

Devon Local Nature Partnership Draft Vision and Priorities

Introduction

This document provides the draft vision and priorities for the Devon Local Nature Partnership (LNP) during its first six months. The purpose of the Devon LNP is to embed the value of the high quality natural environment in the county into local decision-making processes. The LNP will 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.

LNP Vision

The Devon LNP will provide a strong, championing voice for the county's unique and hugely important natural environment. It will coordinate delivery across Devon 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 and social benefits that 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.

LNP Priorities and Outcomes for first six months

The priorities for action and outcomes for the LNP are:

- **To establish itself:** The LNP will set up and establish itself by:
 - Appointing a Board and Chair;
 - Forming a supporting Secretariat;
 - Establishing an LNP Forum and hold a conference;
 - Finalising and publishing a Vision, Strategy and Business Plan.
 - Finalising and publishing a Communications Strategy and further developing the LNP website; and
 - Establishing further elements of the LNP (i.e. task & finish groups) needed to enable delivery of the Vision, Strategy and Business Plan.

- **Begin work on Sustainable Land use and Management:** LNP members will work together to develop a coherent ecological network across the county which provides a range of social and economic benefits and is based on the principles of '*more, bigger, better and joined*' e.g.
 - Publishing a "State of Devon's Nature" report;
 - Producing and promoting a Framework for Landscape Scale Delivery for Devon based on the Devon Nature Map;
 - Conducting an Audit of Devon's Ecosystems Services. Identifying joint priorities and opportunities for aligning resources to achieve these priorities (e.g. Upstream Thinking);
 - Supporting the current Devon biodiversity off-setting pilot and Northern Devon NIA; and
 - Developing and promoting 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.

- **Begin work on Green Economic Growth:** 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. Work with the LEP and other experts to discuss findings from the *Scoping Devon's Green Economy* study and develop a programme of action. Work to date has suggested that actions which may begin in the first six months include:
 - Increased promotion and engagement in rural development programme, e.g. Making it Local;
 - Targeted support for specific Green Economy sectors (i.e. tourism, environmental technologies, food and drink);
 - Ensuring that CAP reform benefits Devon's natural environment and farmers; and
 - Promoting Paid Ecosystems Services projects (whereby the beneficiary pays landowners to provide the ecosystem service).

- **Begin work on Quality of Life and Local Health and Wellbeing:** Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Devon & Torbay Health and Wellbeing Boards. Bring together experts to discuss findings from the *Reconnecting People and Nature* study and develop a programme of action. Work to date has shown that actions which could begin in the first six months include:
 - Providing information for the local physical activity and health and well-being hubs;
 - Improving promotion of access to the natural environment for all, including those with disabilities or disadvantaged backgrounds;
 - Promoting and improving Devon's pilot 'Community Toolkit for the Natural Environment'; and
 - Developing the LNP website to become a natural environment 'first stop shop' for engagement and co-ordinated promotion of activities.

Further LNP Priorities for consideration

In addition to the priorities for action and outcomes for its first six months outlined above, the LNP development exercise also identified several other priority areas and outcomes that could be considered for the longer-term attention of the LNP:

- **Increased appreciation of the quality of Devon's natural environment**

The LNP could promote new awareness raising initiatives to address cultural issues around lack of understanding of the role and value of the natural environment, among communities, businesses and the Third sector, e.g.

 - Promoting a **Dark Skies Devon** campaign building on the work of the AONBs and Exmoor National Park;
 - Promoting successful joint economic and environmental ventures such as Visitor Payback schemes, etc;
 - Promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment, particularly to disadvantaged groups.

- **Joined up approach to statutory and policy drivers**

LNP members will work together to ensure that targets and statutory obligations are met in a more efficient and integrated manner e.g.

 - Achievement of Water Framework Directive targets;
 - Implementation of the Marine and Coastal Access Act;
 - Fulfil the objectives of the European Landscape Convention;
 - Fulfil requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act; and
 - Implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework for the benefit of the environment, whilst minimising bureaucracy.

- **Getting sustainability to the top of decision maker's agendas**

Ensuring that the sustainable use of the Natural Environment is central to the thoughts and plans of Devon's key decision makers by developing a positive close working relationship with and influencing key decision makers in business, community, and health/well being sectors.

- **Further Green Economy priorities**

Liaising with appropriate business partners and support agencies to develop and coordinate a suite of "Greener Devon" business projects:

 - Extending joined up local supply chains across multiple sectors; and
 - Identifying clearly the links between economic activity/development and environmental damage and then promoting those schemes that best mitigate damage and increase benefits.

- **Producing a road map of "big" wins for Devon**

Identifying high impact projects that show that it is possible to make a positive difference to the benefit of all the partners in the county.

- **Identifying the key threats to the Natural Environment in Devon**

Putting in place the necessary action to mitigate these threats.