

North East Local Nature Partnership 2019: 3rd executive meeting

Date 12th September 2019 **Start time** 14.00 **Finish time** 16.00

Location Northumberland Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF (off A197)

Attendees

Paul Brannen, NEENP, Chair	Rob Murfin, Northumberland County Council	Jim Cokill, Durham Wildlife Trust
David Feige, Northumberland County Council	Neil Wilkinson, Gateshead Council	Heather Harrison rep Clare Steward, Environment Agency
Michelle Mancini, Public Health England	Alistair Scott, Northumbria University	Steve Bhowmick, Durham Council, representing Oliver Sherratt
Ian Brown, Forestry Commission and Capability North East Director	Charles Sellers, Innovation and business representative	Cris Brown – Northumberland Tourism
Claire Thompson, NEENP & CNE		

Apologies/ Currently tentative

Andy Smith, Intimation	Glyn Bateman, Natural England	Dan Hattle, Sunderland City Council
Rep to be appointed, Local Access Forum	Clare Deasy Northumbria Water Group	Mike Pratt, Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Agenda

Item	Description	Owner
1	Welcome and introductions	Paul Brannen
2	Previous minutes and matters arising Agreed previous minutes and actions were a reflection of discussions from the previous meeting held on 26 th June. No matters arising. Notes will be available on website.	Paul Brannen
3	VONNE initiative update – Verbal Voluntary Organisations Network North East VONNE acknowledge they haven't done enough in response to the climate agenda and so wanted to initiate a sector response. Early in this process they realised that the challenge is bigger than one sector and needs a collective response. There is a story to tell, the North East is the birthplace of the industrial revolution when consider coal mining, combustion engine, railways, letting the carbon genie out of the bottle and exporting to the rest of the world. VONNE initiative is looking to address the legacy and shape the green offer and actions of the region. Project lead Sir Peter Stark, the vision behind The Sage Gateshead and Millennium Bridge), Chair Sir Paul Ennals, a strong history in education, child safeguarding and leading public sector organisations and Carol Botten, Chief Executive of VONNE with significant community and engagement experience. The work will link with UN Climate Change Conference Of the Parties meeting 26 (COP 26) activities. It is anticipated that Glasgow will host the main event in Nov 2020. Likely there will be a package from government with opportunities for funding.	Claire Thompson Paul Brannen

	<p>There is a significant pace to the project as this is a crisis and time is not on our side. Three meetings held in August and another meeting next week. Coalescing around making the North East of England, England's Greenest Region. This narrative will inform the application to the National Lottery Climate Fund. Applications are to be submitted by Dec with an announcement on progressing the stage 2 in January 2020. At this point the fund is looking for 15 projects that will help shape, lead and deliver on community lead climate initiatives.</p> <p>The project is developing a significant head of steam, which raises the question of what do we the NEENP do to contribute to this project? At the last meeting it was suggested that the NEENP is needed to deliver the environment/ nature part of the inner group working with VONNE. Likely to be considerable funding to go with this role and the initiative will attract significant funding.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Governance – Presentation</p> <p>Due to the number of partners involved the governance arrangements of the NEENP could become quite complex if the relationship with councils is extended to include all of the touch points with the natural environment.</p> <p>Need governance, structure and responsibility. With councils always relying on the political persuasion which can influence the work of officers. How this can be achieved without becoming overly complicated will be the focus of this work.</p> <p>The NEENP Terms of Reference has a list of sectors required to be part of the executive and currently a few gaps. Going forward need to look to appoint landowners and created business and community representation.</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will trial with Northumberland council. Send relevant contacts for the NEENP: Health, sustainability, planning, environment to C. Sellers. - Useful for council partners to confirm what they want and get from NEENP? <p>Note: This work has been paused following our increased engagement with the VONNE project, as it is likely this will be a large factor in determining the structure and governance requirements of the NEENP in 2020.</p>	<p>Charles Sellers</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Reinvigorating the NEENP – Paper</p> <p>The NEENP has had limited funding but has achieved some projects of note; a key role in securing BrightWater funding, an all-inclusive Vision for Environmental Growth, unique consolidation of environment data to produce the Elected Members Guide to Environmental Growth and the creation of the Capability North East amongst other activities.</p> <p>Looking to the future the NEENP has three options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disband the NEENP, not a favoured option but necessary to offer it. 2. Continue as is and be ready to assume any role arising from the Environmental Bill. 3. Align with VONNE initiative and over the next 3 months use NEENP capacity to support project development. Once the success of phase 1 application is known this can be reviewed. <p>This reflection on the NEENP's journey and future is required due to challenges all Local Nature Partnerships have faced, the opportunities that are arising and the context of their work. The NEENP has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fared better than many other LNPs. - Relevant organisations are members making it a unique forum within the NE region. - Carved out a recognition with key regional players including, importantly, the local authorities. - Shown they can horizon scan and competently advise on regional environmental priorities. 	<p>Paul Brannen</p>

	<p>Agreement that it feels as if we could go up a gear or two but to do what? It is clear that larger funding could be available if the 'right' issues to work on are picked.</p> <p>The context indicates the climate crisis is the primary issue that 'frames' (or should frame) all activity covered by the remit of the NEENP. The relentless reduction in bio-diversity would be the major 'secondary' issue and as a part of the solution to the climate crisis.</p> <p>In conclusion, with limited capacity the NEENP needs to pick one thing to do and do really well. In time we can put in our shopping list in time e.g. landscape scale change, mapping, natural capital etc.</p> <p>Need to identify the additionality, spot the gaps and add value, need to consider what that is? Shape the VONNE initiative and look to prepare to engage and deliver our gap/ offer irrespective of the outcome of the VONNE initiative. If the NEENP did not exist, the VONNE initiative would still need a nature/ environment advisory group like the NEENP. Strength of the NEENP is linking across agendas, boundaries and to be a point of contact for the Defra agencies.</p> <p>Chair asked for the NEENP executive to support a small team maintaining and developing a working relationship with the VONNE climate initiative.</p> <p>NEENP executive agreed to continue to support and shape the VONNE climate initiative project. With a request to minute the following. As an agenda must be involved, we are part of the solution and not an opportunity to be mixed.</p>	
6	<p>Reinvigorating the NEENP - Group workshop style task</p> <p>At this point the Chair left the meeting to allow for freedom of discussion. Ian Brown Chaired the meeting from this item onwards.</p> <p>Following item, there was a 50 minute discussion about the future of the NEENP in context of the VONNE project.</p> <p>Agreement that once the project is understood more, we need to clear develop and agree on the USPs of the NEENP.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More info from VONNE in writing in due course. Claire Thompson to share as received. - Meet with the VONNE team within 2 weeks. - Respond accordingly to any requests via NEENP Chair. <p>Note: A draft of the NEENP offer was to be developed but paused at request of Chair until project had progressed further and needs are better understood and supported by an NEENP plan to adequately deliver.</p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange meeting with VONNE team within 2 weeks. CT - PHE make introductions to recently created North East Coastal Activity Partnerships. MM - Formal letter of support from NEENP in support of PhD grant funding to contribute to future natural capital work. CT - Arrange meeting for Chair with Heads of Planning to initiate working relationship going forward in context of the VONNE initiative. CT/ SB 	Ian Brown & Facilitators
7	<p>Next meeting and close</p> <p>Attendance and contributions thanked and meeting closed.</p> <p>12th Dec 2019 – 2-4pm – venue South of Tyne tbc (mince pie day)</p>	Ian Brown

Actions from previous meeting on 26th June 2019 at Durham Council

1. Appoint new Vice Chair – **Outstanding.**
2. Share EOI for youth project for next meeting – **Done.**
3. NEENP and natural capital role. CT to draft and then executive expand – **Outstanding**, will use Sept executive to decide approach, been unable to do before now due to resource and holidays.
4. CT to provide CS with a full contact list that reflects very recent changes – **Done.**
5. Paul Brannen to provide an update of meeting with LEP and way forward – **Meeting held**, update to be provided.
6. SB and CT to draft a brief report for Heads of Planning detailing NEENP and CNE recent journey and planning related changes on the horizon i.e. Local Nature Recovery Networks, Net Gain, Natural Capital and so on with the specific aim of identifying the cross-boundary role of the NEENP - **Currently outstanding**, due for mid September.
7. Paul Brannen to meet with Heads of Planning as NEENP Chair and agree areas of collaboration – **Request made.**
8. Review and update of the NEENP Landscape opportunity work – **Helen Ryde** will provide for October.
9. Claire Thompson to give iiE update presentation at next meeting – **Postponed** for future workshop/ meeting.
10. Claire Thompson to follow up with executive and iiE implementation in their organisations – **Ongoing.**
11. Ian Brown to give update on office plans – Office move planned, **Ian Brown will provide** an update w/c Sept 16th.
12. Claire Thompson to share updated business plan once completed by end Sept 2019 – **Ongoing.**
13. Stuart Priestley to provide evaluation of DCC wildflower work to NEENP by **October.**
14. NEENP officer (Helen) to contact all councils and get updates on wildflower plans with images to quantify and qualify progress that has been made in this area – **Due for October.**

Notes

Items 12,13 and 14 have been a paused until after Jan 2020 meeting, pending agreement on priorities.