

# Partnership Terms of Reference

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## 1. Context and Broad Role of the Partnership

The Tees Valley Nature Partnership (TVNP) is a cross sector Tees Valley wide partnership that has been formed to take a strategic overview of the natural environment and look for ways to manage, enhance and promote it that will produce outcomes that integrate the needs of nature, people and the economy.

The TVNP was formed as a response to the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) (2011) in which the government invited new and existing partnerships to come together to form Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs). The TVNP received government recognition as the LNP for the Tees Valley in July 2012.

The NEWP recognises that a healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. The Tees Valley is home to the largest integrated heavy industrial area in the UK, which continues to create wealth and employment. This sits within a mosaic of 'natural assets' from a rich urban and suburban green infrastructure<sup>1</sup>, the river Tees and estuary, the Beck valleys, coast, brownfield wildlife sites and rural East Cleveland with heather moorland to ancient semi natural woodland.

### 1.1 Geographic Coverage

The TVNP covers the local authority areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. The boundary extends out to sea for 3 nautical miles. It shares the same boundaries as the Local Enterprise Partnership/Combined Authority and many other organisations and initiatives. Part of the North York Moors National Park overlaps into its southern boundary.

### 1.2 The Purpose of the TVNP

- To be an effective unified voice to champion the Tees Valley's environment.
- To provide a strategic framework for local environmental delivery.
- To influence local plans, strategies and policies to integrate the delivery of environmental benefits and services alongside economic and social benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> The collective term for open green spaces e.g. parks, gardens, allotments, church yards, local nature reserves, river corridors, road verges etc.

### 1.3 The Role of the TVNP

The role is to bring a wide range of partnerships and organisations working in the Tees Valley together to provide a knowledgeable and objective voice for the natural environment. The partnership acts as a conduit between local interests and priorities and central government.

The drive is for positive change for the Tees Valley’s natural environment by working collaboratively to develop a shared strategic vision and coordinate the delivery of strategic priorities to improve the natural environment and produce multiple benefits for the local economy and health and wellbeing.

## 2. The Vision for The Tees Valley

*A Tees Valley where more people are connected to bigger and better wildlife rich spaces*

The Partnership works to coordinate and strengthen local action to secure a functioning, sustainable and resilient bio-diverse natural environment. Which improves the health, well-being and livelihoods of people in the Tees Valley.

## 3. Three Key Themes to Achieve the Vision

THEME 1: NATURAL ASSETS	<i>Natural Assets Working Group</i>
	<i>Environmental Policy CPD Working Group</i>
	<i>BOA Mapping Working Group</i>
THEME 2: NATURAL GROWTH	<i>Natural Capital Working Group</i>
THEME 3: NATURAL HEALTH & WELLBEING	<i>Public Health Working Group</i>
	<i>Engagement Working Group</i>
THEME 4: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	<i>Partnership Financing Working Group</i>
	<i>Tees Nature Conference Planning Group</i>
	<i>Large Projects Working Group</i>

Figure 1: Theme and Objectives of TVNP agreed for 2019-2022 Business Plan

## 4. Structure and Governance of the Partnership

### 4.1 Full Partnership

TVNP aims to be as representative as possible of all the interested parties in nature in the Tees Valley area. Membership of the TVNP is open to any organisation, public or private, government or non-governmental, corporate or incorporated which is interested in furthering the work of the Partnership and has agreed to the terms of reference of the Partnership. It's not open to individuals but is open to organisations both large and small.

Membership means:

- Collective voice - joining the already strong and committed members of the partnership.
- Promotion and support of member organisations.
- The opportunity to participate in topic focused 'working groups' that inform the work of the partnership and beyond e.g. planning & nature, natural health & wellbeing, natural assets.
- Up-to-date local and national information to keep informed of projects, plans and developments across the Tees Valley related to nature through quarterly newsletter and links to social media.
- An annual membership conference to:
  - Provide an opportunity for all members of the partnership to contribute to the strategic direction of the TVNP,
  - Share and celebrate achievements of the TVNP and its member organisations,
  - Enable partners to share knowledge and best practice between each other and draw inspiration from beyond Tees Valley.

### 4.2 Governance

The TVNP is governed by a steering group which is supported by working groups.

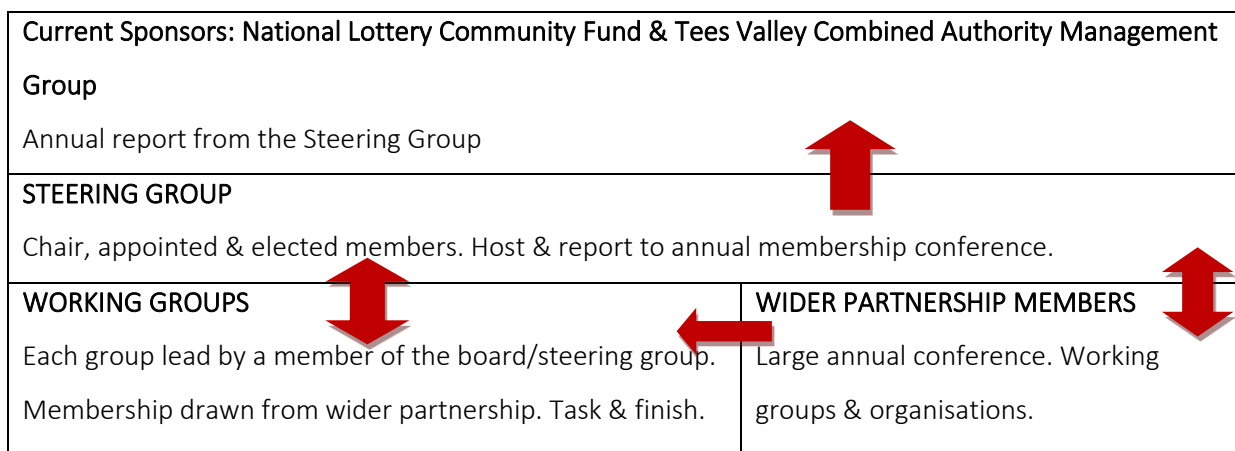


Figure 2: Conceptual Structure of the Partnership

### 4.3 Accountable Body

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The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust (TVWT) acts as the accountable body of the Partnership. This role includes:

- Establishing and maintaining effective partnership management systems.
- Administering and taking responsibility for funding including ensuring structural financial procedures.
- Ensuring that funding resources are spent per agreed plans and priorities.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems of auditing and monitoring spend.
- Employing any staff to carry out the coordination of the Partnership.

### 4.4 TVNP Steering Group

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Following a review in 2016 including interviews with key stakeholders the structure was 'compressed' so that the board & management group combined to give a Steering Group.

#### 4.4.1 Function of the Steering Group

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The Steering Group steers the partnership & provides strategic leadership and direction for the work of the TVNP. It is responsible for the following roles:

- Defining the strategic priorities of TVNP based on the agreed purposes and operating principals of the Partnership.
- Further develop the Partnership by reviewing and developing the purposes and operating principals ensuring that they remain relevant and reflect the views of the partnership and the local needs of the Tees Valley.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and performance of TVNP in delivering integrated environmental benefits.
- Champion the vision of the TVNP to ensure that this vision is communicated to wider decision makers across a diversity of sectors.
- Monitor, action and review progress against the partnership's ambitions and priorities.
- Implement strategic decisions by developing delivery mechanisms.
- Support the Partnership with knowledge, expertise and recommendations as required.
- Communication with the delivery groups to ensure effective working.

4.4.2 Composition of the Steering Group

The Steering Group comprises of no more than 18 members, one member from each of the Tees Valley local authorities and then representatives who have multiple interests. The Chair is nominated from this group. The structure is laid out in figure 4 below. The current membership is published on the TVNP website. The terms of reference for the Steering Group members are in Appendix A.

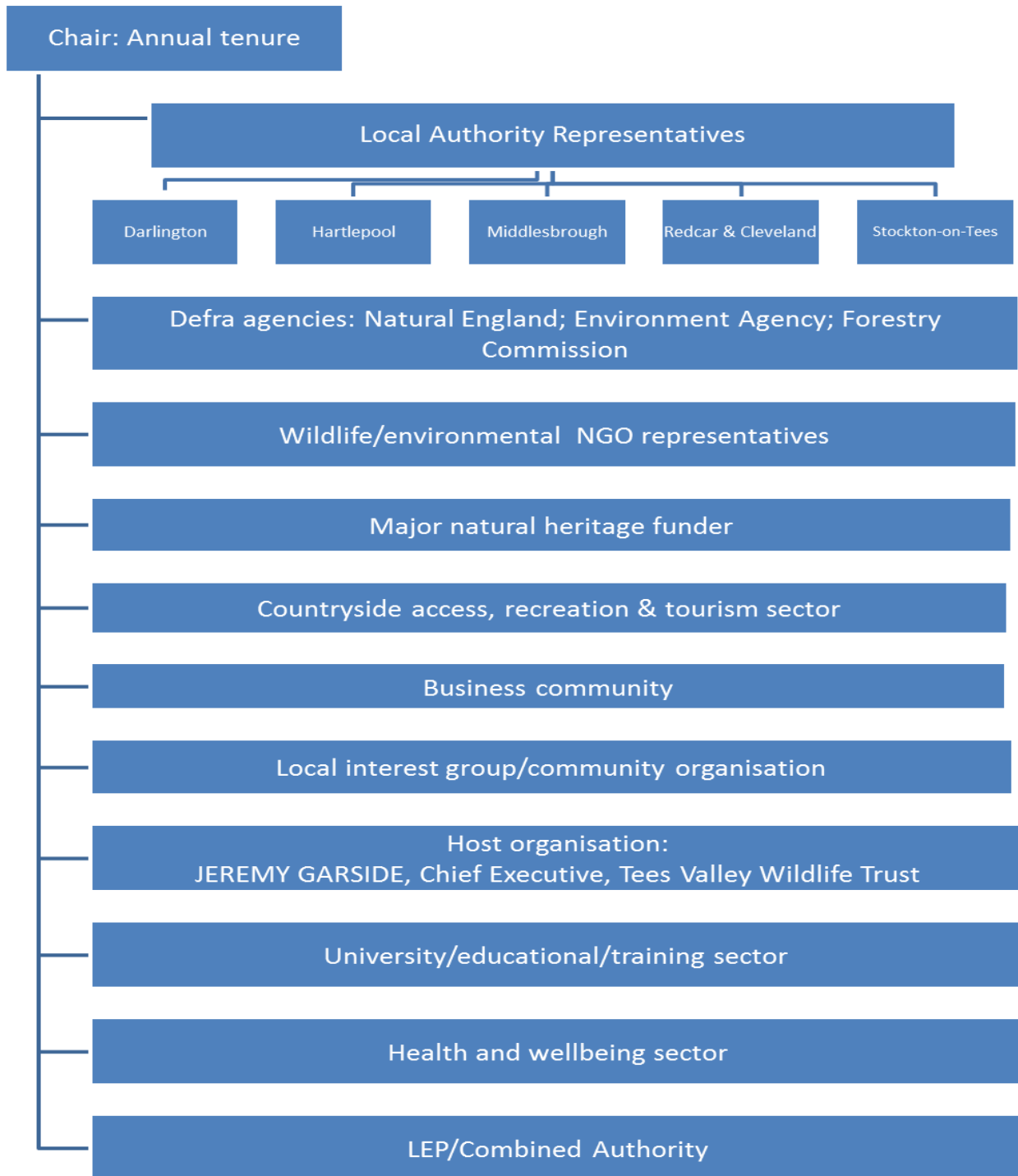


Figure 3: Composition of the Steering Group

#### 4.4.3 Processes and Procedures of the Steering Group

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- Operate in an open, responsive and accountable manner that always adheres to high standards of ethics and governance in public life.
- Provide strategic input into the key decisions of the partnership relating to vision, strategic objectives and delivery plans.
- Actively seek opportunities to influence the strategy and plans of relevant organisations.
- The steering group meet quarterly to set strategic direction and monitor progress.
- Monitor, review and evaluate performance of TVNP and the delivery of its aims and objectives. Work within the TVNP Social Learning Framework, ensuring that TVNP remains effective and relevant to local needs. Publish an annual report.
- Meetings minutes are taken and, where appropriate, action points identified with the individuals or groups responsible shown. These are posted on the TVNP website.
- The steering group elect a Chair on an annual basis. Steering group membership will be for a three-year term. Secretariat is provided by nature partnership staff within the host organisation.
- Where possible the steering group make, decisions based on consensus and agreement. If this is not possible then decisions may be taken by a majority vote of the members, with the Chair having the casting vote. For a vote to be valid at least one third of the members must be present.
- Host the annual conference for the wider partnership.
- The terms of reference of the Partnership are reviewed annually.

#### 4.5 Working Groups

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Membership of the working groups is drawn from the full partnership with a minimum of one steering group representative. Each group will be supported by either TVNP Manager or TVNP Officer. Feedback will be given by each Chair at each Steering Group meeting.

Each working group has its own terms of reference that relate to the full partnership terms of reference.

The number and remit of these groups adapts to meet the developing needs of the partnership.

The 2019-2022 TVNP Business Plan identified the following groups:

THEME 1: NATURAL ASSETS. Protecting & Enhancing the Natural Environment	
WORKING GROUP	BUSINESS PLAN ACTIVITY
Natural Assets Working Group:	<p><b>Activity 1.1:</b> Deliver our Local Sites process ensuring it is robust, clear and fully supported by the planning authorities.</p> <p><b>Activity 2.2:</b> Develop and adopt a system of local biodiversity metrics to assess the value of current assets, set targets and measure future progress</p>
Environmental Policy CPD Working Group:	<p><b>Activity 1.2:</b> Plan a series of CPD workshops for local planners on environmental policy changes.</p>
BOA Mapping Working Group (link to Natural Capital grp):	<p><b>Activity 2.1:</b> Set out future aspirations for the Tees Valley's natural environment through a series of Biodiversity Opportunity Area maps.</p>
THEME 2: NATURAL GROWTH Nature and Economy Working Together	
WORKING GROUP	BUSINESS PLAN ACTIVITY
Natural Capital Working Group:	<p><b>Activity 3.1:</b> Design and drive a Natural Capital approach for the Tees Valley.</p> <p>&amp;</p> <p><b>Activity 3.2:</b> Commission a natural capital account with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to establish a sound evidence base.</p>
Tees Estuary Partnership (this is an independent partnership rather than TVNP working group):	<p><b>Activity 4.2:</b> Work with STDC to ensure an integrated approach to biodiversity and the environment is adopted across the whole site.</p>



THEME 3: NATURAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING Reconnecting People and Nature	
WORKING GROUP	BUSINESS PLAN ACTIVITY
Public Health Working Group:	<p><b>Activity 5.1:</b> Develop a Health and Wellbeing Manifesto for partners to sign and commit to.</p> <p><b>Activity 6.1:</b> Work with health partners to develop practical solutions to increase use of outdoor natural spaces particularly among communities with limited opportunity and greatest levels of health need.</p>
Engagement Working Group:	<p><b>Activity 5.2:</b> Build the capacity of our local groups so they are better able to work for nature with a more effective local voice.</p> <p><b>Activity 5.3:</b> Design a programme to engage and involve greater numbers of people in the work of the partnership.</p>
Task & Finish Group:	<p><b>Activity 6.2:</b> Develop a model that encourages more appreciation and engagement of nature in our open spaces as part of the Sport England sponsored ‘You’ve Got This’ (South Tees Local Delivery Pilot).</p>
THEME 4: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT Ensuring the Partnerships Future Success	
WORKING GROUP	BUSINESS PLAN ACTIVITY
Partnership Financing Working Group:	<p><b>Action 7.1:</b> Explore alternative income streams for the partnership such as new approaches to fundraising, trading or other income generating activities</p>
Tees Nature Conference Planning Group:	<p><b>Activity 8.3:</b> Deliver the annual ‘Tees Nature Conference’ with Your Tees Catchment Partnership.</p>
Large Projects Working Group:	<p><b>Activity 1.3:</b> Establish a ‘Large projects subgroup’ for cross sector support on key strategic projects. TVNP to be facilitators/administrators.</p>

Figure 4: TVNP 2019-2022 Working Groups and associated actions

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## Appendix A

### Terms of Reference for Chair and Steering Group Members

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Expectations and role of members will be to:

- Champion the work of the Partnership to relevant partners, organisations and networks.
- Provide strategic input into the key decisions of the Steering Group relating to vision, strategic objectives and delivery plans.
- Actively seek opportunities to influence the strategy and plans of relevant organisations and groups to further the aspirations of the Partnership.
- Represent and be accountable for the wider interests of their sector at Partnership meetings.
- Provide support for the annual conference.
- Operate in an open, responsive and accountable manner that adheres always to high standards of ethics and governance in public life.

#### The role of the Chair

The principal duties and responsibilities of the Chair will be to:

- Build support for the vision and aspirations of the Partnership by acting as an influential advocate.
- Chair meetings, having regard for the agreed procedures of the Partnership, fulfilling these duties in a manner that is free of political influence or bias.
- Represent the Partnership, acting as a spokesperson at appropriate events, forums and meetings.
- Ensure a culture of mutual respect, partnership working and quality of opportunity for the Partnership.
- Ensure that the views of the wider partnership are represented and considered during decision making to deliver integrated benefits for the natural environment.
- Support and assist the secretariat of the TNVP.