

Devon Local Nature Partnership

Terms of Reference

(agreed at LNP Board meeting on 3rd December 2012)

1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

This document provides the terms of reference for the Devon Local Nature Partnership (LNP). **Note that these terms of reference will be reviewed and amended by the LNP Board as appropriate.**

1.2 Role of the LNP

The Devon LNP will provide a strong, championing voice for the county's unique and hugely important natural environment. It will embed the value of the high quality natural environment into decision-making processes and improve co-ordination of delivery across Devon, in order to:

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

1.3 Geographical area covered

The Devon LNP covers the geographical area of Devon (excluding Plymouth City).

1.4 Definition of the natural environment

For the work of the LNP, Devon's natural environment will include:

- Resources. Including landscape, wildlife, geology, water, urban green space and soil.
- Processes. Such as pollination, water purification, flood control and climate change.
- Associated cultural heritage.

In Devon our natural environment is the result of thousands of years of interaction between people and nature. It continues to be shaped through the care and attention invested by the individuals and organisations who actively manage it.

1.5 LNP Structure

This will include:

- **A Board** of cross-sectoral high-level strategic thinkers and advocates. The Board will have equal status to the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Board and the Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- **An Executive Group** of officers. The Executive will lead the routine operation of the partnership, support the Board, take forward priority initiatives and provide a link between Forum members and the Board.
- **Task and Finish groups** (as required) to bring together experts to support the development and delivery of projects and strategy.
- **A Forum** which helps to develop LNP strategic priorities and initiatives as well as ensuring effective communication and joint delivery between all relevant partnerships, organisations, interest groups and individuals across Devon.

2. Devon LNP Board

2.1 Purpose of the Board

- **Build a strong and effective Devon LNP.**
- **Celebrate and champion Devon's natural environment.**
- Provide **strategic leadership** for Devon's LNP.
- Set the **strategic vision and priorities** for the LNP based on delivering a high quality, resilient natural environment that supports sustainable growth and community wellbeing.
- Ensure that **Forum members are fully engaged** and able to both influence, and deliver, the LNP's strategic priorities.
- Ensure that the vision and priorities are articulated in a **published Business Plan**.
- Develop a sustainable cross sectoral **funding strategy** in order to help achieve LNP priorities and continuity of the LNP itself.
- **Pro-actively advocate the vision and priorities** through engaging with key local, regional and national partners.
- Improve the **co-ordination of work** across the LNP.
- Strengthen the **evidence base** needed to improve cross-sectoral working.
- Promote the active **involvement of communities and businesses** in celebrating and improving the quality of their local environment.
- Provide a **platform for information sharing and networking**.
- **Monitor and report** to the Forum (annually) on the performance of the LNP and progress made in achieving objectives.
- Ensure that the **LNP is fit for purpose**.

2.2 Membership

The initial Board represents the following sectors:

- Non Governmental Natural Environment organisation (CEO Level)
 - Protected Landscapes (CEO/Manager)
 - Local Authority (CEO/Director level)
 - Defra family (Area Manager level)
 - Landowner / Land Manager
 - Devon Health and Wellbeing Board (Senior Level)
 - University/Academic institution (Professor/Senior level)
 - Community Sector representative (CEO level)
- The importance of a strong and effective relationship with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership is acknowledged and will be developed through a Compact. These Terms of Reference will be amended to reflect this Compact as required.
 - The initial Board was established through inviting the relevant 'sectors' (as listed above) to nominate a Board member. Information on this selection process can be found on the LNP website at www.devonenvironment.org.uk (see LNP Board pages)
 - Composition of the Board was reviewed at the first Board meeting and will be reviewed as required.
 - Where further nominations are made, or requested, the nomination must be agreed by a Board vote (see voting below). Essential criteria for nominees are listed below.
 - Board members will be appointed for a period of three years and may be reappointed for further terms of three years.
 - All Board members have voting rights.

Essential criteria for Board members:

- Experience of operating in a senior position relevant to Devon's natural environment and/or relevant social/economic sectors.
- A track record of operating at the strategic level with relevant significant national, regional and local players.
- Ability to both act as a good team player and to lead initiatives on behalf of the LNP Board.
- Strong and effective communication skills.
- Evidence of good influencing and negotiating skills.
- Having sufficient time, enthusiasm and energy to help enable to the Devon LNP achieve its aims and objectives.
- Able to bring resources to the LNP (e.g. supporting the Executive) or to help to align existing resources to achieve the LNP's objectives.

Role of Board Members:

LNP Board members will assist in the delivery of the LNP's aims and objectives by:

- Representing their sector at Board meetings in an open and accountable manner and for the benefit of the LNP as a whole.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of the Business Plan and Funding Strategy using the knowledge, skills, contacts and influence available from their organisations.
- Acting as champions for Devon's LNP and the natural environment, and pro-actively building support for the aims and priorities of the LNP and delivery of initiatives.
- Influencing relevant strategies, plans and funding mechanisms to further the LNP's aims.
- Influencing decision makers (including central government and MPs) to further the LNP's aims.
- Representing the LNP at appropriate meetings and events and acting as a spokesperson for the LNP when appropriate.
- Promoting LNP activities, events and communication tools (such as the website). Reporting back to their organisations and sectors on the outcomes of LNP meetings and other LNP activities.
- As necessary, acting as a lead for a task and finish group in an area of specific knowledge, expertise and/or interest.
- Ensuring that they communicate effectively with both the Executive Group and Chair between meetings.

2.3 Accountability

The Board is accountable to the LNP Forum at all times. The Board will consult the Forum on the Business Plan (and any revision of this) and present this and a report on work of the LNP, to include a summary of any financial information, at an annual LNP Conference. This information will also be placed on the LNP website.

2.4 Other operational arrangements**Chair**

The Chair will:

- Be appointed by the Board.
- Be appointed for a period of three years and be reappointed for only one further term of three years.
- Be key in developing a strong, effective and influential LNP during its developmental stage.

- Be a champion for Devon's LNP at all times and pro-actively build support for the aims and priorities of the LNP.
- Lead on the agreement and delivery of the LNP Business Plan.
- Represent the LNP at appropriate events, meetings or functions. If not able to attend the Chair will nominate a Board member to attend in his/her place.
- Act as spokesperson for the LNP where appropriate.
- Seek to fulfil his/her duties in a manner that is free from political bias and influence.

Also see other duties listed below.

Meeting frequency / attendance / voting

- The Board will meet a minimum of four times a year in the first year to set direction and monitor progress. A minimum of two meetings a year to be held in subsequent years.
- Where members miss two consecutive Board meetings the Chair may request their sector to nominate a new member.
- In order to maintain momentum and consistency Board members should make every effort to attend meetings and to not send a delegate or substitute. If a substitute does attend it will be as a non voting member.
- The quorum for meetings will be 5 members. Board decisions will normally be reached by majority consensus (if there is no majority then the Chair has a casting vote).
- The Chair has discretion to invite attendance by others for specific agenda items.
- The Chair of the Executive Group will attend in an ex-officio capacity (with no voting rights).

Meeting agendas and papers

- Board meetings will be facilitated and organised by the LNP Secretariat.
- Members of the Board will receive papers at least one week before each meeting.
- The Board Chair will be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas and minutes for circulation (to be drafted by the Secretariat).
- Agenda items may be notified by any member at least ten working days before the meeting. Additional items may only be tabled at meetings at the discretion of the Chair.

Public access to meetings

- The Board will initially meet in private with a commitment to moving to public meetings as soon as possible. Confidential items may be then held in closed 'Part 2' sections of meetings at the discretion of the Chair.
- Agenda, minutes and papers from meetings will be placed on the LNP website. The Chair has the discretion to withhold papers, or parts of papers, that are of a confidential nature.

Financial management

- Any LNP funds will be managed by DCC (as Secretariat) on a pro-bono basis.
- If the LNP is responsible for funds a financial report of the LNP's work will be prepared annually by the Secretariat and approved by the Board. A summary of this will be included in the annual report of the LNP's work.

Review of these Terms of Reference

- Terms of Reference to be reviewed after six months (thereafter annually).

3. Devon LNP - Executive Group

3.1 Purpose

- To lead the routine operation of the partnership. This includes:
 - Providing advice / intelligence to the Board.
 - Provide a secretariat function. This will organise Board and Executive meetings and facilitate day to day functioning of the LNP.
 - Overseeing development, implementation and monitoring of the Business Plan, Funding Strategy, Communication Strategy and other documents as required.
 - Ensuring that transparent and inclusive communication mechanisms are in place (e.g. website, annual conference, Forum).
 - Providing a link to the Forum.
 - Supporting / leading Task and Finish Groups or other specific work areas.
 - Producing Board papers as required.
 - Providing links to, and learning from, other LNPs and Defra.

3.2 Membership

Current membership is:

- South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Torbay Council
- East Devon District Council
- Public Health (Devon County Council)
- National Farmers Union
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Devon Wildlife Trust
- Devon County Council

This membership needs to be flexible in order to reflect the emerging LNP priorities and will therefore be kept under review. An officer representing the LEP/ Economy sector will be invited to join the group.

3.3 Accountability – see 2.3 above.

3.4 Operational issues

Meeting frequency / attendance / voting

- The Group will meet a minimum of four times a year and as necessary initially to ensure that the LNP is established.
- The Group will be chaired by the organisation providing the main secretariat function within the Executive.
- The normal expectation is for matters to be agreed by consensus. In exceptional cases where voting is required this will be by a simple majority of those present.
- Others can be invited to the meeting as appropriate to the agenda

Meeting agendas and papers

- Meetings will be facilitated and organised by the organisation providing the secretariat function.
- Members will receive papers at least one week before each meeting (where possible).

- The Chair will be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas and minutes for circulation (to be drafted by the secretariat).
- Agenda items may be notified by any member at least ten working days before the meeting. Additional items may only be tabled at meetings at the discretion of the Chair.
- Agenda, minutes and papers from meetings will be placed on the LNP website. The Chair has the discretion to withhold papers, or parts of papers, that are of a confidential nature.

4. Devon LNP - Task and Finish Groups

Drawn primarily from the wider membership these groups will convene at the request of the Board or, where appropriate, by the Executive Group. They will bring experts together in order to support the development and delivery of LNP priorities.

5. Devon LNP - Forum

Open to anyone who has an interest in Devon's natural environment and the work of the LNP. The Forum will act as a 'critical friend' to the LNP Board and contribute to development and delivery of the priorities and objectives within the Business Plan. Forum members will be invited to an Annual LNP Conference and be able to sign up to receive a quarterly LNP e-newsletter.

6. Resources for running the Devon LNP

Resources will be required for the Board, Executive Group (and secretariat), Task and Finish Group and Forum to function effectively. DCC is currently committed to providing a basic level of support for the LNP secretariat and to ensure that key documents such as the Business Plan are produced. Natural England may also have some funding which can be used to contribute to producing a Business Plan. A wide range of other organisations have stated that they are committed to supporting the LNP and this will be essential for the LNP to develop and deliver its vision for Devon's natural environment.