

North East Local Nature Partnership 2021: 1st executive meeting

Date Start time Finish time

Location

Agenda

Item	Description	Papers	Owner	Time
1	Welcome and introductions	No	Ian Brown	10 mins
2	Previous minutes and matters arising	Yes	Ian Brown	
3	Chair update	No – Verbal update	Ian Brown	5 mins
4	North East of England Climate Coalition a) Update https://www.neecco.org.uk/	Papers	Claire Thompson	15 mins
5	Projects a) Project £500 million	Yes	Mike Pratt	
6	North East LEP a) Future joint working	Yes	Discussion	20 mins
7	Planning 2021+ a) Plan on page b) Priorities c) Events d) Funding	Yes	Discussion	20 mins
8	AOB a) CNE update b) PHE – Greener NHS c) Water Hub d) KarbonCapture	Yes	Ian Brown Glyn Smith George Gerring Claire Thompson	10 mins
9	Next meeting and close	No – Verbal update	Ian Brown	5 mins Close

Actions from previous meeting on November 2020

1. Skills audit early Q1 2021 – CT – Outstanding.
2. New Chair – IB/ MP – Ongoing.
3. Provide an update on discussions and options for collaborating with NELEP – CT – Done.
4. Report back on NEECCo progress and opportunities – CT – Done.
5. Link with NECF – IB – Done.
6. North of Tyne project – MP/ CT – Ongoing.
7. Review other LNP funding models and report back as part of wider LNP planning work – CT –

Ongoing via LEP collaboration.

8. Update on CNE rebranding and funding work – CT – Done.

Meeting Papers and item notes

Item 2.0 – Minutes and matters arising

Papers attached

Item 4.0 – NEECCo update

Discussions to finalise arrangements with councils, Combined Authority and LEP have been postponed until March as a result of Covid19. Sir Paul Ennals is still confident of additional resource and received reassurance from key stakeholders that plans are still relevant.

There are a number of Preparatory Planning Groups (PPGs) that have been developed to deliver the recommendations of the Committee on Climate Change recommendations.

1. Land use PPG (Peri urban has become a workstream of this group) – NEENP leading
2. Retrofit PPG
3. Build Environment PPG
4. Retrofit PPG
5. Engagement PPG
6. Waste PPG – NEENP helping set up
7. Indicators group – NEENP leading

Each is developing a Statement of Intent, detailing vision, purpose, benefits they expect to deliver and workstreams. To be completed for early March when NEECCo is launched and work to date will go out for consultation. Anticipated a new team will be developed over summer and in place for autumn where will relaunch final prospectus a week before COP 26 in November.

COP 26

Will have presence at the event via a combine piece of work with PCAN (Place-based Climate Action Network) which NEECCo is a member of, the intention is for a Northern Powerhouse footprint proposal, more details to follow.

NEECCo will focus more on what they can do, share and influence locally for COP 26 with each of the PPGs running events and opportunities to engage. Ideas welcome and more information to follow by April.

Events

The NEENP has played an important role in the development of these events and in identifying key stakeholders.

1. Enabling the region's financial ecosystem for £1.5 billion of sustainable finance – March.
2. Greener pensions event – March.

Item 5.0 – Project £500 million

Thoughts behind the project

To rise to both climate and ecology emergencies we need to act at scale. Identifying and delivering projects that deliver a just transition as well as enhancing biodiversity and reducing emissions is key.

The NEENP, via NEECCo are currently working on understanding the regions ability to deploy the existing

regional financial infrastructure to sustainable/ green finance. There are some good examples developing, mainly through private activities with the Hadrian Bond (Capability North East provided seed funding) being one example, more details to follow at the next executive meeting.

A significant part of the challenge is ensuring the region looks investable and amongst other things this includes having a significant project portfolio to attract investors attention. These projects need to be large, at scale and should be developed with the mind set of dream projects if funding was not an issue.

In the rapidly growing world of green finance the sums of money available are more likely to be in the £ millions rather than in the £ thousands.

Last year a well-known UK company was looking to offset its carbon emissions via new forestry in the North of England rather than abroad but alas nothing big enough was available.

To put it another way green finance is looking for a one stop shop of hyper market potential rather than numerous visits to a string of local shops.

Across the border Scotland is much better organised to operate in this way and is our competitor.

What is the solution?

Can the North East of England pull together a 'Pot of 50 Projects' focussed on addressing climate change and tackling biodiversity loss to the value of **half a billion pounds** focussed on creating natural assets?

The North East England Nature Partnership (NEENP) is offering to co-ordinate assembling such pot of projects which would then be marketed to the private sector via the North East of England Climate Coalition.

Ask of Chair

Has your organisation an existing project or a potential project that could be included in a collective North East green finance offer?

Then work with the NEENP to build a green investment portfolio in 2021.

Note

The NEENP is not purporting to be a green/ sustainable finance specialist. However, the NEENP is developing a good understanding of this area and linking some impressive contacts that will help to link investors with projects and projects to capital at various stages of the project lifecycle. NEECCo and NEENP will act as convenors to drive the deployment of sustainable finance systems in the region.

Recommendations

1. Support the idea of Project £500 million and contribute to refining the opportunity and offer.
2. Identify project leads.
3. Identify possible projects within your organisations.

Item 6.0 – LEP developing a working relationship

NEENP and NELEP collaboration to date

There has always been a dialogue between the NEENP and NELEP to update on progress, discuss potential opportunities and to suggest contributions to plans e.g. Each version of the SEP and exploring expanding the North East forestry sector. NELEP representatives have attended NEENP executive meetings and workshops and contributed where possible. This was generally set against a political and policy landscape that was less favourable to the environment which made aligning some of the priorities, project, or funding opportunities more challenging. More recently, Andrew Clark, NELEP has provided expertise on the economic indicators' selection and relevant source data to NEECCo's Indicators Working

Group being led by the NEENP. The time is now right to build on this existing informal arrangement and look to undertake joint work that focuses on areas of importance and greatest impact for both organisations. The leads of each organisation have agreed to identify and explore the following:

1. Where there is common interest
2. Ability to support each other's agenda and use their expertise
3. Agree on how to collaborate in 2021+

Evolving environmental agenda

For more than a decade the environmental/ green agenda had stalled and was not a priority for government nationally and locally. Despite some work being maintained on aspects of a low carbon agenda, valuable time has been lost to rising to the climate and ecological challenges and to mitigate and adapt our communities and economy to these significant challenges.

However, over the last two years there has been a clear change in strategic direction that sees government initiatives moving the sustainability and environmental agendas closer to the heart of decision making.

Examples include:

- 25 Year Defra Plan - 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment in a generation'
- Environment and Agriculture Bill
- Environmental targets
- Net Zero Targets
- Government's 10 Point for a Green Industrial Revolution
- Hosting COP 26
- 6th carbon budget
- Natural Capital Accounting
- Biodiversity net gain
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Mandatory disclosure of carbon emissions for quoted companies Annual Report as per Companies Act 2006 with Energy and Carbon Report Regulations 2018 come into force on 1 April 2019.
- Decarbonisation – Offshore wind growth
- Supply Chain due diligence – Rainforest destruction and scope 3 emissions
- Climate Assembly Report – Commissioned by 6 select committees

Thus, there is a much greater awareness of the cross thematic relevance of our environment to a successful economy and that to emerge from COVID a Green Economic Recovery is needed.

How this all fits together in the North East and the efforts to deliver such an array of initiatives to enhance the outputs and outcomes has yet to be defined. It will without doubt require more resource, some will be supplied by government via funding for Local Nature Recovery Strategies for example the rest will need to be found locally and will require the development of a sound resource investment proposal with the LEPs knowledge of value here.

Way forward – Draft

There are obvious benefits to collaborative working between the NEENP and NELNP. How this is achieved will require thought and research to reflect on practice elsewhere in England, vision and purpose, points of synergy, areas of greatest impact and a methodology. Both organisations are keen to avoid sporadic projects and have a clear line of sight for what working together will achieve. The ideal would be an Adonis type review to identify the Green Industrial Revolution opportunities for the North East or an alternative is a stepped approach.

1. **Evidence and research** – Increase knowledge and evidence base specific to our region on areas of common interest. This could include:
 - a. Best practice for LEP and LNP collaboration - Review where LEPs and LNPs are working closely, suggest areas of synergy relevant to our region informed by the findings of the review aiming to become an example of best practice.
 - b. Green Jobs – To provide detailed information on what green jobs means for region in terms of types of jobs, sectors, skills, and education need. Helping to reframe the green jobs

beyond renewables and conservation. The Idaho, USA green jobs infographic might be useful for informing the outputs of this work.

<https://visual.ly/community/Infographics/environment/green-jobs-idaho>

- c. Understand the need for carbon offsetting for North East regional business and facilitate the infrastructure to develop framework/ marketplace.
- d. Understand the resources needed to deliver plans.
2. **Defra initiatives** – Identify which of the Defra initiatives collaborative working can facilitate implementation, lobbying with Defra and raise awareness.
3. **Environmental sustainability** – Identify how environmental sustainability (reducing carbon and green footprint) can become integrated into the operations and programmes of the NELEP. CNE would be happy to support this work via a review or the Investors in the Environment accreditation.
4. **Land use and mapping for net zero** – Review existing NELEP priorities against Climate Change Committees 6th Carbon Budget and understand how an improved knowledge and better visualisation of land use can support net zero ambitions, a green recovery and just transition. An innovative approach like this would look to integrate agendas in an engaging way by pictorially showing what is needed where and tracking change/ improvement over time. Example of this could be enhanced spatial planning through a net zero and natural capital lens using latest mapping and related technologies.

Further areas for collaboration that might emerge from a review include:

5. **Land Use Hub** – A funded group that will work to solve rural challenges and issues. It will do so by bringing together business, farmers, landowners, rural industry and academia to identify the research and technology that does or could exist to solve rural based industry and business problems to improve efficiency and productivity.
6. **Natural Capital Data** – The natural capital agenda will produce an abundance of data that will report baselines and tracking improvements and be relevant to public and private sectors. Currently there is no strategy as to how this data can be best managed and analysed to report on KPIs and inform decision making across sectors. Proposal to use existing assets of the region, NICD, Water Hub, Urban Observatory, ERIC and NEENP to develop a strategy to become a regional/ national centre of excellence of natural capital data collection, analysis and interpretation based on a mixture of open-source access and paid for services.

Actions

1. Does the executive support the 6 areas of collaboration identified?
2. Any issues or concerns?
3. How would you like the final proposal to be presented?

Item 7.0 – Planning 2021+

To date the NEENP has operated at strategic level and project basis rather than annual plans. As the environment agenda gathers pace and the opportunities for the NEENP grow as part of NEECCo and in its own right a plan and record of priorities and progress is required.

Potential priorities

1. Review NEENP vision
2. NEENP development and funding
3. Supporting delivery of Defra 25 YEP
 - a. NEECCo
 - b. Project £500 million
4. Events – building on Defra series of 2020
5. Communications

Revisit original [Vision for Environmental Growth](#) and adopt a plan on page approach with single page deliver plans.

Summary of government initiatives and policy, the opportunity and NEENP action to date and planned.

Defra & Government	Environment sector opportunities	NEENP action
Environment Bill 25 YEP – 2018 Sports England Planning	Whole systems thinking	*NEENP Guide to Environmental Growth - 2018
25 YEP – 2018	Ambition vision	*NEENP 20 Year Vision for Environmental Growth - 2017
25 YEP – 2018	Land use change	Landscape projects – Bright Water most recently NEECCo and Land Use PPG
25 YEP – 2018 Planning reforms	Biodiversity	*Defra events to guide understanding of net gain, LNRS etc NEENP Guide to Environmental Growth - 2018
Treasury Economics of Biodiversity Review This is likely to have the same impact the Stern review had for climate change	Biodiversity	To interpret Economics of Biodiversity Review for North East
Net Zero commitments Climate Change Act	Carbon reduction / Net Zero	*Capability North East & Investors in the Environment
Agriculture Bill – Royal Ascent Nov 2020	Farming	*Hadrian Bond for regenerative farming via CNE More engagement to do possibly via LNRS and Land Use
25 YEP – 2018	Sustainable use of resources Including soil and water	*Capability North East & Investors in the Environment
Environment Bill	Targets	Proposed targets in 2018 NEECCo indicators across 4 capitals
Government’s Tree Strategy 2020	Trees	Proposed North East forestry strategy in 2019 Now member of North East Community Forest Steering group
Natural capital committee	Natural capital	Work to do Likely to deliver via Hadrian Bond
25 YEP – 2018	Connecting people and nature	NEENP Guide to Environmental Growth – 2018 More to do Greener NHS work lead by Glyn Smith PHE rep for NEENP
Nothing significant Funding for projects e.g. woodlands and LNRS	Readiness of stakeholders to deliver	Consult with key stakeholders on ability to deliver 25 YEP and propose a central resource sharing model
Biodiversity metrics Natural capital metrics	Data management	*NEECCo - Indicators Group Need enhanced regional data mgmt across public and private sector

No funding, systems or approaches identified for effective local data management		
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Note

Claire’s time is spread across several large areas, exciting time for executive to develop NEENP functions and opportunities.

1. Capability North East and delivery
2. Capability North East business management
3. NEECCo
4. NEENP

Actions

1. Support principle for developing 2021+ plans
2. Set up a task and finish group to development plans

Item 8.0 Capability North East update

There is starting to be a pick up following a slower 2020. Several interesting proposals to develop this week in the region of £50,000.

Rebrand work

In Jan 2020 we had secured funding to develop CNE’s business strategy and plan to become investment ready to enable business development and growth in 2020. We had in principle secured £50,000 investment with the Directors due to sign the papers w/c March 23rd 2020, the week lock down began. An announcement was made that those investment proposals that had not secured final documents will not receive funding as the fund will switch its focus to Covid19. Part of the funding was to rebrand Capability North East to Genee. This was for two reasons firstly, the CNE story is a nice one but takes time to tell and some thought the Capability linked to various employment and disadvantage charities and secondly CNE was working to green the economy of north east England and that was a simple message that resonate with existing and prospective clients. Determined to deliver the CNE strategy and plans we sought alternative funding from smaller pots to deliver rebrand and produce development work. A small grant from the LEP funded the recent rebrand work to Genee. A communications plan is being developed and alongside a new website will be ready for launch in March. The communications plans will be shared with NEENP executive early March and will require engagement of your organisations and as individuals.

Feed back from NBSL and the LEP has been very positive, comments include, ‘Brand looks great! Very professional and approachable. Get a sense of what Genee does straight away’.

NELEP Energy Catalyst

Through to round 2 of North East LEP Energy Catalyst for funding to develop an end to end sustainability platform for SMEs. One does not exist and where systems are separate the costs are often too large for many SMEs. This collaborative project would resolve many of those issues by simplifying data collection and analysis, electronic Environmental Management System development and carbon footprint reporting to Green House Gas standards. Will be able to report

on progress by the end of February.

Item 9.0 – Next meeting and close

Thursday 6th May 2021, 3pm via Teams