

Engagement over a Lancashire Local Nature Partnership (LNP)

Lancashire Wildlife Trust has been successful in obtaining funding from Defra's Local Nature Partnership Fund on behalf of Lancashire's Environment Forum. This briefing note is intended to summarise the planned work; in particular what a LNP might be, what we are doing, and when that is likely to happen.

Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)

[LNPs](#) are the expression of the Government's new ambition, as set out in the [Natural Environment White Paper](#), to realise a broader range of benefits and engagement for our natural resources. In particular, the Government intends a LNP to bring together a diverse range of individuals, businesses and organisations to work in a strategic way to create a vision of how the natural environment may be integrated into decision-making at a local level, and to develop a plan of action to deliver this. The Natural Environment White Paper states that LNPs are an important part of an "*institutional framework to support nature restoration*", as part of a necessary "*fundamental shift in approaches to conservation and land management.*"

The LNP Fund work

Lancashire Wildlife Trust has recently led a successful bid to Defra's LNP fund on behalf of Lancashire's Environment Forum. This purpose of this funding is to support the development of a Lancashire-wide LNP. Early in 2012 there will be an opportunity for us to apply for formal recognition by the Government as a LNP. We will be working to submit an application in line with Government guidance, which is expected to be published soon.

However, before this can happen, Defra's funding will enable us to go through a process of engagement, with three main aims:

1. To broaden the agenda and engagement
2. To develop a shared vision
3. To develop the partnership

Broadening the Agenda

Our first element of work is a wider engagement with and review of the current state of relevant partnerships covering Lancashire. This will require identification of and communication with such partnerships, with the current members of the Lancashire's Environment Forum, and with potential future members of the proposed Lancashire LNP. Gaps and opportunities will also have to be identified and addressed in the formulation of an engagement plan.

Key outcomes:

- An initial review of Lancashire's partnerships and forums, including gaps and opportunities
- Production of an engagement plan linked to the next stage of engagement
- An Environment Forum meeting for wider stakeholder discussion

Developing a Shared Vision

The widest practicable engagement will take place, starting in January 2012. The main mechanism for this will be a dedicated workshop to engage potential partners around the vision for the LNP, key priorities, work to be delivered, and resourcing.

There will also be room for engagement over specialist issues, which could take the form of targeted subjects for facilitated workshops to take place in February 2012. It may be appropriate, for instance, to hold meetings specific to a geographic location (*e.g.* East Lancashire), and/or to cover a specific issue (*e.g.* the EU Water Framework Directive).

Two specific requirements that need to be addressed are:

- Communication with the Morecambe Bay Partnership (MBP). This is a condition of our Defra funding. MBP has submitted a LNP bid to the second round of Defra funding, the outcome of which should be known in December 2011.
- Communication with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Lancashire. It has been suggested by Government that LNPs mirror the structure of LEPs and work with these.

Key Outcomes:

- Broad stakeholder engagement through a facilitated workshop
- Focused engagement on highlighted specific issues
- Key groups and contacts engaged
- A draft vision, with key issues and priorities identified for a Lancashire LNP to take forward

Development of Process and Structure

This process will finalise the best structure to take forward to ensure that members are heard and that the LNP is efficiently managed. Linked to the development of the shared vision and priorities, it will identify key issues that the partnership would be involved in, and also those which fall outside its remit.

Having identified priority areas for action, an integrated delivery plan will be developed. This should enable gaps and opportunities to be easily visualised. Priority actions will be clearly labelled, with joint working and added value.

Other aspects of future meetings, partnership structure, reporting, monitoring, and future funding will all be planned and agreed as we move towards the next financial year.

Key Outcomes:

- Integrated collation of information
- Identification of shared priorities for partners
- Agreement on a shared vision for partners and a key focus for the LNP
- Agreement on the structure of the LNP
- Production of plans for reporting, monitoring, funding and future communication.
- An agreed schedule of LNP meetings for 2012-13.