

THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

- 1.1. This document summarises background information about the South Yorkshire Local Nature Partnership (SY LNP), covering the northern half of the Sheffield City Region, and puts forward a structure to enable its effective working and proper governance.
- 1.2. Following the Government's publication of the Natural Environment White Paper in 2012, Defra called for Local Nature Partnerships to be established across England to "*bring a diverse range of businesses and organisations together to create a vision and plan of action of how the natural environment can be taken into account in decision-making to raise awareness about the services and benefits of a healthy natural environment.*"
- 1.3. In South Yorkshire we answered this call. A Defra-funded transition project was undertaken to help establish a SY LNP. This work was coordinated by South Yorkshire Forest Partnership (on behalf of partners in the South Yorkshire Green Infrastructure Strategy), South Yorkshire Biodiversity Forum, South Yorkshire Geodiversity Partnership and Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). Other proponents of the work included Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, the South Yorkshire local authorities and many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Workshops were held throughout 2011 and 2012 to develop proposals and a bid for LNP status was made to Defra, with successful approval given in July 2012.
- 1.4. Following designation, the South Yorkshire LNP is now putting in place an effective structure, upheld by efficient and open governance. This document summarises how the LNP's governance and management will be administered.
- 1.5. The SY LNP's **Mission** is to bring together organisations to champion the value of the natural environment and embed its social and economic benefits into decision-making.
- 1.6. The SY LNP's **Purpose** is to protect and enhance South Yorkshire's natural environment, promoting the coordinated delivery of connected 'landscape-scale' projects as part of a high-quality green network, helping to create sustainable jobs and growth and contributing to improved social cohesion.
- 1.7. The SY LNP's **Vision** is that: South Yorkshire's environment will be enhanced, valued and protected, well managed and enjoyed by everyone – and will help to make South Yorkshire a great place in which to live, do business, travel and visit. South Yorkshire will offer a high quality natural environment supporting sustainable economic development and helping to deliver a competitive city region by creating attractive settings for investment.

2. Membership and structure of the partnership

- 2.1. It is proposed that membership of the SY LNP is open to any organisation, public or private, government or non-governmental, corporate or unincorporated, which is interested in furthering the work of the partnership and has agreed to the terms of reference of the partnership. The full partnership will convene at an annual partnership forum event open to the public. Additional workshops and events will be held as required to help secure the vision, with participation and representation being determined according to the task in hand and to meet the needs of the LNP.
- 2.2. The function of the annual partnership forum will be:
 - 2.2.1. to provide an opportunity for all members of the partnership to contribute to discussion on strategic direction of the SY LNP;
 - 2.2.2. to share and celebrate achievements of the SY LNP and its member organisations; and
 - 2.2.3. to enable partners to share knowledge and best practice.
- 2.3. The SY LNP will be governed by a board, which will be serviced by various delivery and implementation groups. The SY LNP may delegate specific functions to be overseen and completed by working groups on a 'task and finish' basis.

3. Accountable body

- 3.1. The Board may appoint an accountable body if required, to administer financial, management and/or legal matters. On the agreement of the Board such tasks would be formally delegated to the accountable body.

4. SY LNP Board

- 4.1. The SY LNP will be steered by a representative Board. The Board will provide strategic leadership and direction for the work of the SY LNP, and will be responsible for the following roles:
 - 4.1.1. to define the strategic priorities of the SY LNP based on the direction discussed by the wider partnership;
 - 4.1.2. to further develop the partnership by reviewing and developing the SY LNP's strategic aims, ensuring that they remain relevant and reflect the views of the partnership and the needs of South Yorkshire;
 - 4.1.3. to champion the vision of the SY LNP to ensure that this vision is communicated to wider decision makers across a diversity of sectors, and to advocate the benefits of a high quality environment in liaison with the Sheffield City Region and its Local Enterprise Partnership.

5. Composition of the SY LNP Board

- 5.1. The Board will comprise up to 21 members drawn from a range of different bodies involved in the partnership, as follows:
 - 5.1.1. Up to 7 representatives from the public sector - to include the four district local authorities of South Yorkshire, and the three relevant government agencies;
 - 5.1.2. Up to 7 representatives from the civil society, NGO and partnerships sector; and
 - 5.1.3. Up to 7 representatives from the private sector (including representatives from the Local Enterprise Partnership, industry bodies and the wider business community, and the education sector).
- 5.2. Board membership will be proposed via the partnership, with representatives being nominated from within the Partner organisations and appointments being made by the Board. It is intended that initially these will include the founding organisations involved in the LNP bid to

Defra, but further representatives may be proposed and considered, up to the agreed limit of twenty-one members. SYFP will act as the Secretariat to the LNP. Individuals' membership will be reviewed from time to time as follows; one third (potentially up to seven of the twenty-one) of the places on the Board will be up for review every year on a three-year rolling basis, with the appointment of new representatives being made by the Board. Board membership will be on the basis that individual members can contribute to the activities of the LNP and the achievement of the partnership's vision. Each local authority partner will determine itself who to put forward as its representative, irrespective of whether representation will come from political members or officers.

- 5.3. Nominations for Board membership will be made using a simple consistent format, including a covering letter, short CV and letters of support from other LNP partners. Responses to nominations will be published.

6. Operational arrangements

- 6.1. The Board will meet generally four times a year to set strategic direction and monitor progress.
- 6.2. The Board will review its composition on an annual basis and will from time to time review the LNP's terms of reference of the Partnership and the Board will be reviewed annually.
- 6.3. Meetings will be minuted and, where appropriate, action points will be identified with the individuals or groups responsible shown. Minutes will be made available to the wider partnership as follows. Draft minutes will be approved by the Board. Following approval, minutes will be published online via a relevant website, excepting any confidential matters which will be clearly marked as such and will be kept as a separate document.
- 6.4. The Board will elect a Chair and a Vice Chair on an annual basis.
- 6.5. Where possible the Board will make decisions based on consensus and agreement. If this is not possible then decisions may be taken by a majority vote of the Board members, with the meeting Chair having the casting vote. For a vote to be quorate at least seven of the Board members must be present.
- 6.6. Board meetings of the SY LNP will be open to Board members only. Other individuals may attend these meetings by invitation only. However, records of meetings in the form of minutes and agendas will be made publicly available.

7. Expectations and role of Board Members

- 7.1. Members of the SY LNP Board, and those to which it delegates the implementation of specific roles, responsibilities or tasks, will be expected to:
 - 7.1.1. Champion the work of the SY LNP to relevant partners, organisations and networks.
 - 7.1.2. Provide strategic input into the key decisions of the board relating to vision, strategic objectives and delivery plans.
 - 7.1.3. Actively seek opportunities to influence the strategy and plans of relevant organisations and groups to further the aspirations of the Partnership.
 - 7.1.4. Represent and be accountable for the wider interests of their sector at Partnership meetings.
 - 7.1.5. Operate in an open, responsive and accountable manner that adheres at all times to high standards and ethics and governance of public life.