



# Tees Valley Nature Partnership

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Dear Matthew King, Planning Policy Team leader,

24/02/2017

## **Duty to Co-operate – Hartlepool local plan**

Thank-you for undertaking the Tees Valley Nature Partnership Local Plan Assessment for Nature and Biodiversity.

This is an assessment tool to ensure that nature and biodiversity considerations are included in the local plans at any stage of the policy planning or review. A series of principles to evaluate this have been developed using the NPPF and NPPG that support the priorities and outcomes devised by the TVNP. Full details of the assessment including the 9 guiding principles, assessment forms and links to all the relevant strategies can be found at: [teesvalleynaturepartnership.org.uk/resources/local-plan-assessment-for-nature-biodiversity/](http://teesvalleynaturepartnership.org.uk/resources/local-plan-assessment-for-nature-biodiversity/)

We acknowledge that the Hartlepool local plan process was well advanced when the TVNP launched the assessment in September 2016. Despite this the plan has still scored a rating of 'Good' and the work put in by the local authority will help to aid the development of the other Tees Valley Local Plans that follow on behind Hartlepool's. There is potential to increase your score, to do so we recommend a two-point approach: -

1. At this advanced point of the local plan process, we would recommend the following minor amendments to the policy wording in the plan.
  - a. NE 4 The Tees Valley Local Nature Partnership also in NE 1 16.14 The adjoining LNP is the North East Local Nature Partnership NELNP (formerly Three Rivers).
  - b. Consider adding specific details on local sites - the local plan is the mechanism for local designation of these sites e.g. Stockton ENV5 8.47 The Tees Valley Nature Partnership acts as the Local Sites Partnership in the Tees Valley. The partnership has produced a guidance document for the selection of Local Wildlife and Geological Sites in the Tees Valley in accordance with Defra (2006) guidance. The Local Sites guidance is based on local scientifically based knowledge within the partnership, with criteria covering 8 habitat types and 15 species/groups. These criteria will provide information to monitor site conditions and set management objectives for sites. Ancient woodland is



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- captured within the criteria for Local Sites.’
- c. Reference to BOAs Biodiversity Opportunity Areas where identified in the assessment feedback e.g. NE1
  - d. NE1 para 5 - BAP no longer exists it has been superseded by TVNP. Remove & re-word “in line with TVNP priority 1: Protect and enhance the geodiversity and biodiversity of the Tees Valley ensuring the conservation, restoration and creation of key landscapes and habitats, including mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change.”
  - e. Add reference to Water Framework Directive.
  - f. EMP1 could you reference BOA III Wynyard Woodland Chain here?
2. The following issues we would like to see progressed through Supplementary Planning Documents and if necessary incorporated into future revisions of the local plan. These are items we would like to see adopted across the whole of the Tees Valley and involve initiatives currently in development.
- a. Tees Valley wide biodiversity indicators.
  - b. Clarity on planning mechanisms to support the existing principle that developers are required to mitigate the impacts of development. As suggested in the new white paper ‘The Government will examine the options for reforming the system of developer contributions...’
    - i. The development of a biodiversity offsetting policy linked to a Tees Valley policy (agreement) including options for cross boundary strategic mitigation where appropriate. Add to NE 1 16.23?
    - ii. The application of Section 106 agreements – the government in the recent housing white paper suggest a ‘standardised open book Section 106 agreements’.
    - iii. A new strategic approach which streamlines the licensing system for protected species such as great crested newts including strategic mitigation at local authority level and potentially across the Tees Valley.
  - c. Future regard of any Tees Valley local guidance for buildings’ sustainability standards’.
  - d. Domestic renewable energy policy e.g. Stockton’s Policy ENV 3 which promotes the development of decentralised energy and seeks to contribute to the implementation of the Stockton-on-Tees district heat and power network. This network opens up new sites for development in locations which would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by utilising existing process heat.
  - e. Respond to the proposed amendment to the National Planning Policy Framework to indicate that ‘great weight should be attached to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes’.



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- f. Clearer reference to Local Green Space – commitment to promoting this to communities at the next revision of the local plan and if and when developed any Neighbourhood Plans.

We commend the following good practice NE 1 16.23 Biodiversity accounting/offsetting NE 1 16.24 Ecosystems Services. Pp255 diagram 5 ecological networks.

Once again thank you for taking the time and effort to undertake the assessment. To complete the process, we would appreciate a written response on how you intend to implement our recommendations. If you have any further queries in the meantime, please do get in touch.

We look forward to a continuing positive working relationship with you where we can all work to realise the partnerships vision of 'A rich and healthy natural environment in the Tees Valley that sustains a vibrant place for people to live work and learn'.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Murtagh  
TVNP Officer

CC Graham Megson, Ecologist; Matthew Clifford, Senior Planning Policy Officer