

Devon Local Nature Partnership application

(The geographical area of the proposed Devon LNP includes Devon County Council, and Torbay Council, administrative boundaries, see map on p.3 of this application)

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Summary cover note: Devon's submission for LNP status

This document presents Devon's submission to Defra for formal recognition by government of Local Nature Partnership (LNP) status.

Since the awarding of Defra funding in December 2011, the core partners in a potential Devon LNP have undertaken an extensive capacity building, partnership development and engagement exercise across the county. This work found an overwhelming consensus of support for a Devon LNP and included three key strands of work:

- **Developing Devon's LNP**
Involved consultation with a wide range of interest groups to assess support for a Devon LNP, and then to identify the purpose and role of an LNP, the priorities for action, a potential governance structure and communication with members;.
- **Scoping Devon's Green Economy**
Involved working with the Heart of the South West (HotSW) LEP to evidence the significant scale of Devon's Green Economy and the opportunities for joint work between the LEP and potential LNP to create further sustainable jobs and increase GVA;
- **Reconnecting People and Nature**
Involved working with representatives of the Health and Wellbeing Board (H&WBB) and the Community Council for Devon to obtain a strategic overview of how people in Devon engage with the natural environment, key issues and how the LNP could help support activities with health and social benefits.

These strands of work have produced some very affirmative and constructive outcomes, giving a positive impetus to the establishment of a Devon LNP, including:

- The widespread endorsement and enthusiasm for a Devon LNP;
- The identification of a clear vision and set of strategic priorities for action;
- The nomination of a HotSW LEP representative for working with a Devon LNP;
- The nomination of a Devon HWBB representative for working with the LNP;
- Commitment from Devon County Council and Devon Wildlife Trust for resourcing the LNP, particularly the secretariat function; and
- Commitment from other local authorities, NGOs and organisations to support and sustain the LNP.

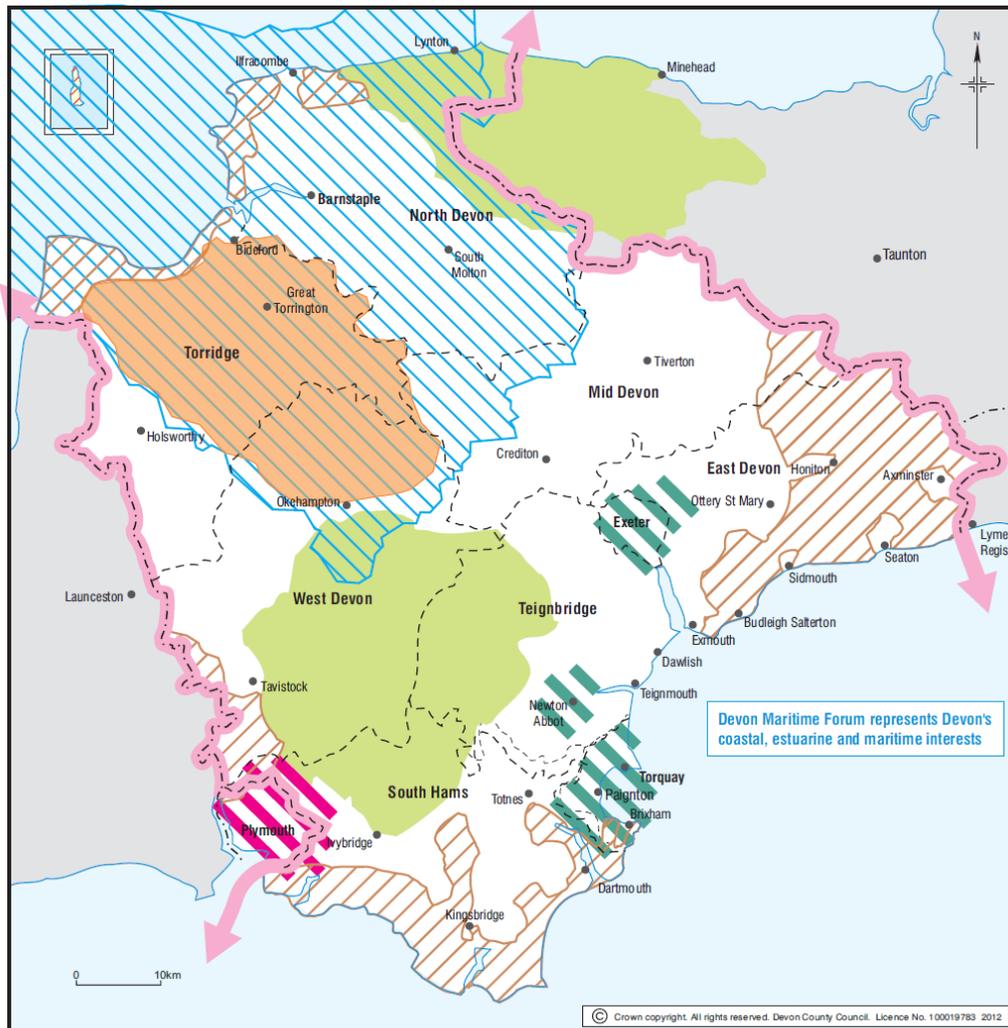
The remainder of this document answers the 12 questions laid out in the *Local Nature Partnership Application Questions* (April 2012). It should be noted that some answers given are relevant to several of the questions posed, in which case cross-references are made.

Section A: A description of your proposed LNP

Q.1. Please describe:

a. The geographical location and boundary of your proposed LNP

The proposed Devon LNP will cover the geographical area of Devon (excluding Plymouth City). This area includes ten local authorities, two National Park Authorities and a wide range of relevant partnerships. Please see map below.



Map 1 : Geographic area covered by a proposed Devon LNP

b. Your partnership's current membership and structure, including the level of involvement of the different members

We do not currently have one partnership in Devon with an appropriate membership and structure that could evolve into the LNP. However the proposed Devon LNP will be based, in part, on bringing together a wide range of existing and well-established partnerships that are currently working to protect and enhance Devon's natural environment. These are listed in Appendix 1. Existing Devon wide (including Torbay and Plymouth) strategic partnerships include the Devon Food and Farming Group, Devon Maritime Forum, Devon Landscape Policy Group, Devon Biodiversity Partnership and Devon Biodiversity Records Centre Forum. All of these partnerships have been involved in developing the Devon LNP.

The only specific LNP group set up to date is an *Advisory Group* that was established in September 2011 in order to lead the capacity building work for an LNP. The membership of the Advisory Group is made up of senior staff members drawn from the following partner organisations across Devon:

- Devon County Council (Environment Manager and County Ecologist)
- Devon Wildlife Trust (Director)
- East Devon DC (Countryside Manager)
- Environment Agency (Communications Manager)
- Heart of the South West LEP (DCC Head of Regeneration and Resources)
- Natural England (Senior Specialist)
- NHS/PCT Devon (Head of Health Improvement)
- RSPB (Senior Policy Officer)
- South Devon AONB, representing all five AONBs (Manager)
- Torbay Council (Senior Strategic Planner).

The Advisory Group members have agreed to continue in their current role to assist the process of establishing the new LNP.

Section B: A summary of your ideas and plans for an LNP in your area

Q.2. We are keen to capture a summary of both what your ambitions are for an LNP in your area and an overview of the initial steps you plan to take towards it. Please:

a. Summarise what you feel the LNP role could mean for your area - what difference could your LNP make at a strategic level and how might it go about doing it?

The quality of Devon's natural environment is one of the defining features of the county. From its high moorland expanses through to its two separate coastlines and associated inshore waters, Devon boasts a varied suite of landscapes and habitats, which are recognised through a plethora of statutory and non-statutory designations. This high quality environment presents important opportunities, but also challenges. Large parts of the county are strongly rural, being physically remote from centres of population and suffering poor access links. Devon's land-use is predominantly pastoral, with the farming community highly reliant upon the livestock sector. A key role for the LNP will be to ensure that the sustainable use of this natural environment *and* the economic and social benefits that it brings, are central to the thoughts and plans of key decision makers.

A Devon LNP will provide a strong, championing voice for the county's unique and hugely important natural environment. It will coordinate delivery across the county to:

- *Secure and enhance the intrinsic value of Devon's natural environment¹ and its associated links with the cultural environment; while*
- *Brokering the optimum economic and social benefits which the natural environment can provide for everyone visiting, living or working in Devon.*

To achieve this the Devon LNP will take a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities available for driving positive change in Devon's natural environment. It will seek to embed the value of Devon's natural assets in the local decision making process for the benefit of nature, people and the economy by:

- Mainstreaming environmental issues and improving decision making concerning the natural environment by collaborating with the Heart of the South West LEP, the Devon Health and Wellbeing Board and other key strategic partners; and
- Providing an 'added value' umbrella for existing delivery partnerships by coordinating work, identifying new, better ways of doing things and maximising new investment opportunities while also being their champion at the strategic decision making level.

¹ For the proposed work of the LNP, Devon's Natural Environment will include:

- Resources, including landscape, wildlife, geology, water, soil, etc;
- Processes, including ecosystem services, climate change, etc; and
- Associated cultural aspects influenced by the natural environment (heritage, etc).

This process has already begun with the business and health/wellbeing sectors:

The Heart of South West (HoSW) LEP

LEP Board members have welcomed involvement in LNP developmental work and see the LNP as having a vital role in working with the LEP on Green Economy issues. The engagement process with the local LEP is well underway and commenced with a joint strategic research project “*Scoping Devon’s Green Economy*”.

The Devon and Torbay Health and Well Being Boards (HWBB)

Similarly representatives of the Devon and Torbay Health and Wellbeing Boards have been involved in developing the LNP (including sitting on the steering group for the Reconnecting People and Nature project) and see it as having a key role in helping to achieve their strategic public health priorities.

b. Provide a high level summary of the key actions you plan to undertake in the first 6 months if you become a Government-recognised LNP – ideally in a table / list of bullet points of not more than 2 pages.

Table 1 lists actions which will be completed or begun in the first six months. Note that some actions build on existing activity whilst others are areas of new work.

Table 1: Proposed Actions in the first six months

Theme	Actions
Establishing the LNP	<p>Appoint a Board and Chair.</p> <p>Form a supporting Secretariat.</p> <p>Establish an LNP Forum and hold a conference.</p> <p>Finalise and publish a Vision, Strategy and Business Plan.</p> <p>Finalise and publish a Communications Strategy and further develop the LNP website.</p> <p>Establish further elements of LNP structure (i.e. task and finish groups) that are needed to enable delivery of the Vision, Strategy and Business Plan.</p>
Sustainable Land Use and Management	<p>Publish a “State of Devon’s Nature” report.</p> <p>Produce and promote a Framework for Landscape Scale Delivery for Devon based on the Devon Nature Map</p> <p>Conduct an Audit of Devon’s Ecosystems Services. Identifying joint priorities and opportunities for aligning resources to achieve these priorities (e.g. Upstream Thinking)</p>

	<p>Support the current Devon biodiversity off-setting pilot and Northern Devon NIA</p> <p>Develop and promote tools that provide a Devon wide strategic approach to influencing strategic and land management decisions, especially as they relate to the National Planning Policy Framework e.g. promoting the Devon Landscape Character Assessment and Devon Wildlife Checklist for Planning Applications.</p>
<p>Green Economic Growth</p>	<p>Together with Plymouth and Somerset LNPs sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Heart of the South West LEP relating to collaborative working on Green Economy issues.</p> <p>Work with the LEP and other experts to discuss findings from the <i>Green Economy</i> study and develop a programme of action. Work to date has suggested that actions which may begin in the first six months include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased promotion and engagement in rural development programme, e.g. Making it Local • Targeted support for Green Economy sectors (i.e. tourism, environmental technologies, food and drink) • Ensuring that CAP reform benefits Devon's natural environment and farmers • Promoting Paid Ecosystems Services projects (whereby the beneficiary pays landowners to provide the ecosystem service).
<p>Quality of Life and Local Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Devon and Torbay Health and Wellbeing Boards.</p> <p>Bring together experts to discuss finding from the Reconnecting People and Nature Report and develop a programme of action. Work to date has shown that actions which are likely to being in the first six months include: :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information for the <i>local physical activity and health and well-being hubs</i>; • Improving promotion of access to the natural environment for everyone, including those with disabilities or disadvantaged backgrounds. • Promoting and improving Devon's pilot '<i>Community Toolkit for the Natural Environment</i>'; and • Developing the LNP website to become a natural environment 'first stop shop' for engagement and co-ordinated promotion of activities/ events.

Section C: Your preparations and plans for becoming an effective LNP

Q.3. Describe any progress you have made towards developing, and / or how you plan to develop, a strategic vision for your area and how you plan to use your vision to inform your work and priorities.

To ensure that the capacity building consultation was as effective as possible, the Advisory Group agreed that a simple vision (based on the NEWP) should be drafted and used as the basis for discussion. This draft vision is that the Devon LNP will:

- *Secure and enhance the intrinsic value of Devon's natural environment and its associated links with the cultural environment; while*
- *Brokering the optimum economic and social benefits that the natural environment can provide for everyone visiting, living or working in Devon.*

Consultees were asked for their views on a vision for the LNP as well as being asked to put forward actions and priorities based on the draft vision above. A key initial task for the LNP Board will be to finalise a high level, simple vision for Devon's natural environment. A summary of progress made in using the draft vision to inform priorities is set out below.

Over the past four months a very wide range of potential partners, stakeholders and interest groups have input into the process of developing Devon's LNP and its strategic vision. Three separate, but inter-linked, consultation studies have been undertaken. Each of these studies has found a very high level of support for a Devon LNP while also identifying the key strategic areas in which it could have the most influence and value.

Scoping Devon's Green Economy

This work was commissioned jointly with the LEP to provide a strategic overview of Devon's Green Economy and the opportunities and priorities for future joint working between the natural environment and economy sectors. The study included one-to-one consultations with 42 stakeholders and partners, concentrating on those from the LEP and economy/business, followed by a workshop session. This was accompanied by desk-based reviews of available evidence and data. The outputs of the research have included a list of potential joint LNP/LEP actions, mapped onto the LEP's Business Plan.

Reconnecting People and Nature

This explored two key areas: 1) How "communities of place" engage with Devon's natural environment and how this can be better supported; and 2) The barriers to different demographics engaging fully with Devon's natural environment. Over 600 community organisations and town/parish councils were invited to participate in an online survey and/or three workshops. The project identified strategic priorities for helping to better engage communities with the natural environment.

Devon LNP Development Study

This study involved extensive engagement with the relevant partners and stakeholders across Devon to begin the process of establishing a LNP. This included obtaining views on the LNP vision and priorities/actions leading from this vision. The study involved individual consultations with over 75 key organisations (see Appendix 1) and a workshop session to debate propositions for underpinning a Devon LNP.

The output of these studies has been a high degree of consensus on the aims and objectives for a potential Devon LNP, in terms of the purpose and role of a Devon LNP as described in Q.2a above and a set of key actions as described in Q.2b.

Outputs from consultation, along with other existing information (such as Devon State of Nature Report, Devon's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Devon Landscape Character Assessment) and new information (such as Devon Framework for Landscape Scale Delivery, Audit of Ecosystem Services and further discussion between the LNP, LEP and H&WBB) will be used to produce the final Vision, Strategy and Business Plan (as outlined in Table 1).

Q.4. Describe how the individuals and organisations in your current membership reflects the range of skills, expertise, interests and level of authority needed to become an effective LNP and how you will address any gaps.

Devon currently has a wide range of relevant partnerships and organisations with an extensive range of skills, expertise and level of authority (see Appendix 1). These include delivery projects (NIA, Working Wetlands, Upstream Thinking), landscape partnerships (AONBs), coastal partnerships (Devon Maritime Forum) and strategic groups (Devon Landscape Policy Group, Devon Countryside Access Forum), together with those for health and wellbeing (Devon H&WBB) and the economy (HotSW LEP).

However these partnerships and organizations are currently very disparate with no effective co-ordination mechanisms in place to ensure effective strategic working across the county and no high level strategic leadership equivalent to the LEP Board and H&WBB. It is therefore intended that the Devon LNP will address this by:

- **Bringing high level strategic thinkers and advocates together**
This will involve the creation of a **Board** that includes members from across the sector as well as the LEP and H&WBB.
- **Setting up an administrative/communication structure to ensure co-ordination**
This will involve the creation of a **Secretariat** to provide practical support and coordination.
- **Bringing technical experts together to ensure effective cross cutting working**
This will involve thematic **Task and Finish groups** as required.
- **Providing a mechanism to ensure improved communication and joint working for all relevant partnerships, organisations, interest groups and individuals across Devon.**
- This will involve the creation of a **Forum**.

Board: Charismatic, influential leaders

The Board of the LNP will be created to have an equal status to the LEP Board and the H&WBB, made up of influential individuals operating at a strategic level. It will require members who are both strong leaders in their field and who can influence decision makers in other fields in the best interests of Devon's natural environment. They will need to be recognised by their peers and those they were seeking to influence as having the ability, experience and gravitas to use the available evidence to drive positive change. A strong Chair will be required to lead the LNP and consideration will be given as to whether it is possible to consider a paid CEO post.

The agreed proposal for initial Board membership is:

- Non Governmental Natural Environment organisation (CEO Level)
- Protected Landscapes (CEO/Manager)
- Local Authority (Director level)
- Defra family (Area Manager level)
- Landowner /Land Manager

- HotSW LEP Board (Director/CEO level)
- Devon Health and Wellbeing Board (Senior Level)
- University/Academic institution (Professor/Senior level)
- Community Sector representative (CEO level)

The agreed process for establishing this initial Board is for the Advisory Group to compile a job description and terms of reference for the Board and to then invite the relevant 'sectors' (as listed above) to nominate a Board member.

Two nominations for membership have already been received. Dr Stephen Bird (Director of Operations, South West Water and Non Executive LEP Board member) has been nominated to represent the LEP on the proposed LNP Board. Dr Virginia Pearson has been nominated as the Devon H&WBB representative on the Board. Dr Pearson holds the most senior public health post in the county, is a joint NHS/DCC appointment and sits on the H&WBB.

Board membership and operation will evolve over time, with a time limit being placed on membership to enable "new blood" and coverage of new areas as the LNP's agenda progresses.

Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Devon LNP will facilitate the functioning of the LNP by playing a coordinating, supporting and administrative role between the Board and wider forum.

Thematic task and finish groups

Any thematic task and finish groups established by the Devon LNP to address specific issues will require members who have the relevant technical knowledge and expertise. Should skills and knowledge be required which are not available among Devon LNP members assistance will be sought from neighbouring LNPs.

Forum

The Forum will involve a wide set of interest groups and organizations which bring with them a broad set of skills, expertise and interest which will inform the vision, priorities and actions for the LNP as well as being essential to delivery.

Q.5. Describe how you have involved & engaged, and/or how you plan to involve & engage, wider interests who may not be represented in your membership in the work

Work done to date

As described above, extensive consultation has already taken place among stakeholders and the wider interest groups in Devon as part of the LNP development process. This has laid the ground for continuing engagement and involvement of both those closely involved with the LNP and those drawn from the widest set of interest groups. In summary this has involved:

Devon's Green Economy

- Individual consultations with 42 key stakeholders and partners, including Economic Development Officers, focusing on the LEP and Green economy/business issues;
- A workshop session with 30 of the key partners, including LEP representatives (see below) bringing together the economy/business and natural environment sectors; and
- Overseen by the Head of Regeneration and Resources at DCC on behalf of the HotSW LEP.

Reconnecting People and Nature

- This was led by the Community Council for Devon and overseen by the PCT, DCC health lead and DCC County Ecologist;
- Over 600 community-based organisations and parish councils were invited to participate in an online survey and/or three workshops;
- Over 120 of these organisations either attended a workshop and/or completed the online questionnaire; and
- The organisations participating provided a complete cross section, including BME, disability, community, arts and hard to reach groups.

LNP Development Study

- Individual consultations with over 75 key organisations and partners from the natural environment, economy, health and community sectors;
- A workshop session with 40 of the key partners to debate the propositions for a Devon LNP; and
- The establishment of a Devon LNP website for both promoting the development work (www.devonenvironment.org.uk) and encouraging feedback and involvement in the process.

It is important to emphasize that this work has enabled both high level, strategic engagement and also the involvement of the widest possible set of interest groups. Five members of the LEP Board (Tim Jones (Chair), Jeremy Filmer-Bennett (CEO), Vaughan Lindsay, Cllr William Mumford and Dr Stephen Bird) participated in the LNP development work and/or the Green Economy study.

A “master contact database” has been pulled together as a result of the LNP consultation work. This includes over 750 contacts from the socio, economic and environmental sectors and will be invaluable in future engagement work.

Planned engagement

Strategic high level engagement

As discussed in Q.4 a broad range of 'leaders' will be directly involved and engaged through sitting on the LNP Board. These individuals will be responsible for wider engagement at this high level.

Wider engagement

- **Awareness**

This will be achieved through delivery of the communication strategy and should aim to heighten awareness of the environmental agenda throughout Devon. There is broad support for developing the LNP website as a key awareness raising tool. Forum members are likely to have enhanced access to the website in order to be able to download information and participate in discussion boards.

- **Influencing**

This will be achieved through the proposed new structure e.g.

The Forum will be established in a manner that allows interest groups to influence the priorities and actions of the LNP. Given the huge numbers of organisations potentially involved in the Forum the best mechanism for achieving this will need to be agreed by the Board (it may be that, as is now being done for the LEP, a smaller consultative forum is set up composed of key partnerships and organisations across the county which are able to act as a 'voice' for the wider Forum).

Task and Finish groups will be convened as necessary to address specific themes and issues and taking the lead from a Board member who is 'championing' the issue. Each group will be made up of the most appropriate mix of strategic, delivery, specialist and interest partners, as required.

- **Delivery**

Existing partnerships, groups and organisations will be directly engaged through their key role in delivering LNP priorities. It is therefore essential that delivery groups form part of the LNP Forum

Combining these approaches will enable the involvement and participation of the widest set of interest groups at the levels most appropriate to their requirements.

Q.6. Describe any progress you have made towards establishing, and / or how you will establish, the partnership's credibility in the area and ensure it has the ability to effectively engage and collaborate with a range of local senior decision makers.

Work done to date

The extensive efforts that have already been undertaken to develop a Devon LNP have given a very wide range of partners, stakeholders and interest groups the opportunity to put forward their views on its potential role and value. The consultations found both a very high level of support for a Devon LNP and a willingness to participate and assist in the process of establishing it.

Indeed 74 out of the 75 core partners and stakeholders who were consulted through one to one interviews expressed support for a Devon LNP (see Appendix II). Securing this level of buy-in is the first step in establishing the credibility of the LNP with these partners and hence with local decision makers. In addition there was widespread support for the LNP from a broad set of interest groups through the Green Economy and Reconnecting People and Nature projects

Credibility will be partly achieved through clearly showing that the issues raised during consultation have been taken on board e.g.:

- The LNP will not be a talking shop, involve a complex new structure or the production of long documents that sit on shelves!
- The LNP will act as an umbrella bringing together all existing partnerships in a more coordinated manner which is as simple and effective as possible;
- The LNP will clearly align its activities with the priorities set out in the NEWP (bringing together interests relating to landscape, wildlife, geology, water, soils and focusing on the social and economic benefits of our environment); and
- The LNP will be seen as having equal status to the LEP and H&WBB.

Devon County Council has **endorsed the LNP at Cabinet level and the establishment of an LNP is a specific target in DCC's Strategic Plan**. Furthermore, senior members of staff (including the Environment Manager, County Ecologist, Head of Regeneration and Resources) and Councillors have been extensively involved in the engagement process.

The 'Devon LNP' is on the agenda for discussion at the **Chief Executive Officers for Devon Local Authorities** meeting in July (discussion will include nomination of an LNP Board member). Indeed, all the local authorities across the county have matched the County Council's high level of involvement in the LNP development process, committing officer time to the process at various levels.

Considerable progress has already been made in establishing the credibility of a Devon LNP with other key local decision makers:

- **HotSW LEP.** Includes ongoing engagement with LEP board and nomination of a Board member.
- **H&WBB.** Similar engagement and nomination of a Board member.
- **Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP).** The proposal for a Devon LNP was raised at the last DSP meeting and DSP has welcomed future input from the LNP on strategic environmental issues. Importantly DSP has also offered support and influence for the LNP in order to help achieve partnership working.

This progress will be built upon to ensure that engagement and collaboration with local senior decision makers is embedded throughout the LNP's work by:

Involving senior decision makers within the LNP structure

A range of senior decision makers will sit on the LNP Board (See above and Q.4);

Ensuring Board members are at same level as LEP and H&WBB

The members will therefore be able to act as influential ambassadors and have credibility in their own right;

Ensuring formal links are made to the LEP/H&WBB

Memorandums of Understanding will be signed with the LEP and H&WBB;

Ensuring support for ongoing engagement and collaboration

The proposed secretariat is vital for supporting the ongoing engagement and collaboration with local senior decision makers;

Ensuring transparency and awareness raising

It is vital the Devon LNP has clear priorities that can be easily promoted to senior decision makers (the current situation is complex, hindering collaboration);

Ensuring that the mutual benefits of integration are understood

The Devon LNP will undertake an Audit of Devon's Ecosystem Services which, along with work on the Green Economy and Health and Wellbeing themes, will provide a useful evidence base which can be used to promote cross cutting projects.

Q.7. Describe any progress you have made towards ensuring, and / or how you will ensure, that the LNP has effective and accountable governance and decision making processes.

The governance and decision making processes for the LNP have been debated extensively as part of the development work. The key points to emerge from the individual consultations and workshop sessions to date, and the issues that still need to be resolved, are summarised below:

There is agreement for the structure proposed in Q.4 from the workshop and consultations held. Other key aspects of progress made include:

- Sectors are beginning to nominate Board members e.g. LEP and H&WBB;
- DCC has agreed to provide resource for the secretariat function (this is currently being undertaken by members of Advisory Group – with the majority of functions undertaken by DCC Environment Team); and
- Devon Wildlife Trust has agreed to help support this in the future.

Other key aspects of ensuring that the Devon LNP has effective, accountable governance and decision-making processes in place include (a full list is in table 1):

Establishing the Board

The Board will consist of members nominated from each sector (see Q.4) and will need to operate within clear terms of reference and with an elected Chair. The Board will finalise and publish a Vision, Strategy and Business Plan which highlight the areas of work in which the LNP will take a lead across the county. It is vital that Forum members understand and feed into Board decisions (see below).

Establishing a Secretariat

The secretariat will also have clear terms of reference and operate on an ongoing basis (with members committing sufficient officer time to sustain it) in order that it can:

- Support the Board and Forum by organising meetings and producing documents (Vision, Strategy, Business Plan, Communications Strategy);
- Ensure transparent and inclusive LNP communication mechanisms are in place and maintained e.g. website, conference and publicity
- Support the thematic task and finish groups as required;
- Provide links to other LNPs;

Establishing a Forum

It has been agreed that a Forum needs to be established as a channel for broad representation within the LNP and which allows interest groups to act as a ‘sounding board’ for the Board and influence priorities and actions. Given the number of organisations potentially involved in the Forum the best mechanism for achieving this representation will need to be agreed by the Board (it may be that a consultative forum is set up composed of key partnerships across the county which can act as a sounding board for the LNP). The Board will also need to agree consultative and communication mechanisms/links with the Forum which will help to ensure accountability and transparency. This is likely to include an annual conference, discussion boards, Task and Finish groups and e-newsletter.

The establishment of this structure is a core “start-up” activity for the Devon LNP to enable both accountable governance and effective decision-making.

Q.8. Describe how your partnership plans to embed the value of the natural environment into the strategic planning and decision making of others, particularly the economic and health and wellbeing sectors.

A key aspect of the LNP's activities will be to increase appreciation of the quality and value of Devon's natural environment. It is anticipated that embedding this into strategic planning, decision-making *and delivery* will take place at two levels:

- Senior level – via the LNP Board; and
- Technical level – support for existing partnerships and organisations, or where needed, the establishment of task and finish groups.

Senior Level

Board members will ensure targeted engagement with key decision makers to embed the natural environment at the heart of their plans and strategies. They will:

- Identify and champion strategic priorities for Devon's natural environment;
- Provide leadership for the natural environment sector on key issues;
- Influence funding decisions to achieve strategic priorities;
- Pave the way for technical experts to embed the value of the natural environment into the strategic planning and decision making of others;
- Monitor and report on progress.

In particular Board members will:

- Work with the **HotSW LEP** to identify, develop and promote business opportunities relating to Devon's Green Economy and ensuring that the value of the natural environment is taken into account in decision making, budgeting and cost/benefit evaluation of proposed developments; and
- Work closely with the **Devon H&WBB** and others to develop a countywide campaign that promotes the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment for visitors, residents and businesses alike.
- Influence a wide range of other strategic plans e.g. through working with Local Planning Authorities on the development of Local Plans and Green Infrastructure Strategies

Board members will also have a role in embedding the natural environment into the decision making processes of Devon Strategic Partnership (see Q.7) .

Technical level

Where possible the LNP will support existing partnerships which already work to embed the natural environment into strategies e.g. Devon Maritime Forum works to ensure that natural environment, social and economic issues are considered together in strategic decision making such as proposals for the selection of Marine Conservation Zones.

Where no existing mechanism exists task and finish groups can be established to undertake this work for the LNP

Q.9. Describe how you see the LNP adding value to the range of other local projects and initiatives concerned with the sustainable management of the natural environment in your area, including any Nature Improvement Areas, biodiversity off-set pilots and catchment partnerships and other land management initiatives.

The Devon LNP will form an umbrella for all the existing projects and initiatives across the county. It will work closely with them to add value to their current activities by:

- Producing a framework for landscape scale delivery based on Devon Nature Map. This will identify existing as well as future priority projects (including new NIAs);
- Providing countywide coordination and increasing collaboration to reduce duplication and improve efficiencies between them; and
- Providing leadership and clarity on the key issues to be addressed by the natural environment sector at a countywide level.

The LNP will build on existing partnerships, moderating and reducing duplication among those working on activities involving the sustainable management of the natural environment. The activities of the LNP in this respect will include:

- Unifying the environment sector through increasing partnership working and developing consensus on key issues;
- Identifying (and highlighting) areas where collaboration and cooperation will bring benefits, preventing “*reinventing the wheel*”;
- Identifying the key threats to the natural environment and taking the necessary action to mitigate these threats;
- Developing better networking and signposting across the sector (rather than just intra-sector), providing a stronger basis for future developments;
- Working to produce clarity and consensus over what Devon’s Natural Environment might be like in 20, 50 or 100 years; and
- Providing a forum for debate of key issues confronting the sector, together with opportunities for “blue sky thinking” / new ways of working.

Two further important elements of the LNP’s work in adding value will be:

Being a shared learning repository

A key component of the LNP’s work in adding value will be to share learning between partners. It will (using the website) establish a repository of best practice and sign post to other useful information sources.

Binding existing schemes/projects together (finding efficient ways of working)

A further part of the LNP’s work in adding value will be to bind together existing schemes at a countywide level to increase their impact and value. Examples of these opportunities include the Biodiversity offsetting scheme (see below) and developing a Devon Framework for Landscape Scale Delivery. The LNP will also act as a sign post to link people across the county with similar goals, ideas, problems in order to improve joint working.

Two important (Defra supported) projects already underway that the LNP will support and build upon are:

Northern Devon NIA

The LNP will support the Northern Devon NIA as described above. Capacity building work for the LNP has already begun to help the NIA e.g. through providing links to the health sector. The LNP will be vital in ensuring that learning from the NIA is shared among partners and fed into other initiatives as well as being understood and promoted at Board level. Involvement of the LNP Board in the NIA may well help the NIA to achieve its objectives through ensuring cross cutting working at the highest level.

Biodiversity off-setting pilot

Again the LNP will provide the mechanism to ensure that learning from the pilot is shared across the county and that benefits and issues are understood at the senior management level in relevant organizations. A county wide natural environment planning group will be set up under the umbrella of the LNP and this group will help to rollout off-setting across Devon.

Q.10. Describe the opportunities you see for funding the delivery of your aims, for instance by aligning and targeting local resources and sources of funding, and how you plan to support the running of the partnership.

Delivery

The final Business Plan will set out how the Partnership can better use new and existing funding opportunities in order to deliver the LNP's aims. Mechanisms include:

Via the planning system

- Using biodiversity off-sets to help deliver an ecological network across the county based on priority areas identified in Devon Nature Map (via the Devon pilot and role out of this across the county).
- Use of the Community Infrastructure Levy / s106 agreements.

Aligning resources

- Aligning resources from a wide range of sectors (including the private sector) in order to achieve integrated priorities relating to ecosystem services e.g. setting up schemes which follow South West Water's Upstream Thinking approach.

Tourism

- Visitor Payback Schemes (discussed at length in the Green Economy workshop. It was agreed that the learning from past/current projects needs to be gathered together and shared in order to develop new and better schemes).

Other

- Development of social enterprises and forging links with existing schemes e.g. Exeter Local Foods Project
- Working with Natural England on HLS targeting.
- Better co-ordination of funding bids across Devon ('bigger, better, more').

Running the Devon LNP

The LNP structure is based largely on bringing together well established and funded partnerships (see Appendix 1) rather than setting up complex new structures. However, resources will be required for the Board, Secretariat, Task and Finish Groups and Forum to function effectively.

- Members of the Board will provide their time to support the LNP.
- Devon County Council has committed to providing officer support for the Secretariat for an indefinite period and financial support for LNP "start-up" activities such as website development, e-newsletter and any consultancy time required to help finalise the strategy and business plan. Devon Wildlife Trust has made a similar in principle commitment to providing in-kind staff resource to help with the Secretariat.
- Task and Finish groups will only be set up where there is a clear need and therefore a desire to engage by the relevant organisations and interested parties.

Given the huge level of support (and identified 'need') for the development of a Devon LNP (see Appendix II) there is also commitment from a wide range of organisations to provide staff time to input into the Forum and Board.

Q.11. Describe why your boundary is the most appropriate one for your LNP and why any overlaps are necessary. Please also tell us about what you have agreed with neighbouring LNPs about how you will work together, including how any overlaps will be managed or resolved.

There are proposals to establish two LNPs in Devon:

- 1) Devon LNP covers the Devon and Torbay administrative boundary. Please see map given in Q.1
- 2) Plymouth LNP covers the Plymouth sub region. Please see map below which has been provided by Plymouth City Council to show the overlap with neighbouring LNPs. Note that the overlap between Devon and Plymouth LNPs covers all of the area to the east of the Tamar estuary / river and outside Plymouth City.

The information below explains why these boundaries are appropriate (and hence why the overlap is needed) and how the overlap will be managed.

Devon LNP boundary

Consultation has shown overwhelming support for a strategic Devon wide LNP. The proposed boundary includes all of Devon other than Plymouth City. This boundary (see map included in Q.1) is appropriate in that it reflects:

- The existing political and administrative boundaries of the County Council, the district authorities within it, and Torbay Council (and hence the boundaries for the Waste Plan, Minerals Plan, Local Transport Plan and District Local Plans);
- The boundary of the emerging Devon and Torbay Health and Wellbeing Boards;
- The countywide remit of key relevant groups / partnerships including the Devon Biodiversity Partnership, Devon Landscape Policy Group, Devon RIGS group, Devon Maritime Forum, Devon Biodiversity Records Centre Forum; and
- A culturally coherent area in which the “Devon” identity is well recognised and highly valued by visitors, businesses and residents alike.

Plymouth LNP

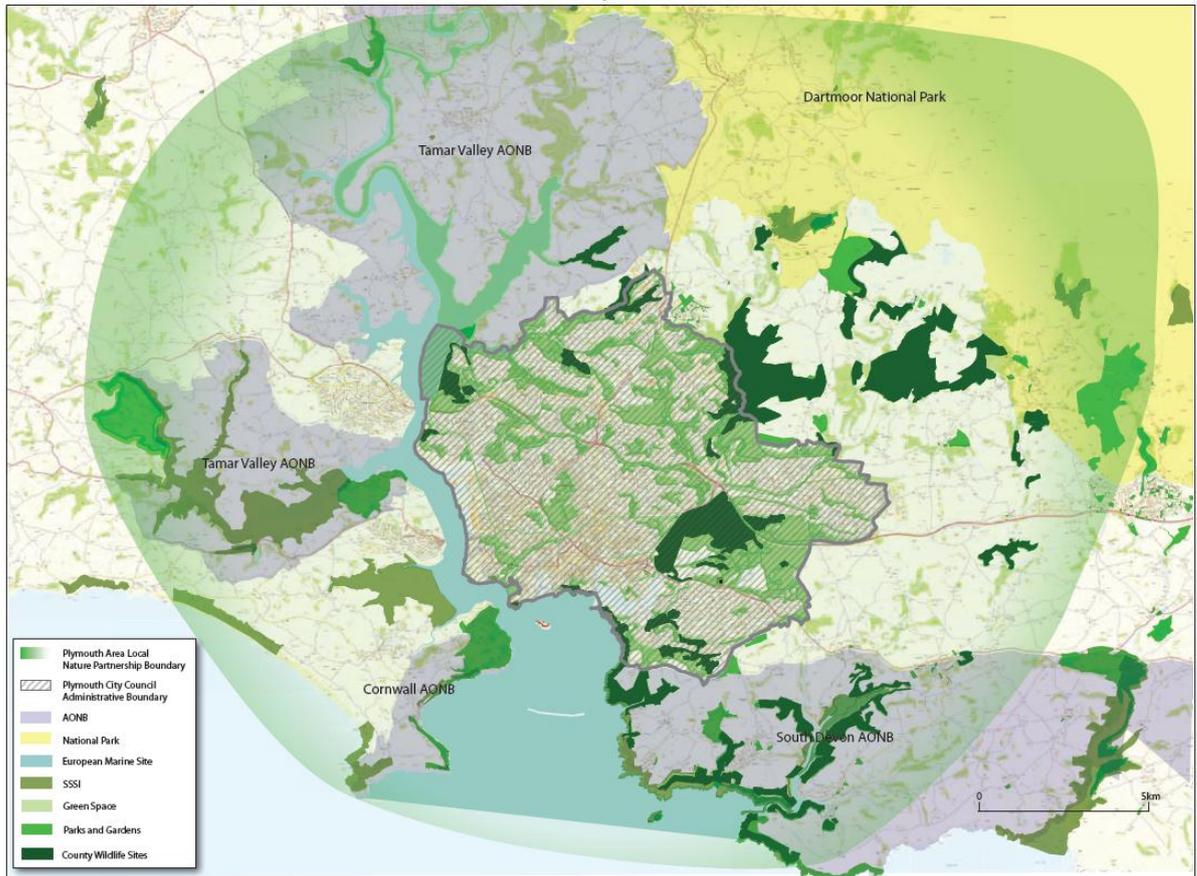
From the Plymouth perspective, there is a clear and established need for the City to strategically plan and deliver improvements to the natural environment at a sub regional level that focuses on boundaries that support natural systems and works successful across administrative boundaries. This work across the wider natural environment that both supports and inter-reacts with Plymouth is long established through the Plymouth Green Infrastructure (GI) Partnership and the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF). The proposed Plymouth LNP will operate strategically at a sub-regional level building on the strength of these existing partnerships, particularly their influence in the Local Planning process, as well as providing key links to important economic and health partnerships that function within the same geographic area such as the Plymouth Growth Board.

To reflect this, the proposed Plymouth LNP boundary will take in the Plymouth City Council administrative area plus a flexible zone covering parts of South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Cornwall Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority. This spatial remit will allow the Plymouth LNP to accurately reflect the policy and projects that interrelate directly with Plymouth including those relating to food production, energy, water, access and forestry.

Joint working

The principles set out here have been jointly developed and agreed by both the Devon and Plymouth partnerships and are supported by all the local authorities working across the area. As the partnerships develop their plans, this complimentary relationship will continue ensuring that there is collaboration over key issues. In order to ensure strong cooperation in the overlap area there will be reciprocal representation on the two partnerships.

Map 1 – PLYMOUTH AREA LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP BOUNDARY



Links with other neighbouring LNPs

Close contact has already been established with neighbouring candidate LNPs in the South West (Plymouth, Somerset, Dorset and Cornwall) both on an individual basis and via the South West Environment Network (SWEN). Continued communication will continue via the Devon LNP secretariat, Board members (especially those who work in more than one county) and proposed SWEN LNP meetings / online resources. This communication is especially important with Somerset LNP given that Exmoor National Park and the Blackdown Hills AONB are in both Somerset and Devon.

The proposed Devon, Plymouth and Somerset LNPs have been engaging closely over their work with the HotSW LEP (which covers the three LNP areas) and will continue to do so via the Secretariat and Board.

Further to this, the South West Nature Map highlights where ecological networks cross administrative / LNP boundaries, and thus represents an obvious starting point for collaboration between neighbouring LNPs.

Q.12. Describe how you plan to monitor and evaluate your work, including how you will know you are making a difference.

An evaluation framework will be devised that can be embedded into the LNP's business and delivery plans. This will incorporate a range of measurable indicators, quantitative and qualitative, designed to assess both ongoing progress and to identify any necessary improvements to LNP delivery, functioning and structure.

In terms of delivery, the evaluation framework will cover three main areas:

Improving the state of Devon's natural environment:

The existing Devon Biodiversity Monitoring Framework will be used, and broadened to cover landscape, wildlife, access and other issues, to provide an evaluation of the state of natural capital in Devon (by means of the "State of Devon's Nature" Report). The basic framework has been developed over the last three years by the Devon Biodiversity Partnership and currently includes:

- A rolling programme for monitoring the condition of Local Sites;
- An assessment of loss of BAP habitat ;
- Information on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
- Information on priority habitats, species and river quality (as required by the Water Framework Directive).

The Framework will be broadened to include an evaluation of progress with landscape scale conservation work, delivery of Strategic Nature Area targets, landscape character assessment work, ecosystem services etc.

Increasing the social and economic benefits of Devon's natural environment:

A process for monitoring the economic and social benefits of the LNP's delivery projects will be explored and developed (in a way which discounts the counterfactual – what would have happened anyway). Such impact assessments will need to be either budgeted for in advance and/or built into the resourcing of the delivery projects as "self assessment" time. The LNP will work with the LEP and HWBB to identify the best means of evidencing these benefits.

There is potential for building an evaluation of community engagement into the pilot Devon Community Toolkit for the Natural Environment. The five AONBs are involved in the South West Protected Landscapes Forum Cordiale (Interreg) project which has a strong community engagement element. The LNP will investigate whether learning from this project can be used across Devon.

In terms of **functioning and structure**, the LNP evaluation framework will cover:

- The effectiveness of the structure (Board, secretariat, task and finish groups, membership forum, etc);
- Achievement of LNP business plan, in terms of overall objectives, milestones and specific targets;
- Successful engagement of stakeholders, partners and wider interest groups;
- Benefits to partners/members of the LNP;
- Impact of the LNP on the planning system;
- New funding sources / re-alignment of funding to meet LNP priorities

The findings from the different strands of the evaluation will form part of the Board's Annual Report on progress to the Forum.

Appendix I: Current 'natural environment' partnerships to be included in Devon LNP

This appendix lists some of the existing natural environment partnerships to be brought together under the Devon LNP umbrella.

Note that these reflect the natural environment sector and that other socio and economic partnerships have been consulted and will be included within the LNP (see Appendix II). A database of ~ 700 organisations and interest groups (socio, economic and environmental) engaged through the LNP capacity building work has been compiled.

Countywide partnerships

- Devon Archaeological Society
- Devon Biodiversity Partnership
- Devon Biodiversity Records Centre Forum
- Devon Countryside Access Forum
- Devon Education for Sustainability Working Group
- Devon Flood Risk Partnership
- Devon Food and Farming Group
- Devon Landscape Policy Group
- Devon Maritime Forum
- Devon RIGS Group

Geographical partnerships (strategy and delivery)

- Biodiversity Partnerships (Torbay, Dartmoor, North Devon)
- Estuarine Partnerships
- Green Infrastructure Partnerships (Exeter and East Devon/South Devon)
- North Devon Biosphere Reserve Partnership
- Northern Devon Nature Improvement Area
- Partnerships of five Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty:
 - Blackdown Hills AONB
 - East Devon AONB
 - North Devon AONB
 - South Devon AONB
 - Tamar Valley AONB
- Tamar to Exe Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area
- Torbay Countryside Access Forum
- Upstream Thinking
- Working Wetlands

Appendix II: Organisations expressing support for a Devon LNP

This appendix lists the organisations and partnerships whose representatives expressed support for a Devon LNP during the one to one interviews carried out during consultation. Further support was obtained during the Reconnecting People and Nature and Green Economy Projects.

- Barn Owl Trust
- Bickton College of Agriculture
- Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Buglife
- Centre for Energy and the Environment, University of Exeter
- Clinton Devon Estates
- Community Council of Devon
- Council for Protection of Rural England
- Country Land and Business Association (Devon)
- Dartington Hall Trust
- Dartmoor National Park Authority
- Devon and Cornwall Business Council (DCBC)
- Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
- Devon Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (DACVS)
- Devon Bat Group
- Devon Biodiversity Partnership
- Devon Biodiversity Records Centre
- Devon County Council
- Devon Countryside Access Forum
- Devon Environmental Business Initiative
- DESWG - Devon Environmental Sustainability Working Group
- Devon Food and Farming Group
- Devon Landscape Policy Group
- Devon Maritime Forum
- Devon Renaissance
- Devon RIGGS (Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites)
- Devon Tree Officers Group
- Devon Wildlife Trust
- East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- East Devon District Council
- English Riviera Global Geopark
- Environment Agency
- Exeter City Council
- Exmoor National Park Authority
- Forestry Commission
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SW
- Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership
- Highways Agency
- Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site
- Landscape Institute
- Marine Biological Association
- Marine Institute
- Mid Devon District Council
- Moor Trees
- National Marine Aquarium

- National Farmers Union
- National Trust
- Natural England
- NHS Devon / PCT
- North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- North Devon Biosphere Reserve
- North Devon District Council
- North Devon +
- Paignton Zoo/Whitley Wildlife Trust
- Plantlife
- Plymouth City Council
- Plymouth University
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Silvanus Trust
- Skills and Learning Intelligence Module (SLIM)/Devon green skills group
- South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- South Devon College
- South Hams District Council
- South West Coast Path
- South West Lakes Trust
- South West Water
- Stover Country Park
- Tamar to Exe Delivery group
- Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Teignbridge District Council
- Torbay Council
- Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust
- Torridge District Council
- Westcountry Rivers Trust
- West Devon Borough Council
- Woodland Trust