

North East Local Nature Partnership 2020: 2nd executive meeting

Date 25th June 2020 **Start time** 15.00 **Finish time** 17.00

Location Now on Teams – new link being sent by Tuesday 23rd June.

Attendees

Paul Brannen, NEENP, Chair	Rob Murfin, Northumberland County Council	Jim Cokill, Durham Wildlife Trust
Ian Brown, Forestry Commission	Steph Bird-Halton, Natural England	Clare Steward, Environment Agency
Clare Deasy Northumbria Water Group	Mike Pratt, Northumberland Wildlife Trust	Steve Bhowmick, Durham Council
Claire Thompson, NEENP & CNE	Charles Sellers, Innovation and business representative	Neil Wilkinson, Gateshead Council
Alistair Scott, Northumbria University	David Feige, Northumberland	Justin Hancock, Banks
Guests:	Stuart Priestley, Durham Council	Tammara Morris-Hale, Durham Council

Apologies

Dan Hattle, Sunderland City Council	Cris Brown, Northumberland Tourism	Andy Smith, Intimation
Liz Bray, Community Access Forum – Hoidays	Michelle Mancini- Public Health England – COVID19 response	Rachel Morris – Environment Agency -

Agenda

Item	Description	Papers	Owner
1	Welcome and introductions	No	Paul Brannen
2	Previous minutes and matters arising	Yes	Paul Brannen
3	<p>DCC Woodland Mapping</p> <p>In 2019 the NEENP set executive members various tasks relating to the Natural Capital agenda.</p> <p>DCC's first efforts to work on the Natural Capital Mapping agenda. Intention is to look at where most valuable sites are, efforts to maintain and enhance and landscape connectivity. Asked key questions about where is the biodiversity resource, what is its condition and effort to conserve and enhance.</p> <p>Used UN biodiversity approach, suggest broad ecosystem service type, then map typologies based on modification from natural to irreversibly modified.</p> <p>Followed by natural capital and biodiversity targets.</p> <p>DCC woodland document classifies the various woodlands. Woodlands of 10hec+ and max dispersion of 1km as core habitats. To arrest decline, need to focus on consolidation and enhancement. Should be the priority over new sites.</p> <p>What is the learning and capability of it across the region? Could be a way to ensure join up over authority boundaries.</p>	Yes	Steve Bhowmick Stuart Priestley Tammara Morris-Hale

	<p>Parallel work in Scotland to show connectivity https://www.gcvgreennetwork.gov.uk/what-we-do/our-blueprint/</p> <p>Good infographic showing the cost benefits of this approach. Focus is to aid decision making and where appropriate broad brush.</p> <p>Councils need to develop nature recovery strategies, government has said funding will be available, more detail in the Environment Bill when brought in later this year.</p> <p>Business/ developers are keen to know what the opportunities are before application stage, makes getting GI and net gain into sites much easier.</p> <p>A new National Natural Capital Atlas has been published for England. The Atlas uses the best available data to map out Natural England's Natural Capital Indicators to show the quantity, quality and location of ecosystem assets, as well as the flow of some ecosystem services. This atlas provides a nationally coherent baseline assessment to show the state of natural capital in England. This summer, atlases for 44 county and combined authority areas will be produced showing the data in more detail, along with the GIS layers in a data package with user guide.</p> <p>Clearly a role of the NEENP, is it strategic oversight, championing best practice?</p> <p>There is a need to review how this approach/ data will be managed and used to inform strategy and progress. There will be loads of data - have good data organisations in region, role for NEENP to join across the landscape, skills, decision making on software to use principles and charting regional progress?</p> <p>Thank you to Durham for beginning this work. An interesting and relevant piece of work. Seems there is an interest in the methodology being shared with others in the region and potentially applied to wider natural capital discussion.</p> <p>In late 2018 at an NEENP Natural Capital meeting various NEENP partners committed to helping to develop a set of natural capital case studies, off which. Next meeting will report on progress.</p> <p>Project/ case study list</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bright Water project – Natural capital for river restoration or in a farming context - Jim Cokill & Paul Black. Banks Group – Natural Capital Planning Tool – Prof Scott & Philip Baker. NWL – SUDS – Graeme Warren. Durham County Council – developer project – Stuart Timmiss. Highways England – assess natural capital of routes – Graeme Warren/ Lydia Speakman. Look to develop one of the above further to a project of national significance <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCC to share methodology and progress, ideally as a case study – SB - Natural capital project follow up update - CT 		
4	<p>North East England Climate Coalition</p> <p>1. Defra pilot area – Paper details conversation and progress on parts of the North East being a natural capital pilot area. Paul Brannen and Paul Ennals (NEECCo Chair) wrote to Defra offering the North East as a pilot area to support Lord Deben Climate Change Adaptation implementation. Had meeting with Lord Deben in summary he thought it was a great idea, suggested as next steps to contact Defra, make proposal and Lord Deben will back it. Had detailed second call with LEP, Durham and Nland councils. Letter and follow up email has now gone to Defra awaiting reply.</p>	Yes	Paul Brannen

Executive confirmed support for Chair to continue with this opportunity with the North East England Climate Coalition (NEECCo).

Unfortunately, the Voluntary Climate Action Alliance (VCAA) and delivery arm of the Coalition was unsuccessful in its Big Lottery bid. The group is still active and looking for funding to continue the overall idea and themes of the project.

Alister Scott raised the following concerns about the NEECCo.

To have had earlier sight of the papers would have been useful. Chair accepts that due to timing and process was not possible to share early but hears concerns. Will commit to weekly updates to the executive on NEECCo when meetings are held.

He was invited to an event in November for the NEECCo where he gave comments on the proposed governance arrangements along with other attendees and heard nothing back. Does this link to failure of the lottery application?

Chair acknowledges attendees might feel need for better engagement and will address with NEECCo and feedback. NEECCo is unique, still evolving and a strategic organisation and therefore less likely to have fit the funding criteria. The application project then moved from being about NEECCo to the VCAA. The project development team felt this suited the fund better following meetings with the Big Lottery. The bid was very community focused and less so on the wider environment agenda and hence why some ideas may not have been picked up in the final application. Accept there was not enough clarity about this change in direction of how to apply for funding. Work was largely led by the voluntary sector and had to happen quickly due to timelines.

The meeting in November was about indicators to support and inform the work of the NEECCo and not the NEECCo itself. Presentations given were for information on project journey and ambition and perhaps this confused things. The focus of the meeting being 'indicators' might explain why follow up about NEECCo governance was overlooked and not minuted as there was no power to act on governance other than for comments to be taken verbally back to the Coalition. The indicators work is ongoing and emails are sent from the National Data Centre informing all of the next steps and asking people to join the various indicators group. Follow up from the indicators has been consistent but accept the response to governance might have been overlooked. There is another Natural Capital event with the Innovation Centre for Data w/c Sept 14th date tbc.

Jim Cokill is leading on Natural Capital Indicators. Claire Thompson is Chairing and coordinating overall the other indicator themes are Social and Economic Capital. Please contact Jim or Claire for more information or to join one of the indicator groups.

Actions

- NEECCo update document and meeting update schedule to be produced – CT
- Chair to raise issues raised with NEECCo Chair and report back – PBra

2. Greenbelt - The greenbelt is a region wide issue. Need to develop a paper for the NEECCo Interim Steering Group, contributors from executive are requested. Must be an aspirational and visionary document and as should be, more info on the routes to achieve those enhancements. More ways to encourage and support landowners to achieve aspiration here. Chair proposed urban fringe as Tees Valley has no greenbelt.

	<p>Some council officers have stated the terminology is an issue as a sensitive topic for some local communities. Durham clarified they have no issue with the terminology greenbelt and it will be highlighted in the DCC plan once it is adopted. Then there is the chance to describe what it can be.</p> <p>NEENP couldn't lead on both but could participate in one and chair the other. Agreed by executive.</p> <p>3. Workstreams – NEECCo wants things to happen but can't make things happen, others will need do that. How do we divide up the climate cake and avoid being constantly challenged on choices?</p> <p>Currently proposing using the Committee on Climate Change land use report to guide our workstreams.</p> <p>Summary of key thoughts of the executive</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where is the governance framework for the workstreams, must develop to be effective? 2. Peri urban instead of urban fringe. Need to describe the greenbelt and what it can be from an environmental and social perspective. Also, does depend how you define peri urban. OECD define peri urban as 70% of UK! 3. Remove the Labour references might not support the case. 4. Rural communities lose out a lot, have a lot to offer, particularly on landscape change. 5. Greenbelt will be highlighted in the DCC plan once it is adopted. 6. Greenbelt can support rural communities too, let's not lose that from messaging. <p>Chair noted that all of the comments will be reviewed and considered when preparing the paper.</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange meeting to develop greenbelt paper - CT 		
5	<p>Capability North East update</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbal update <p>Business has had to adapt to changing environment. Some projects stopped or were pushed back. This is disappointing as we were developing a strong pipeline and on track to be achieving £200k turnover for 12 month period had all projects and proposals become live.</p> <p>Claire worked with open projects to a certain point but being unable to invoice meant a need to protect cashflow and hence some furlough time as introduced. All correct procedures were followed.</p> <p>CNE had secured investor in principle however the week of shut down the Director's were due to sign the agreement however due to COVID-19 situation the investors paused the fund and planned to revisit its purpose so any projects that hadn't crossed the paperwork finish line were not going to receive investment, unfortunately this included our project. The fund reinforced their believe in our work and investability of the business and asked us to keep in touch and revisit the opportunity in autumn.</p> <p>CNE has applied for a business grant from Newcastle City Council and is awaiting outcome. From a finance perspective all liabilities are paid and up to date (operations, HMRC, pensions, salary). A modest VAT bill is deferred to 2021 but money will be aside each month from September to pay for this.</p> <p>As ever the support of partners is essential for CNE in terms of signing up to GENEE or iiE and opening up your networks to CNE and positively promoting our work.</p>	No	Claire Thompson

	Will use August to create case studies to share on social media and NEENP executives. Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share CNE case studies – CT 		
6	Next meeting and close 19 th Nov 2019 – 2-4pm – tbc – Zoom Propose a meeting before then once have update on Defra project.	No	Paul Brannen

Actions summary

1. DCC to share methodology and progress, ideally as a case study – SB
2. Natural capital project follow up update – CT
3. NEECCo update document and meeting update schedule to be produced – CT
4. Chair to raise issues raised with NEECCo Chair and report back – PBra
5. Arrange meeting to develop greenbelt paper – CT
6. Share CNE case studies once available – Sept - CT

Outstanding actions from previous meeting

1. Invite Catherine Saxon to next NEENP meeting – PB – To do
2. Contact Mike Jeffries, freshwater CO2 sequestration – PB – Done
3. Create a Defra announcements task and finish group to meet in February. Agree terms of reference for the group. Provisional aims are for the group to collate and share policy area announcement, timelines, interpret locally and make submission to Agriculture Bill – IB – Paused due to COVID, will start again in July.
4. ADEPT contact – SB – Done.