

**Action 7:** DT to ensure that TVNP partners receive clarified information on the process.

**Coronation meadows** – This is a new initiative championed by Prince Charles. The lead partners are Plantlife, the Wildlife Trusts and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

Further details at <http://coronationmeadows.org.uk/>

**State of Nature Report** - Scientists working jointly from 25 wildlife organisations have compiled a stock take of our native species – the first of its kind in the UK. Published in May 2013, the State of Nature report reveals that 60% of the species studied have declined over recent decades. More than one in ten of all the species assessed are under threat of disappearing from our shores altogether. There was significant national coverage of the report. AM suggested that the TVNP should consider its response to the report from a Tees Valley wide perspective. It can be downloaded from [RSPB](#) or [RSWT](#) websites.

**Action 8:** RP to send SA GIS layers on future woodland planting, e.g. where tree planting grants has been allocated by the Forestry Commission.

## Short updates and information exchange

### 1. TVNP Vision document

Now that the Vision document text has been approved by the board, this has been “designed up” as an e- document as part of the document there is an interactive ecosystems services diagram with links to web pages with Tees Valley examples. A pre-publication draft will be circulated for final comments at the end of June.

### 2. 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

### 3. Biffa Award Flagship Funding

[The 2013 Biffa Award Flagship Scheme](#) is now open for applications. Applicants have until the deadline 20 August 2013 to request and complete an Expression of Interest form, when the scheme. Grants are between £150,000 - £500,000 are available.

**Rebuilding Biodiversity** - Support is available for regionally important site-based projects that protect and enhance biodiversity, particularly those concentrating on species and habitats that have been identified as a priority in Biodiversity Action Plans. To be eligible, a project must lead to a direct improvement to a habitat or species. Projects that are purely for research will not be funded.

**Cultural Facilities**-Support under this theme is available for cultural facilities that offer public access for recreation, interest and education. This could include, for example, a theatre, gallery, museum, concert hall, arts or heritage centre, lighthouse or a windmill. The facility should be open to the public for published periods each year, and attract tourists or day visitors. It must be inclusive and inspire and promote learning, creativity and participation.

Applicant organisations must be registered, or able to register, with ENTRUST.

The majority of the costs must be for physical (capital) works on the specified site.

The following criteria also apply:

- Projects must be within 25 miles of a Biffa Operation - a postcode checker is provided on the Biffa Award website.
- Projects must be within ten miles of a landfill site.
- Projects must demonstrate partnership working.
- There must be a need for the project and applicants must demonstrate how the project will be nationally or regionally significant.
- The majority of the costs must be for physical (capital) works on the specified site.

### 4. River Tees Rediscovered landscape partnership update

#### **Anne- Louise Orange ( Groundwork NE)**

- All project elements to be considered as part of the landscape partnership will be submitted as a proforma by the 11th June. The methods for assessment will be agreed at the next RTR Partnership Board meeting, then wider linkages confirmed and developed.

- 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 logo is in the final stages of design, and will be confirmed at the RTR Board meeting. A brief has been circulated for the website development element.
- Heritage, Access and biodiversity audits will be completed by the end of the summer.
- Partner elements of the Landscape Character Action Plan to be agreed at the next RTR Board meeting.
- Next Partnership Board meeting Tuesday, 18th June, 10am Preston Hall - all partners attendance required.

## 5. 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. 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.”

## 6. Tees Valley 2013 Rural Summit

The Tees Valley Rural Community Council (TVRCC) held its annual summit on 15<sup>th</sup> March at the newly refurbished Preston Hall Museum. This year the theme of the summit was environmental and provided an opportunity to introduce the work of the TVNP to rural community representatives and for the River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership to carry out consultation as part of its project development. The event was well attended by town and parish council, members of community and voluntary organisations and local authority representatives. Feedback to TVRCC from participants was very positive, with presentations and workshops being well received.

## 7. 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 20<sup>th</sup> May on “Rural Development Programme: Ensuring Success” Jeremy Garside gave a short presentation on the TVNP.

## 8. North Tees Natural Network update

**Graham Clingan (Stockton Borough Council)** - A North Tees Natural Network Community Workshop (Teesmouth Field Centre on 15 April). 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?

A feedback report is being prepared by the NTNN partnership which will identify some key actions / recommendations.

## 9. Defra/York University ecosystem interactions research

The Tees Valley is one of two pilot areas for the development of an environmental decision making tool based on ecosystem service interactions. The Defra funded initiative is led by Dr Piran White of York University and explores the management and policy implications of the interactions between habitats in their delivery of ecosystem services. The project is working on the production of a map-based decision-support tool which will demonstrate these interactions and the effects of management interventions on the delivery of ecosystem services. It will also include economic valuation and legislative data to help create a more comprehensive tool. They are focusing on three systems – agriculture, freshwater (rivers and wetlands), and urban areas – which have been identified as priority landscapes in the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UKNEA), either in terms of their status or the lack of understanding of biodiversity-ecosystem service relations within them, or both.

The tool is being initially developed in the context of the Humberhead Levels Nature Improvement Area and is being designed so that it is transferable to other localities in the United Kingdom. The TVNP are working with Piran to assist in the development of a locally-specific version of the tool for the Tees Valley, our 'test' area, and use it to assess the implications of alternative future scenarios for the delivery of multiple ecosystem benefits in this area. Piran and his research team visited the Tees Valley on 22 May for a whistle stop tour of the varied landscapes and ecosystems of the Tees Valley with Sue Antrobus and Anne Louise Orange of the Tees Valley Nature Partnership. It is envisaged that the research will provide valuable tool for the Partnership and in particular for the River Tees Rediscovered landscape project which is currently being developed as a round two Landscape Partnership, led by Groundwork North East. Link to the York University [Ecosystem Interactions](#) project web page.

Also the the '**Ecosystem Service Mapping Gateway**', is now live. This has been developed by the NERC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (BESS) Directorate and brings together information on the growing number of projects concerned with mapping ecosystem service delivery at the landscape level. Click to access the [Ecosystem Service Mapping Gateway](#).

## 10. RSPB submits "North Tees Goes Wild" HLF application

**David Braithwaite (RSPB)** - RSPB have submitted a stage one funding application for a 5-year education programme to HLF. The North Tees Goes Wild project is aimed at local school-age children and will connect education across the NTNN involving a number of partner organisations and forms the basis of a Heritage Lottery Funds (HLF) bid to support a five-year project. In this way young people can not only be connected with nature but come to appreciate and value the exceptional wildlife that lives on their doorstep. As part of this project, some schools will become particularly involved and will be adopted as Go Wild Schools. Go Wild Spaces will be places where these schools can continue their environmental education very close to, or actually within, their school grounds. RSPB is forming the lead partner along with Hartlepool Borough Council, Natural England, Stockton Borough Council, Teessmouth Field Centre and other partnership may develop during the development of phase1 including TVWT. A development phase, subject to HLF grant, will be in place during 2013 with the project aiming to go live in 2014. This project is complimentary to the Tees Valley Wild Green Spaces project that is currently been developed as a stage two application.

## 11. Environment Agency Growth Ready Project

**David Tarttelin (Environment Agency)** - Progress has been made, a bit slower than we would have liked but with great effort from the team involved. We've had 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. Our next steps are 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 (*Ambitious? Minimum?*). This is an ongoing project with good internal "visibility" within our Agency region and increasingly at a national level.

## Programme for Influencing strategic plans

The Influencing strategic plans delivery group has produced a draft terms of reference for consideration by the Management Group and a programme for responding to the publication of consultation plans and strategies.

A workshop for Tees Valley local authority planners, “Natural Networks and land use planning in the Tees Valley Applying landscape scale and ecosystem services approaches of the NPPF and The Natural Environment white paper” is arranged for 25 June. This is fully booked with officers from all five local authorities booked on. A copy of the invitation and programme is attached.

### Draft Terms of reference of the TVNP Influencing strategic plans delivery group

#### 1. Background

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has stated that being a ‘government recognised’ LNP means:

- it will be seen as a balanced, strategic and knowledgeable partnership that can add value to important decision making in an area
- it will have an important contribution to make to strategic planning matters within their area

The government has added (January 2013) LNP’s to the Duty to Co-operate in the Local Planning Regulations. This means that bodies bound by the duty to co-operate will need to have regard to the views of LNP’s on strategic planning matters. This will include informing and working collaboratively with local planning authorities.

A strategic planning delivery group has been set up to enable the TVNP to work towards ensure that the vision and objectives of the TVNP for a sustainable high quality natural environment are met by influencing local, sub regional and national policies and strategies. This group reports to the TVNP Management Group.

#### 2. Purpose and remit of group

- to liaise with the local planning authorities and recommend a process for the LNP to become an effective partner in the local plan process
- to identify the main cross-boundary and landscape scale issues affecting the natural environment in the Tees Valley and demonstrate how these could be addressed through the local plan process
- demonstrate the value of the TVNPs “Natural Network and Opportunity Mapping” and how its evidence can be applied
- identify any gaps in the current evidence base for local plans and recommend how these gaps should be filled
- investigate the potential for biodiversity offsetting in the Tees Valley
- contribute to wider policies, such as regeneration, health and wellbeing, to promote the role of a quality natural environment.

#### 3. Production of TVNP responses on consultations on strategies and plans

This group reports to the TVNP management and is tasked with drawing up TVNP input on strategic consultations. It is important that the coordinated response is solely related to the vision and aims and objectives of the TVNP rather than any wider objectives of individual partner organisations.

For example in preparing responses to local land use planning policies and strategies the following questions should be considered if appropriate;

- How will the policies protect, enhance and expand the ecological network in the Tees Valley?
- Do the policies address the need for landscape scale approach to the natural environment?
- Do the policies address the protection of the hierarchy of site protection?
- Do the policies make use of the most up to date and accurate data? Is the additional data that could be used?
- Do the policies support a sustainable ecosystem services?
- Do the policies incorporate/take into account mitigation and adaptation to climate change
- What implications do the policies have in improving quality and accessibility of public open space
- Do policies promote/provide opportunities for people to explore the natural environment through footpaths/cycle ways network
- Do policies promote the transition to low carbon economy

#### **4. Mechanism for producing responses**

A working mechanism needs to be established to enable the TVNP to respond to its strategic planning role, recognising the challenges that a Partnership has in having a wide ranging membership and the need to work within short time frames via email and ensuring that there is adequate opportunities for participation and transparency. To do this it is suggested that the following system is trialled;

An influencing strategic plans programme has been produced which will be regularly updated by the TVNP Development Manger. Each plan will be assigned a lead. This spreadsheet will be used to track progress on consultations that will provide dates for the planning group members to contribute input, a time for the assigned lead to draw up a collated response and a defined window of opportunity for members of the Management group to comment if they so wish. The formal response will be send on a TVNP letter head which will include standard paragraphs on the role and remit of the TVNP, its membership and the scope of the response. This will be signed off by either the Chair of the Management group or the TVNP Development Manager on behalf of the partnership.



## Annual single data returns for Tees Valley Local Sites (2012/13)

### 1. Background

The Single Data List catalogues all the data that local authorities are required to submit to central government departments in a given year. The Single Data List 160-00 on Improved Local Biodiversity reports on Local Sites designated locally for their nature conservation importance (either for wildlife or geology) which are being managed so as to conserve their nature conservation interest. The indicator covers all Local Sites in an Authorities area, not just those that the Local Authority owns or manages.

The TVNP, acting as the Local Sites Partnership for the Tees Valley has the responsibility for verifying the evidence that sites are under positive conservation management. Any issue regarding running of the Local Site system such as selection and de-selection of sites or facilitating management of sites should be dealt with by the Partnership in accordance with Defra's Local Site guidance. This ensures that there are no perverse incentives and manipulation of the system by one organisation is not possible.

### 2. 2012/13 returns

The five local authorities have submitted the data for the Single Data Returns (2012/13) to The Local Sites group. Sites are only regarded as being in positive management if they have documented evidence of management that maintains or enhances the features for which they have been selected. The sorts of evidence which would be relevant have been set out in [Defra \(2008\)](#).

The evidence was considered and the data agreed at their meeting on 16 April.

In summary the totals are:

Borough	Positive management	Total sites	Percentage
Stockton	30	57	53
R&C	22	84	26
Hartlepool	20	50	40
Middlesbrough	11	17	64
Darlington	10*	27	37

\* On the Darlington return, Rockwell and Brinkburn are each listed as two separate sites. These have been combined to one site in each case in the total of 27 Local Sites (as agreed at the management meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> February) therefore the return for 2012/13 is 10/27 and not 12.

This table is supported by data provided by local authorities, which is available for inspection upon request (emailed to Management Group members). It is recommended that the TVNP Management Group endorse the agreement reached by the Local Sites Group based on evidence provided by the Tees Valley local authorities.

# TVNP and EU growth Funding for the Tees Valley

## 1. Current situation

The Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have been given the role of managing Growth Funds from the European Union from 2014. In the Tees Valley the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership is gearing up to manage somewhere between £100M - £200M in European funding from 2014. With the European Parliament still to agree its budget and the UK Government yet to agree on the internal distribution of funds, there is considerable uncertainty around this funding, however, in order to establish the plans and frameworks for a possible start on spending in summer 2014, the LEP has to work on the basis that all will be agreed and begin to develop proposals (in the form of a Structural and Investment Fund Strategy) for the use of the funds.

The Tees Valley LEP (Tees Valley Unlimited) has given the task of developing its Structural and Investment Fund Strategy (SIFS) to its Investment Panel – an important group which is closely aligned to its Leadership Board. The Investment Panel has agreed to introduce a ‘Part A’ to its meeting which will focus on EU cohesion fund development and which will be expanded (on the advice of central government) to include new representatives from Higher Education, the Voluntary Community sector and the Local Nature Partnership.

The initial role of the Investment Panel (Part A) is to

- provide comments on the consultation response to the Preliminary guidance issued to LEPs on the development of Structural & Investment Fund Strategies;
- consider the strategic allocation of funding between the 11 EU Priority themes;
- consider updates on the progression of the Phase 2 Smart Specialisation research;
- consider the remit and receive updates on the proposed research into the other Thematic Priorities;
- consider the draft Structural & Investment Fund Strategy prior to submission at the end of September; and
- consider further developments to the Structural & Investment Fund Strategy as further detail becomes available.

The EU funding under discussion comprises the four Common Strategic Framework (CSF) Funds, namely European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); European Social Fund (ESF); European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARDF) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

The CSF Funds are allocated on a geographical basis using a European categorisation at NUTS 2 level (generally sub regional and in our case Tees Valley and Durham) with three types of region agreed, differentiated by relative prosperity. Tees Valley and Durham are classified as “Transition Regions” along with 10 other areas in the UK. The rest of the North East is classified as More Developed”

The advantage of Transition Regions is that they will get

- Significantly more money
- Greater flexibility on spending between funds and thematic objectives
- Higher grant level (an intervention rate of up to 60% compared to up to 50% in more developed areas).

Thematic objectives for the use of funds include Employment, Skills, Social Inclusion and Institutional Capacity, R&D and innovation (especially commercialisation), SME competitiveness (especially exports), Shift to low carbon

economy (especially energy efficiency and renewable technologies) and ICT. There are complex rules on how funding is apportioned between thematic objectives.

There are no thematic objectives relating directly to the biodiversity and the natural environment.

## **2. Next Steps at the UK Government / TVU Level**

After Spring Budget: outline LEP guidance published on EU investment strategies (Tees Valley EU Investment Prospectus), (alongside outline response to Lord Heseltine review) and requesting input re freedoms and flexibilities areas would like to see, Financial Instruments etc – to help shape final guidance. TVU submitting response to the preliminary guidance (published in April) by the end of May 2013.

From Spring 2013: LEPs to identify and prioritise EU pipeline investment, with advice from local EU teams.

Summer 2013: more detailed LEP guidance once EU negotiations with EP further developed and final response to Lord Heseltine review complete. More detailed guidance expected on or around the CSR 26 June. EU allocations expected in advance of detailed guidance.

End September 2013: LEPs submit first cut strategic plans including emerging EU pipeline to Government for agreement / steer.

Winter 2013: LEP / Government agree targets, milestones. Plans consolidated at national level.

End December 2013: Government to submit UK Partnership Agreement to EC.

End January 2014: LEPs to submit final Investment Strategies.

Spring 2014: UK business plan (incorporating LEPs' proposals) agree with European Commission

Summer 2014: start spending

## **3. Issues for discussion by TVNP**

The last meeting of the TVNP Management Group chose to send David Tarttelin and Jeremy Garside to meet with TVU to be briefed on the European funding process and the role envisaged for the Investment Panel. At that meeting we emphasised that our mandate was limited, but TVU was expecting to make a formal appointment of representatives at the May meeting of its Investment Panel.

As a partnership, we have yet to evolve a mechanism for electing representatives and it is not even clear whether this is a role for the Management Group or Board. As an interim measure (and given the tight timescales and absence of any other proposal) the Investment Panel chose to appoint David Tarttelin as TVNP's representative with Jeremy Garside as deputy.

With the complexity of European funding and the range of issues and opportunities that will arise, representation should not be left solely to the efforts of the individual attending the Panel meetings. TVNP needs to consider how partners can support and engage through its representatives perhaps through a new working group.



