

Cumbria Local Nature Partnership



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A summary of the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership

Produced by Graham Jackson-Pitt (CLNP Manager) on behalf of the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Shadow Board

Local Nature Partnerships - Where did they come from?

In June 2011 the Government launched its Natural Environment White Paper outlining its vision for the natural environment over the next 50 years. This paper recognised that partnership working was the best method in realising this vision and delivering effective action, in doing so it set out Government plans to establish Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs).



The Government's vision for LNPs is that they are self-sustaining strategic partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people. They will help their local area to manage the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.

The overall purpose of an LNP will be to:

- Drive positive change in the local natural environment, taking a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities involved and identifying ways to manage it as a system for the benefit of nature, people and the economy;
- Contribute to achieving the Government's national environmental objectives locally, including the identification of local ecological networks, alongside addressing local priorities;
- Become local champions influencing decision-making relating to the natural environment and its value to social and economic outcomes, in particular, through working closely with local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards.

A short history of the CLNP

In 2011 the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership (CLNP) Development Group was formed from the following organisations:

- Cumbria Biodiversity Partnership;
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust;
- Cumbria County Council;
- Lake District National Park Authority.

Together these organisations applied for and secured transitional funding to build the capacity of existing environmental partnerships and if desired establish a Cumbria Local Nature Partnership.

A gap analysis of existing county-wide environmental partnerships was carried out to identify stakeholders for the CLNP. This was followed by a consultation of those stakeholders including a workshop at Newton Rigg College where over 60 delegates began forming the Partnership's vision, function, priorities and structure.



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A response document was issued following that workshop that summarised its findings and formed the basis for a 2nd round of online consultation. This round refined the input from the workshop and gauged levels of support. Over 90% of respondents agreed with the proposed vision for the CLNP and 94% supported the establishment of the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership.



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Using the input from stakeholders during the transition phase an application for LNP status was submitted to DEFRA in June 2012. In July the Government's recognition of the CLNP as a Local Nature Partnership was officially confirmed.



A Vision for Cumbria

"Imagine a Cumbria where consideration for the natural environment forms part the decision making process and where the natural environment is managed to provide a wide range of benefits for nature, people and the economy. Imagine a Cumbria where the natural environment's role within the landscape is understood and it is intrinsically valued by all".

Functions of the CLNP

The CLNP will be a prominent and unified voice for the natural environment in Cumbria and it will foster the development of a strategic natural environment framework for the county.

The CLNP will provide a platform to enable delivery for the natural environment that is inclusive and has increased commitment at the strategic level. This delivery will have greater efficiency, be financially stable and sustainable and produce better working across administrative boundaries.

The functions set for CLNP will be crucial in building that strategic framework, bringing about the desired changes in delivery and realising the CLNP's vision.

The following functions are those proposed for the CLNP:

- Act as a forum for the stakeholders in Cumbria's natural environment;
- Act as an advocate for the natural environment in Cumbria;
- Support and add value to delivery for the natural environment;
- Coordinate delivery for the natural environment;
- Provide input on the natural environment for local policies, plans and networks/frameworks;
- Provide information/data on the natural environment;
- Identify, promote and provide learning and training on the natural environment.



What has the CLNP been up to?

Since receiving official LNP status people have been busy putting in place all the things needed to make a successful Local Nature Partnership. Cumbria Wildlife Trust is hosting the newly established secretariat for the Partnership and a Shadow Board has been formed by organisations across Cumbria to drive forward early initiatives. The following is a sample of the Partnership's early work:

Investing in the Natural Environment

Cumbria's natural environment provides a range of ecosystem services and economic benefits. It underpins the economy especially in tourism and farming, two of the county's most important industries. For example Cumbria attracts over 15 million visitors annually, bringing over £1 billion to the economy and supporting employment of nearly 21,000 jobs.

There is however a need to protect some of these services and the benefits they provide from negative impacts whilst others need to be enhanced or restored. Crucial to achieving this is recognising the environment as a key economic asset. In order to achieve this a change of mind set is required as is increased investment in the natural environment. Rather than instigate another round of evidence gathering or developing another strategy the CLNP is seeking to identify opportunities for investment.

Key to this is establishing a dialogue and relationship with key audiences such as the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Health and Wellbeing Boards, planning departments and specific areas of the private sector. Cumbria Local Nature Partnership is in the early stages of establishing a Green Infrastructure (G.I) Thematic Group that will lead the way in developing a G.I investment strategy for the county. This strategy will identify opportunities for investment in the natural environment that will deliver multiple benefits for the economy and social/health agendas.

Cumbria Connections

Cumbria Local Nature Partnership is working closely with the Cumbria Farmers Network (CFN) and Natural England to develop a project in the Ullswater and Bassenthwaite catchments of the Lake District National Park that secures and improves the long term profitability of farm businesses.

The project is led by farmers and has been developed through consultation with the local farming community. A key component of the project is working with farmers to help them view and manage the natural environment as a positive business asset.

The Partnership is helping CFN develop a range of activities for the project by providing biodiversity data/evidence including opportunity mapping and acting and by acting as link with the natural environment/conservation sector.

Meadow Life

Earlier this year CLNP secured nearly £500,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust to conserve and champion the county's flower-rich hay meadows. Despite changes in agriculture many of these meadows have been managed by families for generations, most however have been lost.

The Meadow Life project has been set up to work in partnership with farmers and other land managers to deliver a programme of hay meadow restoration. It is also training and supporting volunteers to survey meadow sites, working with HMP Haverigg to create a wild flower nursery and running restoration work parties with local volunteers and communities. It is hoping to increase the appreciation, enjoyment and understanding of hay meadows through events practical training and educational workshops.

These meadows are an evocative part of Cumbria's iconic landscape and farming heritage. The Meadow Life project seeks to halt their decline ensuring they continue into the future for both people and wildlife.

Cumbria Peat Partnership

Strategic partnerships are being formed in both the Pennine (Northern Upland Chain LNP is leading body) and Lakeland areas (CLNP is leading body) of Cumbria to coordinate peat restoration activity. These Partnerships are also seeking to secure additional funding for such work, identify best practice, demonstrate and disseminate the benefits of their work. These benefits include restoration of habitat, improved management of water quantity, quality and gathering alongside landscape enhancements. These Partnerships are also well placed to participate in carbon capture and brokering schemes and will involve working with others such as the Lake District National Park and their Carbon Landscapes initiative.

Structure of the CLNP

The CLNP is a independent strategic partnership that does not sit within an existing organisation. It is a new partnership that instead acts as an umbrella to existing partnerships and initiatives. It has strategic functions that are county wide but that deliver/impact at the landscape scale.

The structure of the CLNP is composed of three areas. These are the CLNP Board, Thematic and Task Groups and a wider CLNP Network:

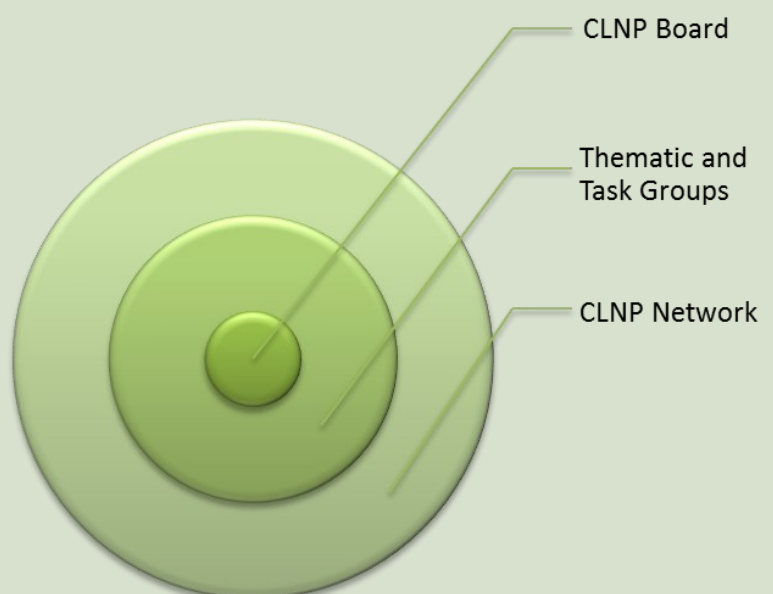
CLNP Board - CLNP Board consists of a maximum of nine members. Representation on the Board is split between organisational representatives and wider members. The role of the Board is to set and review the strategic direction of the Partnership's work ensuring continuity and momentum with respect to the core functions of the CLNP. They will provide a high level steer and own the decisions regarding strategy, policy, objectives and expenditure.

Through their role, Board Members will ensure:

- Delivery for the natural environment that is linked to the economic and social/health agendas;
- Increases in the quantity and quality of delivery for the natural environment;
- Strategic working that identifies and addresses the priorities for the natural environment;
- Greater collaborative and partnership working between natural environment stakeholders and with others;
- Better understanding of and consideration for the natural environment both locally and nationally;
- People are connected with the natural environment;
- A high profile and maximum visibility for the CLNP and the natural environment.

Thematic and Task Groups - Thematic Groups are long term groups based around particular on-going themes or issues (e.g. Green Infrastructure). The CLNP utilises the knowledge and expertise of these groups to inform decision making. Shorter term Task Groups are set up to cover specific tasks, initiatives or project development.

The value of both these groups is reviewed regularly to ensure they contribute to the strategic direction of the CLNP. The membership of both types of group is drawn from all sectors of the CLNP network according to the needs of the groups and the interests of the individual organisations.



CLNP Network - The wider network of the CLNP is open to all interested parties. The CLNP Board, Thematic and Task Groups are drawn from it. This wider membership will be brought together at least once a year at an annual conference. The wider membership will have a key role in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the CLNP. For a full list of Network members please see the CLNP Terms of Reference.

Working with others

The boundary of the CLNP is that of the county of Cumbria. This boundary is shared by many relevant stakeholder partnerships, groups and organisations including Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Board and Cumbria County Council all of whom will be key partners in delivering a successful LNP.

The CLNP has an integrated approach across all sectors with full stakeholder ownership. This will be especially beneficial in bringing together at a local level a diverse range of individuals, businesses and organisations together.

Two other LNPs (Morecambe Bay LNP and the Northern Upland Chain LNP) overlap the CLNP boundary. During the development of the CLNP a working relationship was established with these LNPs based upon differing functions and developing approaches to collaborative working.

Across the north west there are eight LNPs. These partnerships regularly meet together and with others such as the DEFRA family. Together they are working to ensure LNPs are well informed, with the necessary tools, to be influential in the planning process and examining how they can be influential in convincing LEPs and others to include natural environment priorities in their plans. Finally they are looking at the value of the LNP “brand” ensuring its contribution is fully understood by partners and stakeholders.

LNPs are working with DEFRA to ensure the natural environment is represented at the national level not just with DEFRA policy teams but also on cross sector initiatives such as the development of the National Growth Board. DEFRA also produces national guidance for LNPs on topics such as the establishment of locally designated Nature Improvement Areas.



Next Steps

Over the next few months the CLNP's structure will be finalised. Recruitment for the Partnership's full Board will begin and the Chair of that Board will be announced. On top of continuing work already started the table below outlines some other priorities going forward:

CLNP Function	Task
Act as a forum for the stakeholders in Cumbria's natural environment .	Hold the inaugural meeting of the CLNP, further develop the key themes and vision of the Partnership. Develop a web presence and the branding for the Partnership.
Support and add value to delivery for the natural environment.	Working in partnership with Buglife and the North West's Local Data Centres implement the Coast to Coast Bee-Roads project.
Act as an advocate for the natural environment in Cumbria.	Continue to work with other LNPs on collaborative projects and represent Cumbria's natural environment both regionally and nationally.
Coordinate delivery for the natural environment.	Continue to build relationships with other strategic bodies in the county including those from other sectors. Through these relationships influence decision making, support and add value to delivery and generate new sources of funding.
Provide information/data on the natural environment.	Work with Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre to further develop the county's natural environment data and share this with others.

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