



# Tees Valley Nature Partnership

Margrove Park Heritage Centre  
Margrove Park  
Boosbeck  
Saltburn  
TS12 3BZ

[www.teesvalleynaturepartnership.org](http://www.teesvalleynaturepartnership.org)  
[rmurtagh@teeswildlife.org](mailto:rmurtagh@teeswildlife.org)

01287 636382

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

27/03/18

Dear Chris Renahan,

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

Further to my correspondence with John Dixon of, 27 February 2018 and 16 October 2017.

Thank-you for the updates on how the points raised in my letter of 20/2/2017 have contributed to the amendments made to the Local Plan with respect to the duty to cooperate statement.

Since this initial letter there has of course been some local and national developments which I will take the opportunity to up-date you on:

- **Biodiversity offsetting in the Tees Valley.** It has been agreed the main mechanism for this will be the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas which are being developed with the Natural Assets Working Group and the assistance of Stockton Borough Councils GIS team. The detail will be informed by the Tees Estuary Partnership most specifically INCA's biodiversity offsetting/habitat banking system within the Tees Estuary area.
- **National Pioneer Project** – Linked to the above point, the West of England Nature Partnership are examining a model which could improve the strategic allocation of funding generated from developer contributions and payment for ecosystem services schemes to have maximum benefit to the protection and enhancement of a region's natural capital. We await the outcomes this year.
- **Tees Valley wide biodiversity and environmental indicators** The government published its [25 Year Environment Plan](#) in January this year. As part of this plan a set of metrics is being developed including both performance measures and outcome indicators. Our local indicators will be developed alongside this and the emerging Local Natural Capital Plans (local in our case refers to the north east Defra region).
- **Tees Valley guidance for sustainability standards.** The priority to develop/ commission these will be assessed as part of the Tees Valley Nature Partnership (TVNP) business plan process this year.
- **Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan** Reflecting national policy, the Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership (TVBP) was disbanded and replaced by the TVNP that has a wider remit, reflecting a landscape scale/ecosystem services approach. The Tees Valley Nature Partnership builds on this

One of 47 local nature partnerships across England designated by the Secretary of State. We link organisations in the Tees Valleys environmental, business & health & well-being sectors to form an influential partnership working strategically to conserve & enhance a healthy & robust natural environment, proven to aid our well-being & provide the natural assets vital for a healthy economy.



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legacy through its work, reflected in its forthcoming business plan and Natural Capital Investment Plan. A review of TV BAP was undertaken in December 2017 and it was agreed to update and retain the list of locally determined priority habitats and species. This is due for publication in April 2018 and will be forwarded to all Tees Valley Planning Authorities.

- **Local Sites designation process.** This is currently being reviewed by the partnership. Each Tees Valley Planning Authority will be contacted in due course for comment on the proposed new process with the aim of clarifying and standardising the process across all five authorities.
- **Current consultation on NPPF.** We would be keen to explore perhaps by way of a Tees Valley planners workshop the implications and local delivery of:
  - ‘environmental net gain’
  - minimising impacts and providing net gains for biodiversity including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures
  - strategic approach to maintaining and strengthening networks of habitats and green infrastructure... plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
  - identify and map components of local wildlife-rich habitats, including areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation.
  - PPG What evidence might be needed to plan for the natural environment? - 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.

Please do not hesitate in contacting me to discuss any areas the partnership may be able to assist you and your colleagues with.

Yours sincerely

**Rachel Murtagh**  
TVNP Officer

CC: John Dixon, Strategic Planning Officer; Graham Clingan, Greenspace Strategy and Partnership Manager; Paul Taylor, Principal Environment Officer