



# Tees Valley Nature Partnership

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Mr Chris Renahan, Head of Planning,  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council,

20/02/2017

Dear Chris Renahan,

## **Duty to Co-operate first feedback – Stockton local plan**

Thank-you for undertaking the Tees Valley Nature Partnership (TVNP) 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, the 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/)

All five Tees Valley planning authorities and the North York Moors National Park authority are undertaking the assessment. It has been agreed that the nature of our co-operation with the planning authorities are to be considered informal comments to use to update the plans and reference under the duty to co-operate statements. As such in line with your proposed plan development we envisage this will be a continuous process until the publication of your local plan for Stockton.

Following completion of the assessment you scored 'good' there is still some scope to improve the score and we re-recommend a two-point approach: -

1. The following minor amendments to the policy wording in the plan.
  - a. Specifically reference to Tees Estuary Partnership.
  - b. Reference to BOAs Biodiversity Opportunity Areas where identified in the assessment feedback (a paragraph has been supplied).
  - c. Consider amending the wording on SD8 to acknowledge the role of local communities 'Community involvement should be encouraged from the onset in the design, implementation and management of green infrastructure'



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2. The following items we would like to see progressed across the whole of the Tees Valley and involve initiatives currently in development. Please advise if these can be incorporated into the local plan or through supplementary planning documents if necessary.
  - 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.
    - 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. 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'.
  - e. Clearer reference to Local Green Space. Is there time to promote this to communities during this revision of the local plan?

May we commend you so far on your efforts, we were particularly impressed with the references to the opportunity mapping and decentralised energy generation and supply.

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, On behalf of the Tees Valley Nature Partnership

CC Paul Taylor, Principal Environment Officer; John Dixon, Strategic Planning Officer