

NORTHERN UPLAND CHAIN LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP PURPOSE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

1. The purpose of the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership (hereafter referred to as 'the LNP') is to act as a strategic body, with clear priorities focused on securing practical benefits for nature and for the natural economy of the uplands.
2. The LNP will plan and deliver strategic environmental action, enabling the recognition of the value of biodiversity in social and economic as well as environmental terms. The LNP will facilitate co-ordinated decision-making on the natural environment. Members of the LNP will act jointly to deliver integrated outcomes that provide a wide range of benefits and ecosystem services.

Our Vision

3. The area covered by the Northern Upland Chain will be:
 - A place where our special natural qualities, including our breeding wading birds, our blanket bogs, our hay meadows, our tumbling rivers and our upland woodlands, are valued for their beauty, and for their contribution to the nation's economic, physical and spiritual well-being.
 - A living and working upland landscape, a place where an environment-based economy thrives and where development and growth take place in balance with the conservation of the natural world on which they are reliant.
 - A place where conservation bodies, land management organisations, public bodies, businesses and communities work in collaboration rather than competition and where political and landscape designation boundaries are crossed in order to achieve benefits for people and nature.
 - A place that looks outward to new opportunities, new lessons and new partnerships with our neighbours, and not just in at ourselves.

Objectives

4. In working towards the vision for the Northern Upland Chain, the LNP will seek to:
 - Conserve and enhance the natural heritage of the northern uplands, increasing their resilience and ensuring these landscapes can meet the challenges of the future;
 - Improve the economic and social well-being of our upland communities in ways that contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty;
 - Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the nature and culture of these areas, encouraging people to take action for their conservation; and

- Value, sustain and promote the benefits that the NUC provides for society, including clean air and water, food, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation's health and well-being.

Terms of reference and role of the LNP

Geographical remit

5. The area covered by the Northern Upland Chain LNP is shown in the Annex. It includes the designated landscapes of: the Forest of Bowland AONB; Nidderdale AONB; Northumberland National Park; North Pennines AONB; and, Yorkshire Dales National Park. This chain of upland Protected Areas is broken only by the 'Tyne gap' between the North Pennines and the Northumberland National Park, containing the River Tyne that drains the surrounding catchments. The Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership bridges this gap.

Structure of the Partnership

6. A flat structure has been agreed, with:
 - A Board of 19 cross-sectoral representatives, meeting four times a year;
 - Time-limited, task-and-finish groups to support the delivery of practical programmes and strategic initiatives and which may be wound-up when their primary goal is achieved;
 - A wider partnership membership which will feed in to the task and finish groups, receive and input to communications, monitoring etc.
 - A wider forum, open to the public, which will meet annually

The Board

7. The Board will comprise of 19 members. Each representative will have multiple interests, both thematic and geographical. Members will not represent a single organisation or interest.
8. Membership of the Board will comprise of:
 - 5 representatives, one from each of the Protected Landscape Management Bodies (Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership; Northumberland National Park Authority; North Pennines AONB Partnership; Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority; Nidderdale AONB Partnership);
 - 3 representatives from the agriculture/land management sector;
 - 3 representatives from the wider business sector;
 - 3 representatives from the conservation sector
 - 3 representatives from the statutory environmental bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Forestry Commission
 - 2 representatives of the wider community covered by the LNP, to be elected from the Annual Forum

Task and Finish Groups

9. Drawn from the Board and wider membership, these groups will be convened by the Board to develop proposals for delivery of large-scale, collaborative projects and other initiatives agreed by the Board. Each such group will be led by a Board member. Once their task is completed the group will be dissolved.

Wider Membership

10. The wider membership of the LNP includes all the bodies who have expressed an interest in being involved. This is currently over 50 organisations, and is anticipated to grow over time. The wider membership will have the opportunity to influence the programme of work, contribute to relevant task-and-finish groups, and benefit from the communication and intelligence-sharing network.

Annual Forum

11. This event will be open to the public and will be advertised widely. Two seats on the Board will be elected from the Forum, having been advertised in advance and voted for on the day. It will be an important way of raising the profile of the LNP, feeding back on its work and receiving ideas and input from others.

Function of the LNP

The Board

12. The Board will be responsible for:
 - Establishing the vision and setting a direction for the LNP, defining priorities based on an ecosystem approach that will generate multiple benefits for nature and people;
 - Engaging with regional and national organisations to promote and support the delivery of LNP objectives;
 - Facilitating joint funding bids that will deliver programmes across a wider area and ensure continuity of the LNP;
 - Ensuring that the delivery of work across the LNP is co-ordinated in order to deliver greater habitat continuity;
 - Strengthening the evidence base that underpins partners' management of the natural environment;
 - Using the annual forum as a means to communicate and engage with a wider audience, promoting the identity of the LNP and also gathering feedback on future action and priorities as put forward by the public;
 - Monitoring the performance of the partnership and the commitments it has made.
 - Ensuring that the partnership works effectively.

Members' Roles

Chair

13. The Chair will provide leadership for the Board, and act as an influential advocate for the Partnership's vision. The Chair should seek to fulfil their duties in a manner that is free from political bias and influence. The principal duties and responsibilities are to:

- champion the LNP and build support for its aims and priorities;
- foster a supportive and productive partnership approach to deliver the LNP's vision;
- chair meetings of the Board, having regard to the procedures agreed by the Board;
- represent the LNP at appropriate events, meetings or functions;
- act as a spokesperson for the LNP where appropriate.

Vice-Chair

14. The Vice-Chair will support the Chair, and will be expected to take on the Chair's principal duties and responsibilities in the Chair's absence.

Board Members

15. Board Members will work on behalf of the LNP to develop and deliver its aims and objectives by:

- contributing to identifying priority actions and setting targets for the LNP, utilising existing knowledge, contacts and methods available to their group or organisation;
- contributing to the development and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of LNP policies, strategies and action plans;
- working to influence the strategies and plans of relevant organisations and groups in order to complement the vision and objectives of the LNP;
- representing the LNP and promoting its objectives at public meetings, events, workshops and conferences as and when necessary;
- promoting and championing the work of the work of the LNP;

16. Each Board Member will be expected to:

- operate in an open, accessible, responsive and accountable manner at Board meetings;
- report the outcome of LNP meetings back to the organisation or partners that they represent;
- conduct themselves in a way that promotes a culture of mutual respect
- promote equality of opportunity in the work of the LNP.
- declare any personal interest they have in any item of business at Board meetings, and not take part in any decision that may advantage or disadvantage themselves personally or their family and friends

17. Where appropriate, Board members will also:

- lead task-and-finish Groups, acting as a link between the Board and the wider membership;
- act as a link between the LNP and other local authority partnerships, including other Local Nature Partnerships, to assist in developing a strategic vision based on a real understanding of need.

Operational arrangements

18. To ensure that the Board is accountable to the wider membership, the following operational agreements have been agreed by the Board:

- the Board will meet 4 times per year to set strategic direction and monitor progress;
- the Board will seek to reach decisions by consensus. Where that is not possible, the decision will be determined by a majority of the Board Members present and voting. In the event that there is no majority, the Chair will have a casting vote;
- these Terms of Reference will be reviewed at least every 3 years by the Board;
- the Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected at a meeting of the Board. Appointments will be for a three year period, and then subject to re-election.
- any Board Member can be removed from the Board by a decision of 75% of the Board Members present at a meeting at which such removal is an item on the agenda;
- any member of the Board or wider membership can request an item for consideration to go on the agenda by notifying the Secretariat in writing at least 2 weeks before the meeting;
- the agenda and supporting reports will be circulated to the Board and the wider membership at least one week in advance of the meeting;
- past agendas, minutes and reports will be available through the LNP website;
- the quorum of the Board shall be 10 members.

19. The Board may delegate any task or decision to any task-and-finish group or any individual or group of individuals from within the wider LNP membership.

Secretariat

20. The secretariat to the LNP will be provided from amongst the five protected landscape management bodies (see paragraph 8), with the role passing on every 3 years, unless otherwise agreed by those bodies.

Funding the LNP

21. Much of the cost of running the LNP involves in-kind contributions of time, meeting venues etc. However, each of the five protected landscape management bodies has allocated resources from their budget to support the LNP's operations.

22. As projects and programmes develop under the auspices of the LNP, project management fees should be able to be taken which will support the operation of the Partnership and, in turn, support further delivery of action on the ground.

Geographical extent of the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership

