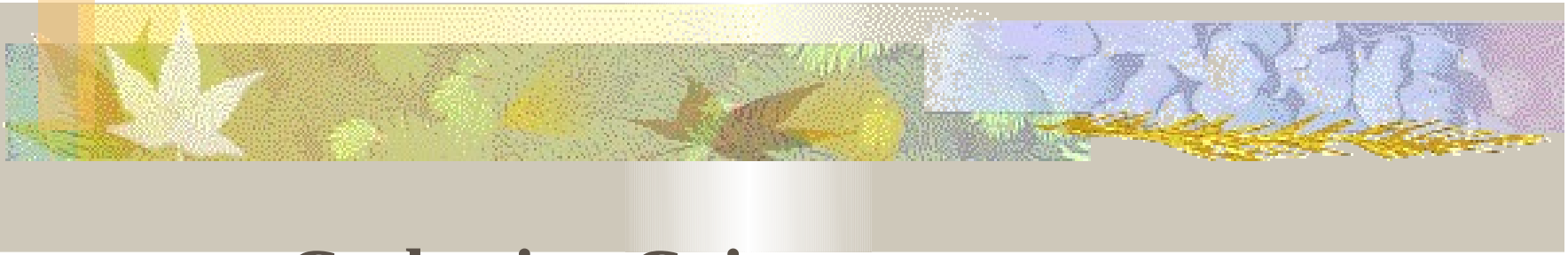


Local Nature Partnerships in the East of England



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What is a Local Nature Partnership (LNP)?

- Idea was introduced in the Natural Environment White Paper in June 2011. Government invited new and existing partnerships to become LNPs, as they recognise that partnership working is the best way to achieve effective action for the natural environment.
- A LNP will bring together knowledge and expertise from a wide range of stakeholders, as it is now widely understood that the natural environment also provides many economic and social benefits.
- A diverse range of individuals, organisations and businesses will come together at a local level to create a vision and plan of action of how the natural environment can be taken into account in decision making.
- Defra will invite applications in early 2012 from prospective LNPs to be formally recognised by Government and its environmental agencies, and to establish LNP boards. Defra is awaiting discussion of the proposed application process with Ministers. Decisions on which bids will receive formal LNP status not expected until summer 2012.



What are the economic and social benefits of the natural environment?

Economic

- High quality environment improves image and consequently business and residential desirability e.g. houses overlooking greenspaces attract a premium of 5%-15%
- High quality environment contributes to tourism and recreation
- Nature conservation and farming add to local distinctiveness e.g local products and food
- Management to restore floodplains and improve water quality shows benefit:cost ratio of upto 4:1
- Trees absorb pollutants and provide cooling/shelter – important to help adaptation to climate change and save energy

Social

- People living within 500m of accessible greenspaces are 24% more active and fitter, especially important with rising childhood obesity rates
- Reducing the sedentary population by just 1% would reduce morbidity and mortality rates and save UK >£1.4 billion
- Proven mental health benefits of exercise and access to attractive green areas
- Walking for Health Schemes have saved >£7 NHS money for every £1 invested
- Local greenspaces improve community cohesion and can reduce crime



Defra support for LNP capacity-building activities

- Defra has some funding for new and existing partnerships to bid for money for capacity-building activities, leading to the establishment of local LNPs in mid 2012.
- Bids were submitted from all EoE counties in July 2011, and three were approved by Defra in late September: Norfolk and Suffolk, Hertfordshire and Greater Cambridgeshire. Bedfordshire and Essex submitted revised bids in round 2 and expect to hear before Christmas whether they have been successful.
- Defra guidance has been quite limited but bids for the funding had to focus on capacity-building activities. Activities such as promotion, websites and delivery were excluded from the criteria.
- Delivery of the agreed programme has to be completed by 30th June 2012, with at least half the activities before the end of March 2012.



Details of individual EoE bids

Norfolk and Suffolk

- Joint application as share ecosystems such as coast, Brecks and Broads, and LEP spans both counties. Led by Norfolk CC and biodiversity forum.
- £31K for 8 activities to increase understanding of LNP concept
- Activities include exploratory session between business and biodiversity forum; targeted work-shops with health sector, communities and marine-based businesses; draft constitution, ToR, vision and action plan and final consultative workshop

Hertfordshire

- Led by county biodiversity forum. Expect to use existing county Environment Forum which is merging with Climate Change Partnership to become Sustainability Forum/ shadow LNP, with biodiversity forum as subgroup.
- See LNP as opportunity at right time, following completion of county GI strategy.
- £13K for officer time and events to engage new sectors by March, then develop vision and priorities by June



Bedfordshire

Resubmitted bid and waiting to hear. Led by GI Consortium. Focus on capacity-building with five sectors:

1. Communities through community planning: 3 neighbourhood planning pilots in Beds and Luton
2. Business through LEP
3. Public health through LSP reps on how environment, economy and public health link together
4. Research and academic
5. Environmental information requirements of LNP for evidence and monitoring

Essex

Resubmitted bid but not hopeful of success as focus on aspirations rather than capacity-building. Included biodiversity offsetting (Essex is one of 6 pilots), building localism into living landscapes etc.

Even if unsuccessful in bidding for money, Wildlife Trust will still apply to be a LNP.

Is also a Thames Estuary bid including southern parts of Essex and north Kent, but not much crossover.



Cambridgeshire

- Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Forum, in partnership with the county biodiversity partnership, had successful bid (£20K) and started work in early November, following receipt of grant offer from Natural England.
- Series of meetings with potential partners underway: local authority Members and senior officers, Local Enterprise Partnership, Public Health officials, land owners and managers, universities, developers, existing regional environmental partnerships, etc. Meetings to explain the aspirations of a LNP and potential synergies and opportunities for integrated working. Stakeholders will come together at an event on 18th May 2012, to discuss the proposal and hopefully gain endorsement to formally establish a LNP for Greater Cambridgeshire (perhaps mirroring the geographical extent of the LEP).



What added value will a LNP bring to Cambridgeshire?

Local context

1. Cambridgeshire has high planned growth rates and high environmental value.
2. Number of existing local, county and regional environmental fora, with potential for stream-lining into a Local Nature Partnership. Plus new LEP and health governance arrangements.
3. Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Forum has a strong track record of partnership working and delivery of GI projects (£22 million of Government supported GI projects from 2004-11 in addition to other partner-delivered GI projects).
4. Recently revised Green Infrastructure Strategy providing sound, upto date evidence base with objectives to:
 - *reverse the decline in biodiversity
 - *mitigate and adapt to climate change
 - *promote sustainable growth and economic development
 - *support healthy living and well-being



What added value will this bring to Cambridgeshire?

Suggestions for added value:

1. Increasing understanding and establishing good working links between existing economic, social and environment partnerships. Aligning effort and co-operation should lead to more efficient use of resources and better outcomes.
2. LNP representing high level support from across a range of partners will provide local leadership, raising awareness about the vital services and benefits which a healthy natural environment brings for people, communities and the local economy.
3. Embed natural value into local decision-making e.g. contributing to local authority plans that affect the environment, as well as local plans.
4. Provide integrated advice to local authorities on the natural environment, based on evidence in the GI strategy.
5. With the LEP and re-organised health services in their formative periods, a LNP backed by the evidence from the GI strategy and elsewhere can provide relevant information and expertise.
6. Provide leadership for engaging local communities in the natural environment



Summary from local authority perspective

LNPs are a new concept from Government to promote integrated working to benefit the natural environment.

Cambs GI Forum and Biodiversity Partnership consider that a Greater Cambridgeshire LNP offers real opportunities to build on their successes and establish new high level leadership, by bringing together a much wider range of partners.

LNP will need to be fit for purpose in these difficult economic times, and be able to achieve real added value.

Defra financial support is only for the capacity-building phase to June 2012. LNPs will be expected to fund their own day to day running costs.

Cambs already has an upto date GI strategy with a vision which encompasses many of the Government's aspirations for what a LNP should be promoting.

Local authorities will be key partners in the proposed Greater Cambridgeshire LNP, with Member level representation on the LNP.



Role of EEEF with individual county LNPS?

As LNPs are seen as strategic partnerships at a county level, how should they engage with regional fora and regional organisations?

Proposed meeting of LNP leads with key representatives from regional fora in late January. Follow up to initial discussion at regional biodiversity forum on 25th November. Natural England have offered to host in Bury St.Edmunds. Opportunity to try and work out future relationships and representation.