

**Devon's Local Nature Partnership**

**Evaluation of Partnership Development Work  
And Proposed LNP Evaluation Framework**

*Draft report prepared on behalf of:*

Devon LNP Advisory Group

June 2012

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## 1. Introduction

This document provides a summary retro-evaluation of the partnership development work undertaken during the process of putting together Devon’s submission to Defra for formal Local Nature Partnership (LNP) status. It also presents a draft Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for assessing the progress of the LNP should it achieve formal recognition.

Devon County Council received funding from Defra to develop a Devon LNP (including Torbay) in December 2011. The funding was used to facilitate partnership development work that involved engagement with all relevant stakeholders across the county in order to develop a vision for the LNP (with clear strategic priorities), a committed membership, a business plan (finance and communication) and a governance structure that would help to achieve the LNP’s vision. The intended outcomes of the development work are set out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Intended Outcomes of Development Work:**

<b>Engagement and commitment</b>	Relevant organisations and partnerships are committed to working together in new ways to develop a strategic, self-sustaining, and delivery focused, Devon LNP.
<b>Governance</b>	An effective governance structure is agreed, with appropriate links to the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Health and Well Being Board. Discussion with the potential Plymouth LNP ensures that an effective LNP structure is set up across Devon. Appropriate mechanisms for effective working with all neighbouring LNPs are established, particularly in relation to working with the LEP.
<b>Integrated priorities</b>	Potential LNP members work together to integrate priorities into a new outline vision that benefits Devon’s natural environment, communities and economy. This vision includes a few clear priorities for the LNP over an agreed timescale.
<b>Funding and communication</b>	Innovative financial and communication mechanisms for supporting the partnership, and for delivery work, are proposed.

The required outputs from the work were:

- Steering and communication mechanisms for the LNP capacity building stage e.g. steering group, e-group, mailing list, updates on DCC website;
- Governance structure and terms of reference;
- Outline LNP vision (with clear priorities and outcomes established);
- Communication and Finance strategies;
- Evidence of support for outputs 2 – 4 above, received from partners; and

- Evaluation indicators and equality impacts assessment.

Section 2 of this report describes the LNP development work that was undertaken to achieve these outcomes and outputs. It also describes the two accompanying studies that were completed to complement the development work – *Scoping Devon’s Green Economy* and *Reconnecting People and Nature*.

The evaluation of the development work that is presented in section 3 is based both on examining the extent to which the outcomes and outcomes described above have been achieved and also on looking at the processes and methodologies that were used to achieve them.

The evaluation is presented in four sections covering each of the main intended outcome areas as shown in Table 1:

- Engagement and commitment;
- Governance;
- Integrated priorities; and
- Funding and communication.

For each outcome area an assessment of progress is put forward alongside the highlighting of any lessons that were identified. This is accompanied by a discussion of any issues that arose and/or matters still to be resolved, followed by suggestions for addressing these matters.

The evaluation section concludes with a summary of the progress made, issues confronted and lessons learnt.

Finally section 4 of the report presents a proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for assessing the progress of the Devon LNP, should it achieve formal recognition. The section commences with a discussion of some of the key issues to be considered in evaluating the LNP and how these might be addressed, before going on to put forward a proposed Framework.

## **2. Summary of the Partnership Development Work**

The LNP Development work involved an extensive capacity building, partnership development and engagement exercise across the county. As mentioned, this entailed three separate, but inter-linked, consultation exercises and studies:

### ***Scoping Devon's Green Economy***

This study 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. The work included:

- Individual consultations with 42 key stakeholders and partners, including Economic Development Officers;
- A workshop with 30 of key partners, including LEP representatives bringing together the economy/business and natural environment sectors; and
- Was overseen by the Head of Regeneration and Resources at DCC on behalf of the HotSW LEP and DCC's LNP lead.

### ***Reconnecting People and Nature***

Led by the Community Council for Devon and overseen by the PCT and DCC's LNP lead, this aimed to obtain a strategic overview of how people engage with natural environment and how the LNP could assist activities with health and social benefits:

- 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***

This study aimed to build on the two above to identify the purpose and role of an LNP in Devon, the priorities for action, a potential governance structure and communication with members. The activities undertaken included:

- One to one consultation 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 promoting the development work and encouraging feedback and involvement in the process.

These three strands of work have already produced many tangible outputs, including reports on the first two studies, the submission to Defra for formal recognition of the LNP and draft documentation for the LNP covering terms of reference, business plan, job descriptions, evaluation and equality impact indicators. Most importantly the development work identified that there was widespread endorsement and enthusiasm for the creation of a Devon LNP and has laid the ground for increased

partnership working and engagement among those working on the natural environment in Devon alongside the LEP and the H&WBB.

### **3. The Evaluation of the Partnership Development Work**

This evaluation of the partnership development work was undertaken retrospectively, after the submission to Defra had been made. The evaluation covered both the LNP Partnership Development work itself as well as the two accompanying studies – *Scoping Devon’s Green Economy* and *Reconnecting People and Nature* – that were undertaken as complementary exercises.

The focus of the evaluation was on assessing the extent to which the outcomes and outputs described in section 1 above had been achieved and highlighting the lessons identified during the process that would be of use to future partnership building. The following sub-sections highlight the findings for each of the four main outcomes:

- Engagement and commitment;
- Governance;
- Integrated priorities; and
- Funding and communication.

The final sub-section in this chapter summarises the findings of the evaluation as a whole.

#### **3.1 Engagement and commitment**

An assessment was made of the range of organisations, partnerships and individuals who were engaged during the process of developing a Devon LNP and the extent of their involvement. In particular the evaluation examined:

- The number and spread of organisations, partnerships and individuals who engaged in the partnership development work; and
- The range and types of partnership building methods used and the level of involvement with each.

As illustrated in the previous section, a very wide range of potential partners, stakeholders and interest groups were involved in the process of developing Devon’s LNP and its strategic vision. The three separate consultation studies undertaken involved high level engagement and commitment, both in terms of the seniority of the participants and the time they committed to the exercises:

##### ***Scoping Devon’s Green Economy***

This involved one-to-one consultations with 42 stakeholders and partners followed by a half-day workshop session with 30 participants. The participating organisations were drawn from the private, NGO, public and academic sectors, with many senior representatives, such as Board members, Directors, CEOs and Departmental Heads.

### ***Reconnecting People and Nature***

More than 600 community organisations and town/parish councils were invited to participate in an online survey and/or three workshops around the county as part of the study. Over 120 organisations participated in the research, providing a complete cross section, including BME, disability, community, arts and hard to reach groups.

### ***Devon LNP Development Study***

This involved individual consultations with over 75 organisations from the natural environment, economy, health and community sectors; a half-day workshop session with 40 of the key partners; and the establishment of a Devon LNP website for both promoting the development work and encouraging feedback and involvement.

These exercises enabled both high level, strategic engagement and also the involvement of the widest possible set of interest groups. Five members of the LEP Board (including the Chair and CEO) participated in the LNP development work and/or the Green Economy study as well as a representative of the Devon H&WBB.

Furthermore, the development work enabled the establishment of stronger working links between the DCC environment team and the Devon PCT/NHS, as well as internally with the DCC economy team. These improved linkages have already resulted in additional benefits such as the identification of cross cutting areas for future joint working and potential extended collaboration on existing projects.

It is also worth noting that an Advisory Group was established in September 2011 to lead the capacity building work. The membership of this Group is made up of senior staff members drawn from key partners, including Devon County Council, Devon Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Heart of the South West LEP, Natural England, NHS/PCT Devon, RSPB, South Devon AONB and Torbay Council.

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

As such it can be seen that the engagement took place in a variety of ways and at a variety of levels – tailored to encouraging an appropriate level of commitment and involvement. This ranged from “intensive” input, such as personalised one-to-one consultations lasting over 2 hours with key partners and ongoing involvement in the Advisory Group, to “soft” involvement such as via posting updates on the website for wider interest groups.

In summary it can be stated that the potential partners, stakeholders and interest groups were involved in a very high level of engagement and commitment in the process of developing Devon’s LNP. This approach has produced a range of benefits

both for the existing organisations taking part in the work and for the emerging LNP partnership. The most positive and constructive aspects of this engagement were:

- The identification of many areas of common interest among the various partners, stakeholders and interest groups;
- Their willingness to engage and debate the ways in which the LNP might usefully take forward these issues for them collectively;
- The involvement of senior staff members in the development work thereby adding “weight” to the process and the LNP itself; and
- The willingness of all participants to find the time to consider and debate the best propositions for the LNP.

The four main lessons learnt from the engagement process were:

- The need to allow for sufficient set up time for consultations with senior level staff members;
- The need to use a range of consultation methods to ensure that all interest groups can participate in a manner that suits them;
- It was recognised that it was impossible to consult with everyone with an interest in the natural environment and it was therefore necessary to request that individuals cascade information and feedback from within their sectors and organisations. Unfortunately this did not always happen; and
- The process of pulling together and collating a usable database of contacts is a time consuming and quite knotty exercise as the database needs regular updating and many organisations have numerous roles and individuals with an interest in (and view about) the natural environment.

### 3.2 Governance

The evaluation examined the extent to which the partnership development work put together an effective governance structure for the LNP, with appropriate links to the LEP and H&WBB. It also looked at whether mechanisms for effective working with neighbouring LNPs were established, particularly in relation to working with the LEP and a potential Plymouth LNP to ensure an effective LNP structure across Devon.

The partnership work found that existing partnerships and organisations in Devon were currently very disparate with no effective co-ordination mechanisms in place to enable effective strategic working across the county and no high-level strategic leadership equivalent to the LEP Board and H&WBB. In order to address this, the development work identified the following proposed structure for the Devon LNP:

- Creating a **Board** made up of high level strategic thinkers and advocates from across the sector as well as the LEP and H&WBB;
- Establishing a **Secretariat** to provide practical administrative support, communication and coordination with neighbouring LNPs;
- Setting up **Task and Finish groups** bringing technical experts together to ensure effective cross cutting working; and

- Creating a **Forum** for improved communication and joint working for all relevant partnerships, organisations, groups and individuals across Devon.

The roles, composition and Terms of Reference of the Board, Secretariat and Task & Finish Groups were discussed extensively in the consultation and workshop exercises and the propositions put forward in the bid to Defra for implementation are the products of this work. The composition and ToR of the Forum need to be clarified.

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

Furthermore, the Devon and Plymouth LNP partnerships have agreed to work jointly together across the county and all the local authorities working in the area support them. It is intended that 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.

Therefore it can be concluded that the development work has devised and put forward a governance structure for the Devon LNP that will enable it to function effectively and to develop appropriate working links with the LEP and H&WBB. In addition, mechanisms for effective working with neighbouring LNPs have been established, particularly in relation to working with the LEP and a potential Plymouth LNP to ensure an effective LNP structure across Devon.

The most positive and constructive aspects of this development work were:

- The agreement of an appropriate structure for the effective functioning of the LNP in relation to its stated aims and objectives;
- The nomination of both LEP and H&WBB representatives for the LNP Board, alongside the proposed composition of the Board itself; and
- The agreements to work jointly with Plymouth and Somerset LNPs.

The main lessons learnt and issues still to be dealt with from this part of the development work were:

- The need to continue close joint working with neighbouring LNPs and the regional SWEN network;
- The need to identify the best means of establishing the Forum in order to confirm its role and Terms of Reference; and
- Thereby identify the means by which the Forum will provide a mandate to the LNP for its work.

(In relation to establishing the Forum it is worth noting that careful consideration should be given to alternative models and for learning from other Forums, such as the LEP. It should also be emphasised that it is usually not possible to achieve 100% agreement on such matters and that some compromise will be necessary).

### **3.3 Integrated priorities**

The third area appraised was the extent to which potential LNP members had worked together to integrate priorities into a new outline vision for the benefit of Devon's natural environment, communities and economy.

As detailed above, extensive consultation work was undertaken over a period of four months among a very wide range of potential LNP partners. This gave them the opportunity to both put forward their own views on an outline vision the LNP together with an associated set of priorities, as well as discussing these ideas collaboratively with the other partners, stakeholders and interest groups.

The consultation work 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. If formal recognition is achieved, a key initial task for the LNP Board will be to finalise the high level, simple vision for Devon's natural environment and the set of priorities for action that this process produced.

In summary the priorities identified can be grouped into three main sets relating to each of the studies undertaken:

#### ***Scoping Devon's Green Economy***

This study was commissioned jointly with the HotSW 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 priorities for action it identified were mapped onto the LEP Business Plan.

#### ***Reconnecting People and Nature***

This work was jointly overseen by PCT/DCC exploring: how "communities of place" engage with Devon's natural environment and how this can be better supported; and the barriers to different demographics engaging fully with Devon's natural environment. The project identified strategic priorities for helping to better engage communities with the natural environment.

#### ***LNP Development work***

This study took a more overarching view, examining the full range of environmental and associated areas in which the LNP could have a strategic influence. It produced a further set of priorities for action and potential areas of collaboration to help inform the LNP's work while aligning it with existing programmes and initiatives.

Further to these outputs from the consultation, it was also recognised that other existing information (such as Devon State of Nature Report, Devon's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Devon Landscape Character Assessment) together with new information (such as Devon Framework for Landscape Scale Delivery, Audit of Ecosystem Services and further discussion between the LNP, LEP and H&WBB) would need to be used to produce the final vision and priorities for the LNP.

For evaluation purposes it is worthwhile considering the development process to date in terms of the following four questions:

***The extent to which the work has strengthened the capacity of the partners/ stakeholders to implement their aims/objectives***

There was evidence that the work had begun the process of strengthening the capacity of the partners/stakeholders in several areas. In addition to the joint working with the LEP and H&WBB and the internal linkages between the DCC Environment and Economy teams, the five Devon AONBs were collaborating with one representative of their interests on the Advisory Group and the neighbouring LNPs were involved in the engagement process.

***Whether the development work has fostered communication between partners and stakeholders***

It was also clear that communication had increased between partners and stakeholders, evidenced "formally" by the workshops and Advisory Group meetings and also "informally" by the number of conversations, contacts and leads that had resulted from the formal engagement.

***Whether the work has increased the process of debate between partners and begun relationship building, etc***

As described above in sections 3.1 and 3.2, there was also considerable evidence that the work had increased debate and begun cementing existing relationships further, as well as building new ones. This was apparent across all three of the consultation exercises as well in the work with the LEP, the H&WBB and the Advisory Group meetings.

***Whether the work will increase the ability of the partners/stakeholders to influence decision makers according to the LNP's objectives***

This is, of course, the \$64,000 dollar question. The evidence to date is positive with the LEP and the H&WBB nominating representatives for the LNP Board and consensus being reached on the LNP Board composition. However, until the LNP is established, the extent to which it can successfully influence strategic decision makers will not be apparent. Much of this will rest on the ability of the Board and Chair in particular to be strong, positive and passionate advocates for the LNP's objectives.

In terms of producing a new outline vision and associated priorities for the benefit of Devon's natural environment, communities and economy, the most positive aspects of the development work were:

- The identification of a wide set of priorities, drawn from existing and proposed environmental strategies and plans, as well as linking to the LEP Business Plan and the emerging H&WBB agenda;
- The increased collaboration and communication both among and between partners and stakeholders, helping to strengthen existing relationships and forge new ones; and
- The identification of a firm platform of support and consensus from which the LNP Board can work more effectively to achieve its objective of influencing decision makers for the benefit of the natural environment.

The main lessons learnt and issues still to be dealt with from this part of the development work were:

- The need to identify those areas where LNP priorities do not align with existing strategies and plans and how these can best resolved;
- The need to continue close working the LEP and H&WBB as their agendas evolve to ensure that LNP priorities reflect any changes;
- The overriding importance (because of the potentially huge scope of its remit) of the LNP focussing on a few key priority aims and objectives; and
- The need to appoint Board members who have the charisma, status and ability to successfully achieve these aims and objectives.

### 3.4 Funding and communication

The final area addressed by the evaluation concerned the extent to which innovative financial and communication mechanisms for supporting the partnership, and for delivery work, had been proposed. This part of the evaluation of the funding and communication outcomes and outputs covered:

- The steering and communication mechanisms **actually established** for the LNP capacity building stage e.g. steering group, e-group, mailing list, updates on DCC website; and
- The **proposed** communication strategy and funding mechanisms for the LNP operational stage, assuming formal recognition is achieved.

In terms of funding its **operation**, resources will be required for the LNP Board, Secretariat, Task and Finish Groups and Forum to function effectively. The following proposals were agreed to allow this effective functioning:

- 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 parties.

There was also commitment from the wide range of organisations supporting the Devon LNP to provide staff time to input into the Forum and Board as necessary.

In terms of funding **delivery**, the following mechanisms were put forward, subject to agreement by the LNP Board as part of their Business Plan:

- **Via the planning system** – Using biodiversity off-sets to help deliver an ecological network based on priority areas identified in Devon Nature Map and use of the Community Infrastructure Levy / s106 agreements.
- **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 that follow SW Water’s Upstream Thinking approach.
- **Tourism** – Visitor Payback Schemes (discussed at length in the Green Economy workshop. Learning from past/current projects will be gathered together and shared in order to develop new and better schemes).
- **Other mechanisms** – Development of social enterprises and forging links with existing schemes e.g. Exeter Local Foods Project, working with Natural England on HLS targeting, etc.

It was therefore apparent that a range of innovative financial and communication mechanisms for supporting the LNP, and delivery work, had been proposed. The most positive aspects of this were the commitments from Devon County Council and Devon Wildlife Trust to resourcing the LNP as well as the willingness of the wider partners to play an active role in the Forum and Task & Finish groups.

The key issues still to be dealt with from this part of the development work were:

- Clarity on the extent to which it will be possible to effectively use the planning system and realigning existing resources to fund delivery; and
- How far using tourism and other mechanisms can be improved and developed to generate sufficient resources to help the LNP.

### 3.5 Summary evaluation comments

In summary it can be concluded that the retro evaluation found that the LNP development work was broadly very successful in achieving its intended outcomes. The potential partners, stakeholders and interest groups were involved in a high level of engagement and commitment during the process and this has produced benefits both for the organisations themselves and the emerging LNP.

The key achievements of the development work can be summarised as:

- The involvement of senior staff members adding “weight” to the process and the proposed activities of the LNP;
- The agreement of an appropriate structure and governance model for the effective functioning of the LNP;
- The nomination of HotSW LEP and H&WBB representatives for the LNP Board and associated LNP Board structure;
- The identification of firm mechanisms for effective working with neighbouring LNPs have been established;
- The identification of a set of key priorities, covering existing and proposed environmental strategies and plans, as well as linking to the LEP Business Plan and the emerging H&WBB agenda;
- The increased collaboration and communication both among and between partners and stakeholders, helping to strengthen existing relationships and forge new ones; and
- The building of a firm platform of support and consensus from which the LNP Board can work more effectively to achieve its objective of influencing decision makers for the benefit of the natural environment.

The main combined outputs of the three elements of the development work are summarised in the Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Main Outputs of Development Work:**

Element	Outputs
Green Economy Study	A report on <i>Scoping Devon’s Green Economy</i>
Reconnecting People & Nature Study	A report on <i>Reconnecting People and Nature</i>
LNP Development Work	Terms of reference
	Job descriptions for LNP Board members
	Equalities impact indicators for the LNP
	A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the LNP
	A draft Business Plan for the LNP
Combined	A website for the LNP ( <a href="http://www.devonenvironment.org.uk/">http://www.devonenvironment.org.uk/</a> )
	A master contact database for the LNP

The most important issues that still need to be resolved from the development work and as the LNP emerges are:

- The need to develop the Forum in an appropriate manner that enables the participation and involvement of the wider interest groups while providing the LNP with a suitable mandate for its actions;
- The need to identify those areas where LNP priorities do NOT align with existing strategies and plans and how these can best resolved;
- The need to continue close working the LEP and H&WBB as their agendas evolve to ensure that LNP priorities reflect any changes;
- The overriding importance (because of the potentially huge scope of its remit) of the LNP focussing on a few priority aims and objectives; and
- The need to appoint Board members who have the charisma, status and ability to successfully deliver these aims and objectives.

## 4. Proposals for Evaluating the Devon LNP

As mentioned, the development work culminated in the submission of a bid to Defra for formal recognition of the Devon LNP. This section presents a proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for assessing the progress of the Devon LNP, should it achieve this formal recognition.

### 4.1 Evaluation considerations

Before discussing the framework, it is worth highlighting the important role that proper evaluation, integrated into partnership activities from the start, can play in improving delivery and identifying lessons. Carefully tailored evaluation work could:

- Provide real-time feedback on delivery and the performance of the LNP partnership itself;
- Inform the LNP Board's review of priorities and allocation of resources;
- Provide an opportunity for reflection and inform the wider Forum;
- Identify and communicate achievements to partners, stakeholders and the wider interest groups;
- Assess the value added by LNP partnership working;
- Examine the impact of partnership activities; and
- Identify and promote lessons for the future.

Furthermore, in order for evaluations to be effective they need to be designed to address the following three questions. (For each of the three questions the issue is first outlined and then our recommendation for addressing it described):

#### 1. What is being evaluated?

It must be clear what the evaluation is assessing. When considering partnership activities, there are various possibilities that could be included (often already having their own sets of data and outcomes):

- **The delivery activities covered by the LNP:** as this will be a wide range of projects, programmes and initiatives, should or can they all be included?
- **The “value” of the LNP:** assessing the added value that working in a partnership can bring, both in terms of the potential impact on outcomes and outputs, but also on the partners themselves; and
- **The operation of the LNP:** the effectiveness of the LNP structure, operation, etc. in helping to enable the LNP to deliver its aims and objectives as described in its Business Plan.

Our recommendation is that the LNP evaluation should definitely cover the added value and the operation of the partnership. Inclusion of the delivery activities is also recommended, though with the following caveats:

- Firstly, there should be no duplication of any existing evaluation activities (the findings from these should be integrated into the evaluation);

- Secondly that consideration should be given to what actually constitutes an “LNP delivery project”, as distinct from activities that are being undertaken by an organisation that happens to be a partner in the LNP; and therefore
- Thirdly, that the delivery activities that are to be included in the evaluation should, where possible, be reported on at an overarching “LNP level”, rather than project specific basis.

## 2. What time period should the evaluation cover?

Similarly the evaluation needs to frame a clear time period, with distinct marker points identified at which review and appraisal should occur, with associated data and reporting. The most common periods are:

- **Baseline:** providing a ‘snapshot’ picture of the situation when the partnership starts, defined by a number of clear indicators;
- **Interim:** reviewing progress and performance at a mid way or agreed point. Crucially interim evaluations should be conducted in a time scale that allows changes to be implemented to address both “*what is not working*” and “*what is working that we can do more of*”; and
- **Final:** at the end of the project/partnership, focusing on what has been achieved and what the impact of the partnership was, alongside the lessons learnt for future partnerships.

Our recommendation is that the Devon LNP should conduct an annual interim evaluation of its activities to inform its annual report to the wider Forum. A baseline exercise should also be undertaken to help identify progress and development as well as a focused review after six months to ensure that the LNP is established properly (see theme 1 overleaf). A decision on the timing of a final evaluation cannot be made until the lifespan of the LNP is known.

## 3. Who should complete the evaluation?

The LNP partners and stakeholders together with the delivery partners will hold much of the basic data needed for the evaluation, though it will be necessary to collect more information to complete the evaluation properly (specifically around the views and opinions of all involved). It will be important that the evaluation process is kept to a minimum, both in terms of the time and resource requirements and in not being overly intrusive on busy delivery organisations.

This leads to the question of who should conduct the evaluation. There are clear cost and time benefits associated with conducting a self-evaluation. However, our recommendation is that in terms of independence and credibility, it would be better for the evaluation to be undertaken by an external Third party. This will ensure that the evaluation is impartial and thereby help the LNP establish its accountability with all its partners and wider interest groups.

## 4.2 Proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that is presented in this section has been devised to assess the new LNP as a means, process and end:

- As a **means** of establishing the ability and capacity of the LNP to work towards its objectives and priorities;
- As a **process** of building a strong and lasting partnership: enabling debate, relationship building, moderating between differing priorities and adding value to the activities of partners; and
- As an **end** in evidencing that the LNP's work is achieving its intended goals, in terms of the objectives and priorities specified in its Business Plan.

It is intended that many of the indicators will be used on an ongoing basis to help inform the decision making process and address any issues that arise. Specifically these relate to the process part of the work and also progress towards targets. Of course, some of the indicators are time bound, such as the establishment of the LNP within its first six months. Others will be linked to the timescale for implementation and delivery identified in the LNP Business Plan.

As such the draft framework has been drawn up based on six main themes covering different aspects of evaluating the LNP. One theme relates to the means, two to the process and three to the ends, with the intention being to reflect the relative "weight" of each element.

Each theme is made up of a set of indicators that are listed in the framework overleaf. It is intended that the individual indicators will provide an insight into, or a measure of, the current position of the partnership. When combined they should provide a balanced assessment both of the LNP's functioning and of the range of activities that it is engaged in, together with the value (if any) that is being added.

The six proposed evaluation themes are:

- The establishment of the Devon LNP (the *means*);
- The effective operation of the Devon LNP (the *process*):
- Effective and added value delivery by the Devon LNP (the *process*);
- Improve the state of Devon's natural environment (the *end*);
- Increase the social and economic benefits of Devon's natural environment (the *end*); and
- Increase the community benefits of Devon's natural environment (the *end*).

It is important to note that for several of the themes (specifically those dealing with work on social and economic benefits and the community and health sectors) it is not possible or appropriate to provide details of indicators at this stage.

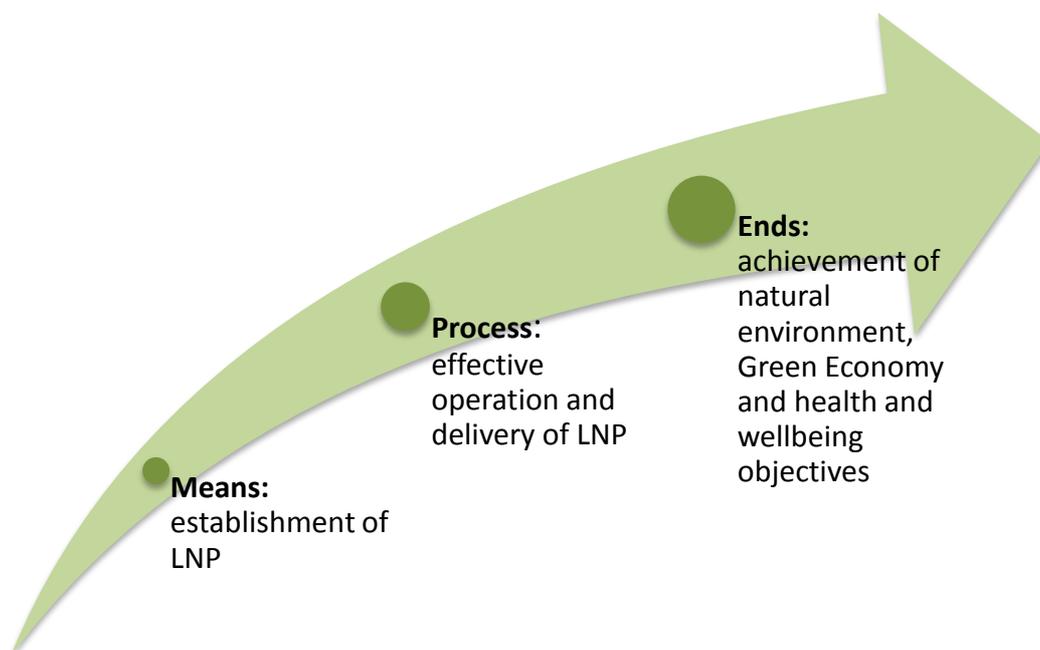
This is because these need to be based on the specific projects, initiatives and targets that are agreed with the HotSW LEP and H&WBB respectively and will need to “fit” into their business plans and intended outcomes. Furthermore it is possible that some of this work may have its own associated evaluation and monitoring procedures that will need to be integrated into the LNP Framework.

It is also worth re-emphasising that the timescales relating to each theme (and some individual indicators) will vary. Establishing the LNP is a task to be achieved in the first six months, while monitoring and evaluating its effective operation is an ongoing task that will need to be reviewed annually.

The proposed Framework is presented overleaf describing for each theme:

- The specific aim;
- The intended outcomes;
- The indicators (where possible);
- The sources of evidence (such as via existing reports or using new data sources);
- How often they should be reviewed/reported: and
- The means of disseminating the outcome.

It is intended that each of the six themes can be evaluated separately, though in a logical sequence:





**Table 2: Proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Devon LNP**

Theme/specific aim	Intended outcomes	Indicators	Sources of evidence	When	How reported
<b>The establishment of the Devon LNP</b>	<p>The set up and running of the LNP, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of an Executive Board and Chair;</li> <li>• Formation of a supporting Secretariat;</li> <li>• Production and agreement of a Business Plan;</li> <li>• Production of a “State of Devon’s Nature” report;</li> <li>• Production of a Communications strategy;</li> <li>• Establishment of Forum to enable wider interest groups to input into LNP activities;</li> <li>• Resourcing and funding arrangements established; and</li> <li>• Setting up any other elements (i.e. task/finish groups) needed for delivery of Business Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board and Chair appointed</li> <li>• Secretariat formed and operational</li> <li>• Business Plan written, agreed and published</li> <li>• Devon State of Nature report written</li> <li>• Communication strategy published</li> <li>• Forum set-up with wide involvement and membership</li> <li>• Resources and funds aligned to LNP aims;</li> <li>• Any other elements identified and set-up process started</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters of appointment</li> <li>• Minutes of LNP meetings</li> <li>• Publication of reports on LNP website</li> <li>• Press releases</li> <li>• Written plan and report</li> <li>• Attendance of agreed % of Forum</li> </ul>	<p>Within six months of start</p>	<p>Via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LNP website</li> <li>• Annual Board Report</li> <li>• E newsletter to members</li> <li>• Interim evaluation</li> </ul>

Theme/specific aim	Intended outcomes	Indicators	Sources of evidence	When	How reported
<b>Effective operation of the Devon LNP</b>	The LNP has a clear purpose, expressed in writing and agreed by the Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear vision and plan;</li> <li>• Agreement of aims;</li> <li>• Realistic/achievable objectives.</li> </ul>	Interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members</li> <li>• Partners</li> <li>• Delivery managers</li> <li>• Forum</li> <li>• Secretariat</li> </ul>	Annually	Via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LNP website</li> <li>• Annual Board Report</li> <li>• E newsletter to members</li> <li>• Interim evaluation</li> </ul>
	The LNP has clear leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior commitment;</li> <li>• Influential Chair;</li> <li>• Board takes strategic and difficult decisions</li> </ul>			
	The LNP provides a voice for all partners and members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at forum, meetings, groups, etc</li> </ul>			
	The LNP communicates effectively internally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular reporting of progress/issues;</li> <li>• Partners aware of what is happening</li> </ul>			
	The LNP communicates effectively externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular contact with partners, etc;</li> <li>• Reciprocal presence at partner meetings</li> </ul>			
	The LNP produces efficiencies				

	for partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources are used more efficiently</li> </ul>			
<b>Theme/specific aim</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sources of evidence</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>How reported</b>
<b>Effective added value delivery by the Devon LNP</b>	<p>Achievement of LNP Business Plan, in terms of objectives, milestones and specific targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits to partners/ members of Devon LNP;</li> <li>Impact of the LNP on the planning system;</li> <li>New funding resources and realignment of existing sources</li> </ul> <p>Creation of “added value” beyond that currently achieved by existing partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities that would not have been undertaken without LNP;</li> <li>Key decision makers include LNP aims in plans /strategies;</li> <li>The LNP gives a stronger</li> </ul>	<p>As per targets detailed in Business Plan, but should also include the views of the core partners, stakeholders, wider Forum members and other interest groups on the LNP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits;</li> <li>Impact;</li> <li>Realignment of funding;</li> <li>Added value;</li> <li>Influence; and</li> <li>Achievements to date</li> </ul>	<p>As per monitoring reports together with evaluation interviews with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board members</li> <li>Partners</li> <li>Delivery managers</li> <li>Forum</li> <li>Secretariat</li> </ul>	<p>As per BP, but likely to be either ongoing or annually</p>	<p>Via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LNP website</li> <li>Annual Board Report</li> <li>Forum</li> <li>E newsletter to members</li> <li>Interim evaluation</li> </ul>

	<p>voice to the NE than before;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Additional) Benefits accruing from LNP activities</li> </ul>				
Theme/specific aim	Intended outcomes	Indicators	Sources of evidence	When	How reported
<b>Improve the state of Devon's natural environment</b>	<p>Outcomes for wildlife include the condition of habitats (including water quality) and the population status of species. Broader outcomes for the landscape, ecosystems services, etc need to be developed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of local sites in positive management (Single data set);</li> <li>• Devon Biodiversity Action Plan targets met (to be reviewed);</li> <li>• % of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in favourable condition;</li> <li>• Water Framework Directive Targets; and</li> <li>• Indicators for other aspects of the natural environment to be developed.</li> </ul>	<p>Wide range of sources.</p> <p>Information compiled for Devon's <i>State of Nature</i> report.</p> <p>Other sources to be agreed.</p>	Annually	<p>Via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LNP website</li> <li>• Annual Board Report</li> <li>• E newsletter to members</li> <li>• Interim evaluation</li> <li>• Devon's <i>State of Nature</i> and <i>State of the Environment</i> (to be produced as part of Joint Strategic Need Assessment)</li> </ul>
<b>Increase the social and economic benefits of Devon's</b>	<p>As per priorities identified in the <i>Devon's Green Economy</i> study to be agreed with the HotSW LEP</p>	<p>If appropriate as per LEP Evaluation plan, otherwise to be devised in accordance</p>	<p>To be agreed with LEP</p>	Ditto	<p>Via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LNP website</li> <li>• Annual Board Report</li> </ul>

<b>natural environment</b>	in line with their Business Plan for the Green Economy	with projects/programmes undertaken			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E newsletter to members</li> <li>• Interim evaluation</li> </ul>
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Theme/specific aim	Intended outcomes	Indicators	Sources of evidence	When	How reported
<b>Increase the health and community benefits of Devon's natural environment</b>	To be agreed with H&WBB based on <i>Reconnecting People and Nature</i> study. (Evaluation of Community engagement could be carried out using the Devon Community Wildlife Toolkit).	As per priorities and delivery arrangement agreed with H&WBB	Ditto	Ditto	Via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LNP website</li> <li>• Annual Board Report</li> <li>• E newsletter to members</li> <li>• Interim evaluation</li> </ul>