



TVNP Management Group Meeting

10 am, 27th February 2013 at Billingham Beck Country Park

Agenda

10.00 - 10.05 **Welcome and introductions**

M/01.01.13 **10.05-10.15** **Actions and matters arising from last meeting**

M/02.01.13 **10.15-10.25** **Report from Board meeting** *(board minutes)*

Update from Jeremy Garside on first meeting of the board on 22 January 2013.

M/03.01.13 **10.25-10.40** **Nature Network and Opportunity Mapping**
(paper M/03.01.13)

Progress review on project including some examples of draft visual presentation and landscape opportunity area selection to enable discussion on how to present and communicate work to maximise its value to different sectors.

M/04.01.13 **10.40-10.50** **Vision document**

Proposals from the task group on the function and format of a vision document for discussion and development.

Coffee and cake break

M/05.01.13 **11.15- 11.30** **Tees Valley "Growth Ready" initiative**
(paper M/05.01.13)

Presentation by David Tarttelin in this Environment Agency led project that develop an evidence package that provides information on environmental risks and opportunities associated with growth proposals in Tees Valley. This initiative is being designed to meet the needs of, and successfully influence, the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, contributing towards efforts to promote strategic growth that protects and enhances the environment.

M/06.01.13 11.30-11.40 Local sites Partnership work *(paper M/06.01.13)*

Update from a member of Local Sites group including the proposal of the selection of x additional local sites for ratification and additional items identified by the group for a requested action.

**M/07.01.13 11.45-11.55 Realising the Value of TV's ancient woodlands
*(paper M/07.01.13)***

Proposal from Sue Antrobus for the TVNP to take forward the survey of the extent, condition and management of the Tees Valley's ancient woodlands to work with Forestry commission, forestry sector woodland owners to improve their sustainable management contribute to the Tees Valley rural economy.

M/08.01.13 11.55- 12.15 Short updates and announcements

- TVNP planning group
- Tees Valley Rural Summit (TVRCC)
- Forestry Regional Advisory meeting
- Natural England GI funding
- Wetland and coastal action group
- Ministerial LNP event
- NERC Ecosystem services research
- North Tees Natural Network community event

M/09.01.13 12.15-12.30 future meeting format review and agenda planning

TVNP Management Group Meeting

10 am, 27th February 2013 at Billingham Beck Country Park

Minutes

Attendance: David Tarttelin (Environment Agency), Jeremy Garside (Tees Valley Wildlife Trust), Malcolm Steele (TVU) Rob Brown (TV Local Access Forum) Sarah Scarr (Hartlepool Borough Council), Phil Roxby (Darlington Borough Council), Tim Crawshaw (Darlington Borough Council), Phil Jones (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council), Nick Brodin (Natural England) Anne-Louise Orange (Groundwork North East), Bob Pailor (Industry and Nature Conservation Association), Amanda Miller (RSPB), Anne Gladwin (Middlesbrough Council), Graham Clingan (Stockton Borough Council), Graham Megson (TBC), Sue Antrobus (TVNP).

Apologies: Helen Herring (Wildflower Ark) Kate Roberts (Forestry Commission)

M/01.01.13 10.05-10.15 Actions and matters arising from last meeting

- Action 1 - done
- Action 2- on agenda
- Action 3 - yet to be carried out
- Action 4 - In progress
- Action 5 - done, on agenda
- Action 6 - done
- Action 8 - In progress, on agenda
- Action 10 - done
- Action 11 - done

M/02.01.13 Report from Board meeting

JG gave an update on the first meeting of the TVNP board (22 January 2013). The meeting mainly comprised of informing and updating the board with the development of the TVNP; its remit structure and current initiatives and the role of the board. The board were very supportive of the wealth of development work that has been carried out so far by the Management Group and through the stakeholder engagement workshops in 2012. They decided to meet four times a year and meeting dates have been set until March 2014. They decided that it was too early to elect a chair and that initially they would operate with a revolving chair. Minutes of the board meeting were previously circulated and are available at <http://teesvalleynaturepartnership.org.uk/groups/all-members/documents/>

There was discussion on the timing and frequency of Management Group meetings to tie in with the board meetings. It was decided that in order to prepare material for board meetings that management group meeting be held around 4 -5 weeks prior to board meetings with SA ensuring feedback from Board meetings to the Management Group via email.

Action 1: SA to arrange Management Group meetings up until March 2014 via doodle poll.

M/03.01.13 Nature Network and Opportunity Mapping *(paper M/03.01.13)*

SA gave a PowerPoint presentation on the progress of the project and to open discussion on its future direction and applications. Phase 1 of the project has involved a review of data sets, collation and mapping of suitable data has been completed with a few data sets to chase up. A detailed digital bibliography has been produced and a rationale given when there was a choice of alternative data sets available. Phase 2 of the project is now underway with a completion date of end of March. This has involved the identification of five landscape opportunity areas for which some draft maps were shown. A description of each is currently being prepared which describes the natural features, natural assets and designations and opportunities. Before this is published SA would like to bring together

key people with local ecological expertise who initially fed into the project in 2012 to ensure that the mapping has captured and accurately described and interpreted the ecological data before the workshop with Tees Valley land use planners on 26 April. Phase 3 of the project will be to look at each Local Authority area and integrating GI mapping as well as producing mapping of ecological assets for the River Tees Rediscovered landscape project. Discussion focused on the use of mapping and integration with layers for planned land use development and also opportunities to develop with the addition of historic and heritage sites. Opportunities on watercourses with SUDS using the mapping were highlighted and an analysis of drivers for change e.g. Water Framework Directive, climate change etc was suggested as part of the project. It was recognised that there would need to be greater development of the interpretation before the meeting with planners.

Action 2: ALO to provide SA with a boundary map of the River Tees Rediscovered project

Action 3: SA to arrange meeting with local ecological expertise to review Phase 2 project outcomes for 26th March.

Action 4: SA to arrange workshop meeting with planners with input from MS

M/04.01.13 Vision document

Feedback from the board was that this should be short, succinct and straightforward and not time consuming to produce. MS, BP and SA met with Richard Hall and Lucy Marshall to take forward work on the TVNP vision document. This group had outlined that the purpose of the vision was to provide a clear focus for the partnership enabling it to set priorities and to act as a communication tool with other sectors to promote the value of a high quality natural environment and the role of the TVNP. The format of the document was envisaged as moving away from a static document idea to a more dynamic web based format, with a pdf printable version available.

It is envisaged that one overarching summary document with sector specific documents would be produced. The overarching document would lay out the context (local environment and role of LNPs) and include a vision statement, describe what we are trying to achieve and why the natural environment is important (use of Venn/circular diagram showing links), a short section on structure, key priorities, Tees Valley examples of how delivery is based on partnerships e.g. Natural Network and opportunity mapping project, River Tees Rediscovered, Tees Valley Growth Ready. The sector specific documents, on the web based version will link into the overarching document via picture/diagram. These would make reference to national/local policies and strategies in each sector that the natural environment is relevant to.

It was agreed that advocacy planning should take place alongside the development of the vision document to examine approaches to stakeholders and other sectors. This could be part of the communication plan to maximise the impact of the vision document and the functions of the website. The role that the Board and Management Group members can play in this should be considered and placed on the agenda of the next Board meeting.

Action 5: TVNP Vision task and finish work continue to work on vision document to have a draft of the overarching document ready for consideration at the next Board meeting.

M/05.01.13 Tees Valley “Growth Ready” initiative *(paper M/05.01.13)*

DT gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Environment Agency “Growth Ready” initiative, which is being piloted in the Tees Valley with the Tees Valley LEP. This initiative has developed from the Environment Agency signed a Working Protocol with Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) in 2011 with both parties having a shared ambition to see the Tees Valley develop a strong and sustainable economy within a vibrant and resilient local environment. One of the key aims is to work with the LEP to streamline processes for developers and investors to obtain the necessary planning consent from the local authority and relevant environmental permits from the Environment Agency. The first phase of the project has focused on the Tees Valley Enterprise zones, with the aim to develop “evidence products” that would help TVU facilitate development (e.g. encouraging inward investment) with speed and confidence, while influencing such developments to protect and enhance the environment. Here work is being undertaken in identifying and (spatially) mapping TVU growth priorities and overlaying these with Defra network environmental information to identify potential areas of constraint and opportunity. This mapping work with the TVU will identify where there is uncertainty surrounding environmental issues from TVU’s point of view (and the developers they liaise with) in terms of real and perceived barriers to investment e.g. flood risk, contaminated land, waste water treatment capacity etc.

It was agreed that providing accurate and appropriate information with interpretation was very useful and presented opportunities to ensure that environmental improvements/opportunities for biodiversity enhancements

could be maximised by this approach. It was also important to ensure that the information/advice looked at “future proofing” in relation to climate change. It was noted that TVNP partners, especially INCA had considerable local intelligence that is an important role in the interpretation of data. It was noted that Northumbria Water are doing some work with the Environment agency on identifying risks to development on surface water drainage issues.

Action 6: DT to send INCA copies of draft formats that the initiative is using and to further explore joint working

M/06.01.13 Local Sites Partnership work

(paper M/06.01.13)

AG reported that the Local Sites group had been established and is chaired by Ian Bond, (Hartlepool Borough Council). The group has met and has been communicating by email. The group proposed that the following selection/boundary changes to Local Sites be ratified by the Management Group.

Local Geological sites (RIGS)

Four sites on geological criteria are suggested. These additions are a result of extensive geological survey work that focused mainly in Darlington, carried out by the TVRIGS in 2012, with funding from Natural England. Geological reports are in an accompanying file.

1. Killerby North Lane Quarry (disused), Darlington NZ 19642013
2. Side Hill, Houghton-le-Side Quarry (disused), Darlington NZ 22132785
3. High Coniscliffe Quarries (disused), Darlington NZ 2254 1527 and NZ 2255 1521
4. Red Howles, Marske Sands, Redcar and Cleveland NZ 6266-2374 and NZ 6273-2377 to 6277-2374

Local Wildlife sites

1. Addition of Bonds Bog, Darlington NZ296179. This is 2ha rush pasture in north Darlington. Surveys in 2011 by Darlington Council found that tubular water dropwort, a nationally scarce plant, is frequent on the site therefore it would meet criteria V1 of the Tees Valley Local Sites Selection Guidelines.
2. Alteration to the boundaries on Brinkburn, Darlington, in order to amalgamate adjacent sites which are designated principally for their amphibians. The new boundary has also been extended slightly to include an area of ponds on an allotment site which supports 4 native amphibian species.

These changes were agreed by the meeting.

The Local Sites group also recognised the need to have a rolling programme of site visits to undertake Local Sites surveys and asked that the TVNP management group for ideas on the identification of potential funding to re-survey the sites. It was noted that the Local Wildlife Sites were selected for the Tees Valley (apart from Darlington) on the basis of systematic review of data and surveys organised by the TVBP, and carried out by the Wildflower Ark. The first surveys were carried out in Middlesbrough in 2005. The importance of accurate up to date data was discussed and how this was the backbone of the current mapping projects being carried out with a need to have a programme for updating. It was suggested that there may be an opportunity for funding this work by local planning authorities under the need to “monitor impact of policies in the development framework”.

GC highlighted the need for the local sites group to produce a timetable for the collation and submission of data on the Local Sites indicator and the need for the group to collectively address setting future local authority targets in a collective way.

Action 7: Ian Bond to write to relevant Local Authorities of changes and additions of Local Sites ratified by the group.

Action 8: Local Sites group produce a timetable for action on reporting on Local Sites indicator to ensure timing of submission of data to be ratified by management group.

Action 9: Local Sites group to scope a timetable and cost a programme of resurvey work to enable the management group to explore funding opportunities.

M/07.01.13 Realising the Value of TV’s ancient woodlands

(paper M/07.01.13)

SA introduced proposals for the TVNP to take forward the survey of the extent, condition and management of the Tees Valley’s ancient woodlands to work with Forestry Commission and forestry sector woodland owners to improve their sustainable management and contribute to the Tees Valley rural economy. It was recognised that with the current FC and ES grants coming to a close and uncertainly in replacement schemes that timing for landowners wasn’t the best.

Action 10: AM to provide SA contact details of an RSPB officer with extensive ancient woodland experience

M/08.01.13 Short updates and announcements

TVNP planning group

MS, in consultation with local authority planners, has composed a list of key planning documents that the TVNP should contribute to. In addition it was considered that the TVNP should consider the Middlesbrough LDF Housing Review Preferred Options. There was discussion on the difficulties on reaching a census, especially as the remit of the TVNP is broader than the former TVBP, however there are some key dates rapidly approaching and it was agreed that it was essential that we respond. MS agreed to coordinate this with interested parties and by sharing the response for comment by all via email as had been done with previous plans.

Action 11: MS to coordinate TVNP response on key local plans

Tees Valley Rural Summit (TVRCC)

Tees Valley Rural Community Council have an annual rural summit, this is well attended by parish councils and community groups. This year the event is being held on 15th March at Preston Hall with an environmental theme and is an opportunity to launch TVNP to these groups as well as introducing the River Tees Rediscovered Project. There is also an afternoon session on neighbourhood planning. JG is giving a presentation and workshop at the event. The link is posted on the TVNP website at <http://teesvalleynaturepartnership.org.uk/2013/02/26/tees-valley-rural-summit-2013/>

Forestry Regional Advisory meeting

The Forestry Commission's North East Regional Advisory Committee, of which SA is a member, is holding its next meeting (13 March) in Middlesbrough. On their agenda is LNPs and they have asked the TVNP to do a presentation. AG has agreed to do this on behalf of the TVNP. In the afternoon the committee will be looking at East Cleveland Ancient woodlands and visiting woodlands at Saltburn.

Natural England GI funding

Local authorities and the TVWT have been sent application forms by Natural England to apply for support for partnership projects to develop Green Infrastructure strategies or for delivery of priority habitat and Green Infrastructure on the ground in 2013/14. It was noted that the fund is undersubscribed with one of the issues being that applicants are finding that a cap on funding of £140 per hectare is unrealistic particularly for delivering GI on urban sites. This also means that the level of paperwork can be disproportionate to the grant value. GC has put together an application bringing together a number of sites in Stockton and offered an opportunity for other TVNP partners to add sites to their application in an effort to reduce any administrative burden.

Action 12: NB to feedback to colleagues in Natural England issues raised.

Wetland and coastal action group

This TVNP group met in March, the agenda was focused on discussion of the development of a project on significant species for the River Tees Rediscovered landscape scheme.

Ministerial LNP event

DT was invited to attend this as no board members could attend the date. DT reported that the minister, Richard Benyon, came across as being a genuine advocate of LNPs and Defra staff were very encouraging and wanted LNPs to be successful. This was the first of an annual ministerial event for LNP chairs, hosted by Defra.

Some LNPs are becoming well established and there were 3 presentations by LNPs sharing their success and approaches that are working for them. Some delegates requested more help from Defra to open doors with LEPs as some are finding it difficult to engage with LEPs. There was a call from delegates for support from Defra and guidance on how to tackle this. Also LNPs are keen for Defra to support them by initiating sharing good practice and networking, for example setting up an online forum. David Henshilwood from Natural England presented on the Defra network offer to LNPs.

Action 13: David to write short update for TVNP website

NERC Ecosystem services research

The TVNP have received an invitation to a workshop on Friday 2 March run by York University on ecosystem services mapping. ALO will attend on behalf of both the TVNP and RTR.

Action 14: ALO to report back on workshop.

North Tees Natural Network community event

The community workshop to be held in February has been postponed, and will now take place on 15 April.

BARs training

Training in the new version of BARs (Biological Action Recording System) is being organised by ERIC. Anyone wishing to attend should contact Katherine Pinnock at ERIC.

Tees River Catchment plan

Groundwork North East and the River Tees Trust are working with the Environment Agency to create the Tees Catchment Plan. This plan will look at how rivers are managed and how together we can improve our rivers for people and wildlife. A series of public consultations are being held. For more information visit;
<http://www.northeast.groundwork.org.uk/what-we-do/major-initiatives/tees-catchment-plan.aspx>

B-lines

This is a national project run by Buglife for the creation and restoration of at least 150,000 hectares of flower-rich habitat across Britain. The B-Lines concept has been piloted in Yorkshire and they currently have a project covering Durham and the Tees Valley. There is a mapping workshop on Monday 18th March at the Durham Wildlife Trust. It was noted that JG and PR plan to attend as well as Geoff Barber from INCA. More information at;
<http://www.buglife.org.uk/conservation/currentprojects/Habitats+Action/B-Lines/The+B-Lines+Project>

EU Growth Programme

MS discussed the letter that had been sent to all LEPs from the Government about the EU Common Strategic Framework. The EU Growth Programme will be notionally allocated to LEP areas. Each LEP will lead the development of an EU Investment Strategy. In the letter reference is made to working with partners including LNPs and Food and Farming networks. TVU has asked MS to initiate discussions with TVNP. There is a short timetable and therefore a need to make a start before the next board meeting. It was agreed that initially DT and JG would take the lead on this.

Action 15: JG & DT attend initial discussions and communicate with Management Group and Board as required.

M/09.01.13 Future meeting format review and agenda planning

SA to pull together from the minutes an agenda for the board meeting and liaise with management group members on content and supporting documents.

Action 16: SA to arrange meeting using doodle poll



Management Group meeting *paper M/03.01.13*

Tees Valley Natural Networks and Opportunities Map Update

1. Project objective

1. Describe the natural and local environment of the Tees Valley that we are seeking to protect, promote and enhance.
2. Identify and map the components of the local ecological network (designated sites), wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them so that it is possible to identify landscape areas for habitat restoration or creation.
3. Identify and map the biodiversity interest of strategic green infrastructure in urban areas and links with public rights of way and cycle routes.
4. Identify the key components of each area that we need to enhance to create robust functioning ecosystems. Using the existing TVBAP Habitat and Species Action Plans and Local Sites management targets where possible to provide targets for Local Plans that will promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and protection and recovery of priority species populations
5. Review of landscape-scale ecological delivery opportunities in the Tees Valley, bringing together the objectives of existing landscape partnerships and analysis of local data sets to identify key areas for landscape scale activity.

2. Progress on project

1. Relevant datasets have been located and where the data is robust, used to create GIS layers. These layers comprise of international and national site designations, Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and other locally designed reserves. UK Priority habitat has been mapped using a combination of local and national data. Information on UK priority species has been collated but only mapped for great crested newt and water vole as for other species there is no comprehensive Tees Valley wide survey results. Local Authority GIS layers (where available) have been collated. The data has already highlighted gaps in evidence which is useful in directing future survey/data gathering.
2. Using this data five distinct natural landscape areas have been identified, based on high levels of priority habitats and species and habitat connectivity. These are Tees Estuary area, East Cleveland rural landscape, River Tees and Skerne, Middlesbrough Becks, and as yet unnamed Tees Valley farmland landscape (which include parts of Stockton, Hartlepool and Darlington). For each of these areas a description with annotated area maps are in the process of being produced that follow the same format. This includes a description of the natural environment, outline of key natural assets and designations, and lists broad requirements/action for the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and protection and recovery of priority species populations.

3. Pictures of draft maps will be presented during the meeting for discussion. It is important to note that although GIS has been used, it has been as a tool rather than an end product and it is the interpretation and local intelligence that is the project outcome. The resulting documents will clearly signpost all data sources rather than supply these layers.

3. Next stage

1. A draft of the Nature Opportunities Networks for internal consultation is planned for end of March 2013. This will enable TVNP partners an opportunity to assess the in the content, format and presentation of work carried out so far and contribute further local natural environment intelligence. It will also help direct second stage of project which will focus on mapping of priority habitats and species on Green Infrastructure networks for each local authority area.
2. An immediate use of the landscape scale analysis from the project is to assist the Tees Valley local authorities with the new Local Plans under the National Planning Policy Framework. In these documents local authorities are directed by the NPPF to *“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 *“To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should plan for biodiversity at a landscape scale across local authority boundaries and identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them, and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation”*.
3. A workshop for the Tees Valley Development Plans Officer Group is being planned (either 16 or 23 April). This will give planning officers an opportunity view the draft mapping document and discuss with the TVNP their information needs and how the information can be best presented to meet their planning needs.

Input required from management group

At this stage we want to ensure that there is general consensus on the presentation and interpretation of natural environment information for the workshop in April. It is suggested that that this is achieved by gathering together our local ecological expertise in the Tees Valley for a working morning on 26 March to review and refine the mapping interpretation.



Management Group meeting *paper M/04.02.13*

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.

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.

Tees Valley “Growth Ready” Initiative

1. Background

In July 2011, the Environment Agency signed a Working Protocol with our Local Enterprise Partnership Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU), both parties having a shared ambition to see the Tees Valley develop a strong and sustainable economy within a vibrant and resilient local environment. We stated that we want to work together to achieve two key aims:

- Streamlined processes for developers and investors to obtain the necessary planning consent from the local authority and relevant environmental permits from the Environment Agency
- Effective joint working and dialogue on relevant Local Development Framework documents and on other plans, strategies and programmes produced by local authorities, Tees Valley Unlimited and the Environment Agency

In support of this, we have had a continuing dialogue over the last year on how best the Agency could work directly with TVU to support their aims and ambitions. Early engagement focussed on how we could take forward the lessons learnt from our engagement in the Enterprise Zone process. This led to the idea of “evidence products” that would help TVU facilitate development (e.g. encouraging inward investment) with speed and confidence, while influencing such developments to protect and enhance the environment.

We recently named this our “Growth Ready” initiative, which we think will consist of a number of phases. It is envisaged that we will find, use and then present Defra family information in a format TVU find useful and in doing so, highlight the opportunities and challenges associated with priority growth ambitions and proposals, as well as potential solutions to address the issues.

2. Current status of project

This January, we started Phase 1 with the aim of:

1. Identifying and (spatially) mapping TVU growth priorities. Overlaying these with Defra network environmental information to identify potential areas of constraint and opportunity.
2. Using the mapping to work with the TVU and identify where there is uncertainty surrounding environmental issues from TVU’s point of view (and the developers they liaise with) in terms of real and perceived barriers to investment e.g. flood risk, contaminated land, waste water treatment capacity etc.
3. Focussing on 1 or 2 sites to work with TVU and look at joint opportunities and constraints in greater detail. At this stage climate change adaptation options and the role of green infrastructure at a site specific level will also be explored.

Sophie Evans in our local Sustainable Places team is working on this and she has already met or talked with TVU, our Defra partners in Natural England and the Forestry Commission, and seen the ongoing Natural Networks and Opportunities Mapping work .

We hope to complete this phase around March/April time and then review the outcomes, internally for learning and externally with TVU on how best to go forward with future work – this is likely to be in a phased programme. Early indications are that TVU are very supportive.

3. Input required from management group

I hope to be able to share some slide views of example work at our meeting.

The group is invited to comment and then discuss links with the TVNP/Wildflower Ark mapping and opportunities presented by wider spatial mapping initiatives.

David Tarttelin
Environment Agency

22 February

Local Sites Partnership matters

A local sites group has been established to take forward the local Sites Partnership work of the TVNP. This group is chaired by Ian Bond (Hartlepool Borough Council). The group held its first meeting on 7 January. Minutes are available at <http://teesvalleynaturepartnership.org.uk/groups/all-members/documents/>.

In addition there has been communication with the Tees Valley RIGs Group (Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites) and advice provided to Redcar and Cleveland Council officers on the management of their Local Sites management indicator documentation.

Ratification of selection/boundary changes to Local sites

The Local Sites group advise the TVNP management group to ratify the following additions/ boundary changes to Local Sites in the Tees Valley.

Local Geological sites (RIGS)

Four sites on geological criteria are suggested. These additions are a result of extensive geological survey work that focused mainly in Darlington, carried out by the TVRIGS in 2012, with funding from Natural England. Geological reports are in an accompanying file.

5. Killerby North Lane Quarry (disused), Darlington NZ 19642013
6. Side Hill, Houghton-le-Side Quarry (disused), Darlington NZ 22132785
7. High Coniscliffe Quarries (disused), Darlington NZ 2254 1527 and NZ 2255 1521
8. Red Howles, Marske Sands, Redcar and Cleveland NZ 6266-2374 and NZ 6273-2377 to 6277-2374

Local Wildlife sites

3. Addition of Bonds Bog, Darlington NZ296179. This is 2ha rush pasture in north Darlington. Surveys in 2011 by Darlington Council found that tubular water dropwort, a nationally scarce plant, is frequent on the site therefore it would meet criteria V1 of the Tees Valley Local Sites Selection Guidelines (map showing boundary attached).
4. Alteration to the boundaries on Brinkburn, Darlington, in order to amalgamate adjacent sites which are designated principally for their amphibians. The new boundary has also been extended slightly to include an area of ponds on an allotment site which supports 4 native amphibian species. (map showing boundary attached).

Others matters

The Local Sites partnerships recognise the need to have a rolling programme of site visits to undertake Local Sites surveys and that Local Authorities are unlikely to have any funding to pay for a re-survey of Local Sites in the future. They have asked that the TVNP management group for ideas on the identification of potential funding to re-survey the sites or at least a proportion of them.



Realising the value of the Tees Valley's Ancient Woodlands

-Taking forward the Tees Valley Ancient woodland survey project

1. Background

The newly published Government Forestry and Woodlands policy statement¹ identifies that both LNPs and LEPs have a potential role to play in the governments ambition to create a *“healthier, more resilient and sustainable forestry and woodland sector delivering long term social, environmental and economic benefits for all”*.

There is an opportunity for the TVNP to utilise the results of the TVBP's Tees Valley Ancient Woodland Ecological Condition Assessment to work with the Forestry Commission and the TVLEP to engage with woodland landowners, managers and wider forestry industry with a view to supporting the development of the sustainable management of the ancient woodland resource and contribute to the Tees Valley rural economy.

2. Ancient woodland survey project

In 2010-12 the former Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership (TVBP) carried out a comprehensive survey of the extent, characteristics, ecological condition, ownership and management of ancient woodlands in the Tees Valley². The project included ancient woodlands of two hectares or over, including PAWS. Areas of secondary (non-ancient) woodland were not surveyed as part of this project. The project received some grant funding from Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, Forestry Commission and Natural England.

The overarching aim of the initiative is to provide accurate landscape scale information on the ecological condition to ensure that the ancient woodland resource of the Tees Valley receives greater understanding, recognition, protection and appropriate management. The specific objectives were;

1. To provide a better understanding of the characteristics, condition, management and ownership of the ancient woodland resource. The information collected can be used to assist with woodland management and creation at a landscape scale.
2. To provide information to the Forestry Commission, Natural England and other partners to enable the co-ordinated prioritising and targeting of grants and other measures.
3. To provide advice and guidance to woodland owners and managers on the sustainable management of biodiversity and enable them to access funds to manage woodlands through the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) by the provision of condition assessment information.

3. Current status of project

1,019.45 ha of woodland were surveyed in 74 separate compartments during 2010/11. Field surveys were carried out on each woodland compartment using a survey form. This was based upon the Natural England SSSI Condition Assessment and with elements of the Forestry Commission's Condition, Threat and Opportunity Assessment form, along with additional items of local interest.

The field data was digitised and mapped using GIS ArcView. Data from the surveys has been brought together and analysed to provide survey wide data on a range of ecological condition measurements and presented graphically. A comprehensive report outlining the project methodology, results discussion and recommendations is in a good draft

¹ Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement Incorporating the Government's Response to the independent Panel on Forestry's Final Report, January 2013, Defra

² The Survey covered the boroughs of Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Stockton. It did not cover Darlington which at the time of the start of project was not part of the Tees Valley BAP.

format but with more work needed on the discussion and recommendations. A list of actions has been made that is required to complete the report.

In addition to the report, data on individual woodlands needs to be fully digitised and supplied to FC and woodland owners and update Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI). This requires systematically checking all the survey database, maps, photographs and GIS layers to ensure consistency and accuracy. Sensitivity is required on how the survey results of individual woodlands are communicated with woodland owners.

To complete the report and the required finalization of the GIS and woodland database the TVWT is providing additional funding for technical support from the Wildflower Ark. This will enable the TVNP Development Manager to complete and publish the report and provide completed data in a format for Forestry Commission use. A programme timetable for completion has been made.

4. Taking forward the project

The TVNP could use the detailed picture of the ecological condition of the ancient woodland resource in the Tees Valley that the survey has provided, to take forward locally some key priorities outlined in the Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy statement (January 2013).

We are discussing with the Forestry Commission approaches to sharing the findings of the survey results and recommendations to a wider audience in the Tees Valley in a way that which will stimulate discussion and explore opportunities amongst stakeholders including the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, and the commercial forestry/wood products sector that will realise the value of ancient woodlands. In particular to use the depth of data to underpin work to;

- Bring a greater proportion of ancient woodlands into sustainable forestry active management that will benefit their local landscape character and wildlife
- Explore with the scope for developing new economic opportunities for the management of ancient woodlands , e.g. wood fuel market and tourism that will support local rural economic development

It is proposed that alongside the detailed technical web-based document, a short summary publication (4 pages A4 – colour) is produced. This would headline key findings of the survey and its implications to a wider audience on the value of the ancient woodland resource in the Tees Valley along with opportunities for its sustainable management.

This and the full report could be launched at a conference. Two thirds of the ancient woodland resource is in private ownership and the conference would bring together the woodland ownership/management and biodiversity sector in the Tees Valley for the first time. It would provide an opportunity to generate a greater understanding of the ecological characteristics and condition of the Tees Valley's ancient woodlands. It would also engage a wide variety of stakeholders in exploring opportunities to best manage this resource for long term environmental, economic and social benefits. It would provide an opportunity for the Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust to promote their grant giving and advisory services and for the Tees Valley LEP to further their engagement with the rural economy of the Tees Valley.

Susan Antrobus 17.02.13

