

## Agenda



## Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Board

**Wednesday 7 December 2022 at 10.00 am**  
**Willow Room, Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road,**  
**Didcot, OX11 7NE**

Contact: Matt Whitney, Local Nature Partnership Manager

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### Members:

Richard Benwell  
Dr Prue Addison  
Giles Brockbank  
David Knight  
Michelle Leek  
Professor David Macdonald CBE  
James Price  
Councillor David Rouane  
Dr Rosie Rowe  
Simon Smith

Chair  
Environmental NGO representative  
Business representative  
Environmental NGO representative  
DEFRA family of organisations  
University representative  
Farming representative  
Local Authority representative  
Health representative  
National landscape body representative

### In attendance:

Matt Whitney  
Becky Chesshyre

Susan Harbour  
Ian Boll

Local Nature Partnership Manager  
Strategic Partnership Communications  
Officer  
Strategic Partnerships Manager  
Corporate Director, Cherwell District  
Council

## AGENDA

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Apologies, conflicts of interest and Chair's announcements</b> | 10:00 |
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| <b>2</b> | <b>Notes of the previous meeting</b> (Pages 4 - 7) | 10:05 |
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To consider the notes of the previous meeting held on 22 September 2022.

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| <b>3</b> | <b>Oxfordshire's current affairs updates</b> (Verbal Report) | 10:10 |
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Members of the Board to update one another on key matters of importance arising since the previous meeting.

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| <b>4</b> | <b>Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership approach to influencing policy</b> (Pages 8 - 9) | 10:20 |
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At the September meeting, the Board agreed that the LNP would “influence planning to ensure better outcomes for people and nature”. The Board is to discuss what methods OLNP will utilise to influence Local and Strategic Plans in Oxfordshire.

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| <b>5</b> | <b>Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Forum review</b> (Pages 10 - 14) | 10:50 |
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On 12th October 2022 OLNP held its first Forum event. The Board is asked to consider the review of the first Forum event, and the proposals for future Forum activity.

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| <b>6</b> | <b>Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership membership changes</b> (Pages 15 - 18) | 11:10 |
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This item considers a proposed change to the OLNP Board’s Terms of Reference, to ensure the Local Authorities are adequately represented. Further, two personnel changes to the Board are discussed – the need to recruit a new Landowner representative, and the replacement of the Chair of Wild Oxfordshire (one of two eNGO reps) with the Chief Executive of Wild Oxfordshire.

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| <b>7</b> | <b>Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Sub-groups update</b> (Pages 19 - 26) | 11:30 |
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This paper provides an update on the work of the LNP subgroups, with a focus on the objectives of those groups. It also seeks the Board’s input on some questions of importance.

**8      Communications update** 11:50

The Board is invited to discuss the draft Communications Plan created by Becky Chesshyre, Communications Coordinator for the Oxfordshire Partnerships.

**9      Any other business** 11:55

Cotswolds Dark Skies survey

**10     Dates of future meetings** 12:00

To note the dates of future meetings set out below:

- 8 March 2023
- 14 June 2023
- 13 September 2023
- 13 December 2023

# Notes

## OF A MEETING OF THE

# Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Board

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 10.00 AM  
SANDFORD-ON-THAMES VILLAGE HALL, HENLEY ROAD, OXFORD, OX4  
4YN**

### **Present:**

**Members:** Richard Benwell (Chair), Dr Prue Addison, Michelle Leek, Professor David Macdonald, David Rouane, Rosie Rowe, Simon Smith and Lady Jennifer Stringer

**Officers:** Becky Chesshyre, (Communications Coordinator for the Oxfordshire Partnerships), Susan Harbour, (Strategic Partnerships Manager, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils) and Matt Whitney, (Local Nature Partnership Manager).

### **1 Apologies, conflicts of interest and Chair's announcements**

There were apologies from James Price, Giles Brockbank and David Knight.

There were no conflicts of interest reported.

The Board welcomed Susan Harbour, Strategic Partnerships Manager (and line manager of the LNP Manager) and Becky Chesshyre, the new Communications Manager who comes with more than five years' experience at Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. Part of Becky's role includes providing Communications resource to the LNP.

### **2 Notes of the previous meeting**

Notes of the previous meeting were approved.

The Board was asked to note that these, and all future agendas and minutes, are published [here](#), and will be available via the LNP website which was currently being worked on.

### **3 LNP Priority setting**

The Board members updated one another on Oxfordshire current affairs. This will be a standing item on future agendas.

The Board noted the enhanced importance of Local Nature Partnerships in what appears to be a weakening legislative environment relating to the Environment Act and Agriculture Act. The Board also noted that, despite work ceasing on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, all of Oxfordshire's Local Authorities are committed to working together to deliver the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision, which has environmental sustainability at its core. The Local Nature Partnership is considered one of the key tools towards delivering on this vision.

**ACTION** – MW to bring draft calendar of influence to next Board meeting, including North Wessex Downs Management Plan, Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and West Oxfordshire Issues and Options Consultation

**ACTION** – MW to circulate the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision with minutes

**ACTION** – DM and MW to connect regarding the Wytham Woods project.

As the main tools at the disposal of the LNP amount to advice, ideas and encouragement, it is imperative that we have clear, visible priorities that reflect the key areas of focus for the partnership. The Board agreed the following:

- Natural Capital,
- Nature Recovery, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), (this to explicitly include environmental land management and farming) and
- People and Nature.

These priorities will be presented to the LNP Forum on October 12, which will be asked to endorse them (or propose amendments) and suggest objectives in each area.

## 4 Sub-groups

The LNP Manager proposed a framework to ensure the Board and sub-groups are able to communicate effectively. These are outlined in the paper that was circulated with the Agenda pack. The Board noted that representatives of the sub-group serve as a spokesperson for the LNP's broad objectives rather than for their employers.

Sub-group updates can be found in the paper accompanying the Agenda pack.

### Biodiversity Gain Group

- 1) The Board were asked for feedback on three of the principles for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery proposed by the BNG subgroup. The Board agreed pushing for countywide policy alignment on BNG is important. The Board noted the different advantages and disadvantages for people and nature of onsite and offsite mitigation. Onsite mitigation is better able to provide dual benefits to people and nature, but is not usually an appropriate replacement for specific rare habitats and species. Offsite mitigation can in the right circumstances more effectively achieve wholesale benefits for nature but is harder for people to access and enjoy. They did not endorse a minimum offsite requirement for net gain delivery, in part because the 'mitigation hierarchy' (which mandates that developers should avoid impacts first, then mitigate and only compensate as a last resort) prevents it. The LNP is taking advantage of an opportunity to link with University to research how its playing out on the ground – Prue Addison is the key contact point for this.
- 2) The Board endorsed the drive to go over and above 10% minimum. There is precedent to support this. For instance, Cotswolds AONB management plan will be recommending a higher percentage than 10%. The planning inspector endorsed 25% biodiversity net gain as part of the planning proposals for the garden village. And the Draft Nature Recovery Network (NRN) work developed a draft policy, available on the Wild Oxfordshire website, supporting a 20% ambition.

- 3) The Board noted that clearer definitions of local irreplaceable habitats are needed, to add nuance to the DEFRA metric.

**ACTION** – BNG subgroup to talk to council planning policy officers to establish the main problems around delivery of excellent onsite provision of net gain.

**ACTION** - SS to share the paper supporting 20% net gain in Cotswolds AONB

#### Health and Nature

**ACTION** - PA to introduce ML and RR to Steve at Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre.

#### Policy

Susan Harbour volunteered to act as the Board representative for this group, despite not being a formal Board member.

#### Natural Capital Investment

The Board noted that MW was meeting with University of Oxford the following day to discuss collaboration in this area.

#### Biodiversity Advisory Group (BAG)

BAG's request to become a LNP subgroup was formally endorsed by Board.

#### Local Nature Recovery Strategy group

Currently an informal group, awaiting the formal guidance and funding from central government. The Board endorsed this group being a LNP subgroup, led by Oxfordshire County Council, who are the likely Responsible Authority for this work.

## **5 Forum event**

The Board noted progress on planning the Forum event, and approved the proposed reimbursement of Wild Oxfordshire, thanking those involved for all their work. £2,500 will therefore be paid to Wild Oxfordshire from the LNP budget.

## **6 Vice Chair**

The Board deferred the appointment of a Vice Chair to a later date due to time constraints. Prue Addison was nominated as a candidate.

**ACTION** – RB and MW will conduct the process of Vice Chair appointment online before the next Board meeting.

## **7 LNP Manager Update**

The Board noted the update from the LNP Manager.

## **8 LNP Budget**

This item will be a standing item at all Board meetings. There was not time for consideration or approval of the budget at this meeting.

**9 Next meeting - Wed 7th Dec 10:00-12:00**

It was noted that next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 7 December at 10:00.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

<b>Title:</b>	OLNP approach to influencing policy
<b>Author:</b>	Matt Whitney
<b>Date:</b>	07/12/2022

## Summary:

OLNP has agreed to “influence planning to ensure better outcomes for people and nature”. This paper considers the best methods to utilise in order to achieve that goal. It suggests strongly that we steer clear of campaigning, but that we work in a supportive and encouraging capacity, providing evidence, case studies and experience to influence local and strategic plans in Oxfordshire via a Policy working group (as previously agreed).

## The Board is asked to:

Discuss the approach that OLN should take to influencing policy, and approve the recommendations made in this paper.

The Board at its last meeting agreed that OLN would work to influence policy to ensure better outcomes for people and nature. The Board also supported the establishment of a sub-group that would bring together expertise to fulfil this mission. It is considered useful at this stage for the Board to discuss the methods that OLN should use in order to exert that influence most effectively.

### What policies and plans should LNP try to influence?

OLNP needs to balance considerations of impact, value, capacity and scale when deciding at the level of plan over which we should attempt to exert influence. This paper recommends NOT commenting on individual planning applications, but focussing on more strategic documents, such as Local Plans. There may be specific developments that, due to their scale, location or type warrant consideration by OLN. An example for consideration here might be the Botley West Solar Park.

This paper recommends that OLN exerts influence over national policy via its contributions to the South East Nature Partnership (SENP).

### What methods should OLN employ?

OLNP should feel able to speak confidently with an objective voice, but also needs to ensure that through its policy work it does not alienate any of its partners. In order to achieve this aim it is considered useful to establish the means via which OLN will exert influence.

This paper recommends OLN does NOT engage in public mobilisation, use of media tools for attempting to influence specific policies, or ‘on the ground’ actions. This paper



## **Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval**

recommends OLNP establish the Policy sub-group we discussed at the last meeting as soon as possible, pending appointment of a chairperson, with the LNP Manager Chairing the first meeting.

This Policy sub-group may decide to develop position papers which spell out the views and policy position of OLNP on various key topics, for instance around supporting a policy of 20% Biodiversity Net Gain across the county. These position statements could be used to inform the ad hoc policy work that the LNP Manager and others conduct with Local Authority officers in the development of various plans and strategies, as well as to inform the responses to the consultations on these plans and strategies. They may be displayed on our forthcoming website for ease of access by all.

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

<b>Title:</b>	OLNP Forum review
<b>Author:</b>	Matt Whitney
<b>Date:</b>	07/12/2022

## Summary:

The inaugural Local Nature Partnership Forum event took place on 12 October 2022. This paper assesses the success of the event and presents some pointers to follow for future events.

This paper also considers the role of the Forum and makes a recommendation for its future.

## The Board is asked to:

Note the review of the first Forum event.

Approve the recommendations for the future of the Forum.

The OLNP Forum is a broad stakeholder group that will ensure the decisions of the board and actions of the OLNP are fully informed by the views and experiences of LNP members. The Forum's inaugural event took place on 12 October 2022. This doubled as a launch of the OLNP.

The main objectives of the event was to foster a sense of togetherness around the aims and objectives of the LNP, to provide a networking opportunity, especially between the Board members and the wider partnership, and to gather feedback from partners on the deliverables that should form the workplan of the LNP under the three strategic areas of focus. Workshop sessions were conducted, the outputs of which can be found as appendices to this document.

Following the event, a feedback questionnaire was circulated, which received fourteen responses. This is considered a decent return from just fewer than one hundred attendees. Analysis of this feedback shows significant levels of satisfaction for all elements of the event that were surveyed. The following comment is representative of a number of pieces of verbal the LNP Manager has received:

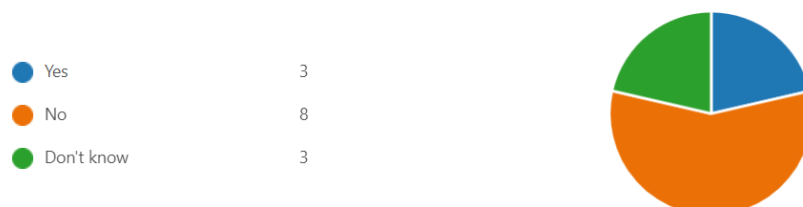
*The event was well-organised, the group facilitators did an excellent job and there seemed to be good opportunities for everyone to contribute.*

This paper picks out another comment from this feedback process, which highlights a couple of key issues around the venue. This comment is to be contrasted with the graphic following it.

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*The venue was beautiful but rather remote and some of the rooms were acoustically challenging.*

3. Would you have preferred a more urban venue?



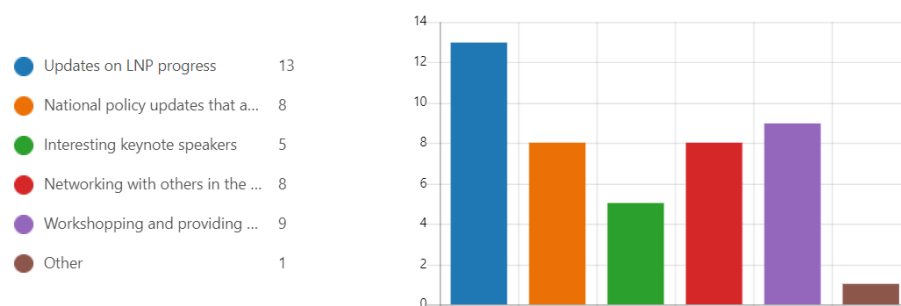
While there was significant praise for the inspirational nature of the venue, concerns around accessibility perhaps suggest a rethink. This is corroborated by an internal review process conducted by South and Vale staff involved in the organisation of the event, which illustrates the high levels of organisation required to put on an event such as this in a venue that is not equipped to provide for conference functions.

In terms of how the LNP Forum should operate, the Board is asked to weigh up the importance of gathering the views of the partnership and the value from provision of networking opportunities with the resource required to deliver a successful event such as the last one, and the opportunity cost of doing so. Another pertinent factor is the complexity involved in assimilating the views and opinions of such a wide variety of stakeholders into the workstream and strategic approach of the Partnership on a basis more frequent than annually.

Considering both these aspects, and the venue selection process conducted prior to the event, this paper recommends the next event is held at Didcot Civic Hall in early October 2023. If the Board is in agreement, LNP manager will secure a date and notify Board members immediately this has been done.

This approach should not preclude the Partnership from calling separate Forum engagement events on an *ad hoc*, basis should there be a need to do so, for example to inform our strategic approach to a specific aspect, issue or project. It is suggested this could be done at relatively shorter notice with an online workshop event. To support the Board's consideration of this issue, this paper presents the following graphic illustration of Forum feedback questionnaire responses, showing what were considered to be the most important aspects of future events:

8. For future events, what are the most important aspects for you? **Tick all that apply.**



The Board is asked to consider the above when discussing the future function of the Forum.

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

## Appendix 1

### Oxon LNP Forum Outputs - **Natural Capital Investment**

This area of work largely focusses around leveraging finance from the private sector into nature recovery and nature-based solutions.

The recently formed LNP subgroup can help avoid duplication and unnecessary competition by identifying and supporting complementary enabling actions across three areas:

#### FRAMEWORK:

- produce an ethical delivery framework, comprised of guiding principles for projects and sources of investment, linked to the LNRS.

#### PROJECTS:

- undertake a quick market analysis of ecosystem service sellers/project developers
- support development of projects to investment readiness.
- provide dating service between funders and projects.
- develop a Case Study, using a flagship best practice project. This would help to raise funds
- increase resource within the LNP, creating a Natural Capital Investment Secretariat to scale-up the model.

#### INVESTMENT:

- Thorough market analysis – who are the buyers and investors, and what do they want to invest in?
- Compile list of funders and seek funds

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

## Appendix 2

### Oxon LNP Forum Outputs – **Nature Recovery**

The Local Nature Partnership is working closely with Oxfordshire County Council and other partners to begin developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Throughout this work it is important we remain open to new ways of working and new voices, whilst not re-inventing the wheel. We should to focus on three areas:

#### COMMUNICATION

- Ensure engagement with stakeholders is appropriate, timely and effective
- Find new routes and approaches to engaging with farmers and landowners
- Ensure timely engagement with policy makers enables appropriate consideration of nature within plans and strategies
- Create a temporary policy solution in the absence of a LNRS, so Local Authorities can progress with ambition within their Local Plan timeframes.

#### DELIVERY:

- Create a delivery plan alongside the strategy that can inspire the communities and landowners to take action.
- Provide collaborative support for communities that want to deliver projects.
- Ensure alignment/integration of nature recovery on farmland with other aspects of nature recovery in the county.
- Invest in measurement, reporting and verification.

#### MAPPING

- Create a publicly accessible map that is clear and easy to use, similar to Magic, that enables stakeholders to prioritise and plan.
- Ensure connectivity with development mapping. This could be in the form of a Land Use Framework, which details proportions and potential locations of land needed for various purposes eg food, solar, housing, open habitat, woodlands, floodplains etc.
- Develop inspirational mapping, with suggested visions for each 'landscape recovery priority area'. This could then include case studies of best practice Nature Recovery projects.

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

## Appendix 3

### Oxon LNP Forum Outputs – **People and Nature**

The LNP has a new Nature and Health working group looking to increase equitable access to and engagement with nature. This group's approach should be focussed around three areas:

#### MAPPING CURRENT ACTIVITY:

- Use LNP convening power to make current activity visible, bringing partners together and identifying gaps in provision. Overlay maps to identify target areas and opportunities (land and communities) for nature, people and nature & people.
- Produce case studies to be used as advocacy tools. Moving people from Awareness through Access to Action.
- What's worked and what hasn't? Collate local data, working with TVERC of the impacts on nature and people.

#### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Commit to involving and engaging seldom heard voices
- Research locally who are missing from the nature sector, and ask them how they would like to be involved.
- Endorse and support partnership funding bids from delivery charities

#### COMMUNITY ACTION FOR NATURE

- Develop a joint approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, and health by bringing together nature organisations that are working with local communities, along with organisations who are experienced in improving equality, diversity, and inclusion, and in health
- Enable community leaders to identify which groups of people are missing from community-led action, ask them what they want from their green spaces, and help them engage with their local green spaces.
- Develop or signpost to guidance for improving access for all to community green spaces (physical access, greenways, and engagement).
- Investigate the council process blockers to community action and encourage them to streamline processes.

#### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Champion and influence strategic plans and policy to meet best practice (LGA requirements, PHE recommendations etc) Green Infrastructure, greenways, and active travel.
- Produce or promote a design guide for new development (eg Building with Nature, Building Nature in, NE Green Infrastructure standards).
- Support physical improvements to greenspace access, making best use of tools available to Councils (e.g. s106, CIL and other community monies).

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

<b>Title:</b>	OLNP Board membership changes
<b>Author:</b>	Matt Whitney
<b>Date:</b>	07/12/2022

## Summary:

This paper recommends the OLNP Board approve changes to the Terms of Reference to reflect the addition of a second local authority member.

It also asks the Board to consider some other amendments to Board membership.

## The Board is asked to:

- Approve the inclusion of a second local Authority Representative on the OLNP Board, and associated changes to the Board's Terms of Reference
- Approve the change of Wild Oxfordshire representative
- Consider the most appropriate way to recruit a new landowner representative

OLNP reserves the right to review membership of the Board from time to time, to ensure it is fit for purpose and delivering as much value to the work of the partnership as it can. In this instance, there are two recommended changes.

Firstly, it is considered useful to include a second Local Authority representative, a senior officer.

- Officers bring a different perspective to elected Members, and the input of both to Board deliberations is extremely useful
- A well networked senior officer is able to ensure communication of LNP Board decisions and approaches to the Local Authorities via different channels to those available to Members
- A well networked senior officer is able to outline and stimulate methods of resourcing and delivering our workplan.

The Board is asked to approve the addition of a senior council officer to the Board, to be chosen by the Chief Executives of the councils.

Secondly, a change is proposed to the eNGO members. Currently the Chair of Wild Oxfordshire is one of two eNGO reps. The Chair, as opposed to the Chief Executive, was put forward as a candidate in the recruitment process due to the understanding that Wild Oxfordshire would take on the responsibility for managing the Forum element of the LNP, on, which the Chief Executive would take the lead.

As things have turned out, the management of the Forum has largely been taken on by the OLNP Manager, with support from the local authority secretariat. Wild Oxfordshire therefore

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believe that it would be better use of the Chief Executive's time to be board member. Camilla would bring her deep knowledge of Oxfordshire's environment and her extensive networking amongst public, private and non-government organisations. It is the view of the Wild Oxfordshire Chair that the OLNP Board would definitely get better value from Camilla's skills and experience than from his.

The Board is asked to approve this change.

Finally, it is with regret that Lady Jenifer Springer has had to step back from her position on the OLNP Board. The Board is asked to consider the most appropriate way to recruit her replacement.



# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

## Appendix

### Oxfordshire LNP Board Terms of Reference

#### **1. Purpose of the LNP**

The purpose of the LNP is to radically enhance nature, its positive impact on our climate, health and wellbeing, and the priority it is given in decision making, ensuring Oxfordshire is a county where people and nature thrive.

#### **2. Purpose of LNP Board**

The purpose of the Board is to govern the LNP, including to:

- Provide strategic leadership for the LNP and to champion nature
- Be responsible for delivery of the LNP purpose
- Oversee management of LNP finances and report to the body accountable for finances
- Evaluate success of the LNP and delivery of the work programme
- Support cross sectoral collaboration, including informing and consulting with the Forum
- Establish strong relationships with key stakeholders, in particular the Local Enterprise Partnership and Future Oxfordshire Partnership

#### **3. Membership of the Board**

The Board will consist of up to 11 Board members:

- One member from a local authority
- One member from a University
- One member from the health sector
- One member from the Defra family of organisations
- Two members from environmental non-governmental organisations
- One member from a National Landscape body
- One member from the farming sector
- One member from the business sector
- One member from the landowner sector
- An independent Chair

#### **4. Other Attendees at Board Meetings**

The LNP Manager will attend Board meetings.

Observers may attend, and may be invited to comment, in a non-voting capacity at the invitation of the Board or Board members via the Chair.

#### **5. Role of Board Members**

LNP Board members will assist in the delivery of the LNP's aims and objectives by:

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

- Fulfilling the responsibilities of a member of the LNP governing body.
- Engaging with the LNP Forum.
- Advocating the aims and objectives of the LNP within their sector and reporting back to their sector on LNP activities.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of the LNP's Strategic Plan, using the knowledge, skills, contacts and influence available within their sector.
- Influencing relevant strategies, plans and funding mechanisms to further the LNP's aims.
- Where appropriate, supporting the Chair and Board to champion the LNP and nature through engaging with key local, regional and national partners.

## **6. Appointment of Board Members**

Board members will be appointed for a three year term, and a maximum of one additional consecutive term. Board members shall be appointed by their own sector.

The Chair will be appointed by the Board after consultation with the Forum and receiving its endorsement.

Should a member of the Board leave their position within their sector they will resign from the Board and a new member be appointed.

## **7. Conduct of Meetings**

As a voluntary partnership most decisions will be by consensus. When voting is required the following process applies:

- Only Board members present either in person or virtually at a meeting may vote.
- Voting is by show of hands in open forum.
- The Chair has a second casting vote if voting is tied.
- In between meetings, if a vote is required, the Chair may seek votes via email.
- The Board acting with a 75% majority of all members (not just those in attendance) may remove a Board member and begin the process to appoint a replacement from the relevant sector, if in the view of the Board the member has: (a) failed to attend 3 consecutive meetings, (b) failed to act in the interests of the LNP, (c) acted in a way which could bring the LNP into disrepute, or (d) failed to resolve a conflict of interest.
- Once approved, minutes of Board meetings will be published on the LNP website.
- The Board will meet at least quarterly

## **8. Review of the Board Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference will be next reviewed by the Board in January 2023.

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

<b>Title:</b>	OLNP Sub groups update
<b>Author:</b>	Matt Whitney
<b>Date:</b>	07/12/2022

## Summary:

The Local Nature Partnership currently has five active sub-groups, with a sixth, the policy group, still in development. This paper gives an update on activity from each group, provides Board members with insight into key decisions taken by each group, and poses some questions to the Board.

## The Board is asked to:

Consider ways in which BNG might be linked to LNRS.

Consider and endorse the priorities presented by the Health and Nature group.

Endorse BAG's consideration of recognition of the River Thame Valley as an additional Conservation Target Area.

Comment on the potential evolution of Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment towards a more public-private partnership model.

Suggest ways in which the LNRS steering group can begin work on this process, especially perhaps around engaging farmers during this relatively quieter period of winter.

## Biodiversity Gain group

UPDATE:

### Purpose of BG Task and Finish Group

- Advise the LNP and other key stakeholders on ways in which the benefits of Biodiversity Gain (BG) can be maximised in support of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Explore the feasibility of a cohesive county strategy for Biodiversity Gain.

### Update from last meeting (5<sup>th</sup> Oct 22)

1. The **Planning Advisory Service**, Beccy Moberly (role is in supporting LPAs to implement BNG) and Krista Patrick (helping local authorities to deliver the Nature

# Oxon LNP Board Paper for Approval

Recovery Network) attended October's BG Task and Finish Group meeting to share their expertise and communicate the support they have available for LPAs.

- Support and resources for LPAs  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities>  
(PAS website has some links to well written BNG policies e.g. Plymouth)
  - Nature recovery info on PAS website  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/nature-recovery-local-authorities>
  - Useful diagram on how the introduction of BNG will impact the work stream of LPAs relating to planning applications  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-local-authorities/biodiversity-net-gain-development>
  - Still not clear whether Defra will allow a local credit scheme, but many are communicating the implications to Defra.
  - Hard to see how government could legislate that BNG could not be in S106 when this is the mechanism for other schemes such as nutrient neutrality.
  - Lots of local schemes currently implementing, or setting up local credit schemes, as otherwise what is the mechanism to enable the units to be spent in the local area.
  - Legislation not expected to provide support for local first (relying on weak mechanism in metric). Could mean that if a unit costs £20k locally and £5k up north Oxon will lose out unless local policy specifies otherwise.
  - Members want impact to be addressed locally.
2. Broad agreement that this group should pursue the ambition of 20% BNG. All supported this in principle. In practice, it was felt that LPAs required a better evidence base to set policy. Some developers already saying that current BNG requirements are impacting on viability. Due to the local plan review schedules there is some urgency for this.
- There is a growing body of evidence to support increasing the requirement. The most notable one from the Kent Nature Partnership <https://kentnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Viability-Assessment-of-Biodiversity-Net-Gain-in-Kent-June-2022.pdf>

## Next meeting

The next meeting will look at another aspect taken from the BG Guiding Principles discussion paper (shared with last update): namely that there are two important pillars of the Environment Act that are of particular relevance to this group, Biodiversity Gain and LNRS; they are not linked by current / proposed legislation. There should be an ambition to link the two, to lever funds to the priority areas in the county. (Although, quality biodiversity projects not in the nature recovery zones should not automatically be discounted.)

## KEY DECISIONS:

To provide evidence to the LPAs supporting a policy of 20%, notably around the need for such a policy, and its negligible impact on viability.

## QUESTIONS for the Board:

Consider ways in which Biodiversity Net Gain might be linked to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

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## Nature and Health group

UPDATE:

The LNP Health and Nature subgroup held its second meeting on 3 November 2022, attended by 32 members. The focus of the meeting was a review of the feedback from the Forum regarding priority areas for action for the people and nature theme; it was noted that there was close alignment between the Forum's ideas and those proposed by sub-group members. Following these discussions, the following objectives and proposed outputs of the group were agreed:

Priority No	Sub-Group Proposed Objectives	Alignment with Forum Proposals	Specific Forum ideas	Deliverable outputs	Timescale
1	Input into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to ensure that it is a key thread throughout the strategy	X	People and nature needs to be a thread running through the LNRS not just a chapter	An LNRS which fully considers the needs of people and the importance of human connectivity with nature	Linked to LNRS delivery timetable -
2	Promote Green Social Prescribing	X	Link eNGOs with health Increase skills in engaging with seldom heard	A social prescribing strategy for Oxfordshire which recognises the role of 'green prescribing'  Training to share best practice in reaching groups who do not usually access nature  Inclusion of nature activities on the Livewell website – social prescribers' directory  Engagement with the NHS – to maximise uptake of nature based activities and to influence 'greening' of the NHS estate	2023 – linked to Oxfordshire social prescribing strategy timetable
3	Promotion of high quality green infrastructure that works for people and nature that works for people and nature,	X Make access to nature easy	Focus on active travel, influencing planning policy, design guides, improving the quality of our existing green	Develop definitions of what we mean by high quality, accessible green spaces  Identify	2023

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	maximising the quality and use of existing green spaces		spaces so that they are multifunctional and enable access for all	opportunities for increasing biodiversity – check use of One Public Estate and engage with the Universities to influence their land management activities  Review and provide feedback on existing Local Authority Design Guides	
<b>Enablers</b>					
1	Networking and collaboration	X	Understand what is happening and where so we can identify the gaps	Share case studies of good practice and promote them on the LNP web site  Share good practice re: sustainability of projects	
2	Mapping of need and service provision	X Focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.	Development of case studies.	Detailed, accessible map of nature activities which also shows the gaps and under-utilised green spaces. (Link with existing work including HERO, sustainable healthcare, Wild Oxfordshire and District maps)	By May 2023
3	Mapping funding and free training opportunities	X Bring together research, evidence and local data	Layer priority areas of need with funding opportunities	Create a directory of funding and training opportunities	By March 2023

## KEY DECISIONS:

To focus work around the items in the table above.

## QUESTIONS for the Board:

To consider, comment on and endorse the priorities in the table above.

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## Biodiversity Advisory Group

### UPDATE:

Our most recent BAG meeting was on 23rd September. It was agreed that we should gather the evidence to support the case for the designation of some or all of the River Thame Valley as a Conservation Target Area (CTA).

- This area is acknowledged as being important for wildlife where targeted conservation action will have the greatest benefit but has, until relatively recently, been under recorded. Therefore, there hasn't been enough evidence to support CTA status.
- Between the work of the River Thame Conservation Trust, Freshwater Habitats Trust and others we think it is time to have a closer look at the area.
- We have no a priori expectations of exactly where the boundaries will be as this will need to be evidence led, so the starting point is the whole River Thame Corridor in Oxfordshire.
- Most of the evidence will need to come from TVERC and they will cross check with RTCT & FHT to make sure that TVERC have the most up to date data.
- South and Vale are currently working on their 'Joint Local Plan 2040' and if this area is to become a CTA we need to get it into the plan during the creation phase.
- Steve Wilkes is bringing together the data into a form that can be presented to the BAG before our next meeting in January.
- The background, governance & process for CTA creation can be found here: <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CTA-Governance-FINAL-JUL2017-1.pdf>

**KEY DECISIONS:** To consider the designation of the River Thame Valley as an additional CTA.

**QUESTIONS for Board:** Endorse the move towards recognition of the River Thame Valley as an additional CTA

## Natural Capital Investment group

### UPDATE:

The group has met twice since the last LNP Board meeting and is working within the context of the areas considered and prioritised at the OLNP Forum event. Both meetings focussed discussion around four key areas:

- Evidence
- Project pipeline
- Investment
- Natural Capital Investment Plan

### Evidence

The group has recruited an intern, paid by University of Oxford's Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery, to research 1) the cost of delivering our nature recovery ambitions in

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Oxfordshire and 2) the likely size of the offsite BNG market in Oxfordshire. This work requires significant assumptions, and should be completed by early in the new year.

## Project Pipeline

The group has begun collecting case studies of projects. Some are projects that have been delivered, to demonstrate to potential investors that we have a track record of successful delivery. Others are pipeline projects, to show investors the sorts of things their investment might fund. There is a dearth of 'shovel-ready' (or investment-ready) projects and a small group is meeting to consider a funding application to develop this pipeline.

## Investment

The group is fortunate to include Ben Caldecott, a senior figure at the Leverhulme centre with a background and strong professional network in the investment world, especially around green finance. We are looking forward to discussing with Ben the opportunities that exist, and the best way to ready ourselves to take advantage of these.

Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment is a key player in this space, and is well placed to provide 'hub' functions to support both natural capital investment projects and a healthy natural capital marketplace across the county. TOE cannot grow without evolving – this represents an opportunity to rethink the model of Oxfordshire's premier environmental funder, to one more aligned with social enterprise and public-private partnership. The group is considering the most appropriate way for this evolution to take place, so as to benefit the county as a whole. This is a key piece of the Natural Capital Investment Framework that was discussed at the OLNP Forum.

## Natural Capital Investment Plan

Work has begun on a natural capital investment plan. This will be shared with the Board once a working draft has been agreed and commented on by the group, prior to wider consultation and socialisation.

## KEY DECISIONS:

- 1) To engage an intern to develop evidence which we hope will support our approach.
- 2) To collate and stimulate a pipeline of investible projects
- 3) To develop a Natural Capital Investment Plan
- 4) To support TOE in considering the most appropriate form

QUESTIONS for the Board: Comment on the potential evolution of Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment towards a more public-private partnership model.

## **LNRS technical steering group**

### UPDATE:

Whilst originally expected in Spring 2022, we have recently been informed by DEFRA that they are now aiming to roll out LNRS from April 2023. We still await the publication of secondary legislation and guidance on LNRS, and information on associated funding, and as such DEFRA do not expect LNRS preparation to begin at this stage. We have been informed that Responsible Authorities can expect to receive a £32,500 further seed corn funding ahead of April 2023 to allow for capacity building and / or preparatory work ahead of the roll-out.

We held a meeting of partners on 28<sup>th</sup> September to discuss governance structure, briefing of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP), influences on the timeline, and data. We have provided information on the proposed LNRS governance and structure to the Future



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Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) which has been presented to the Executive Officers Group and Scrutiny Panel and was considered by FOP on 29<sup>th</sup> November. This paper gained FOPs endorsement for:

- Oxfordshire County Council to continue in the provisional role of responsible authority.
- Proceeding with work on an Oxfordshire LNRS where we can (e.g. revising baseline data)
- The proposed governance arrangement, which sees the formation of an interim LNRS steering group which is a Local Nature Partnership group led by Oxfordshire County Council (as provisional Responsible authority).

We have invited representatives to form an 'interim' steering group as follows:

- Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership – Matt Whitney
- Oxfordshire County Council -Beccy Micklem
- The LPAs – Dominic Lamb (South and Vale DCs)
- eNGOs – Prue Addison (BBOWT)
- Defra Group – Paul Candlin/Graham Scholey
- The farming community -??? (suggestions welcome)
- Designated landscapes – Simon Smith (Cotswolds Conservation Board)
- Comms & engagement/community groups – Camilla Burrow (Wild Oxfordshire)

We have met with Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) to discuss initial data needs and requested a quote for a review of the DEFRA LNRS pilots in terms of the data requirements, as well as a review/update of the Oxfordshire State of Nature Report, with a view to using some of the DEFRA seed corn funding on this work.

We have met with Local Authority officers to discuss the needs arising from Local Plan production, which runs ahead of the LNRS timeline. This has flagged the need to revise the draft NRN map which was produced to inform OP2050, in order that it can effectively inform development of Local Plan policy on nature recovery. TVERC have been asked to quote for this work (which will likely be funded by LPAs). The need for Local Plan policy to be worded so that a future LNRS can be accommodated was flagged and discussed.

OCC are currently recruiting to two additional biodiversity roles in order to increase capacity ahead of LNRS roll-out.

We have engaged with NFU to consider the best approach to engaging with farmers. We had hoped to attend NFU Branch meetings but have been advised that this is best conducted following release of further information regarding ELM.

## KEY DECISIONS:

QUESTIONS for the Board: Suggest ways in which the LNRS steering group can begin work on this process, especially perhaps around engaging farmers during this relatively quieter period of winter.

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## Nature Policy group

### UPDATE:

There is appetite for this group from some partners, and the need to ensure Local and Strategic Plans have strong environmental policies within them has never been stronger. We have now established a timeline for all Oxfordshire-based plans that the LNP may wish to influence. We have also completed our first response to a Local Plan Consultation, that of Oxford City. A Chair is yet to be identified but the group will form with LNP Manager as temporary Chairperson as soon as possible.

The group may decide to focus on developing position papers on a number of key topics and issues, and indeed we are fortunate to have those created by Bucks and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership at our disposal to inform our approach.

KEY DECISIONS: To establish the group as soon as possible.

QUESTIONS for Board: Consideration of the 'Influencing Policy' item on December's Board agenda will inform our approach.