

Wiltshire & Swindon Local Nature Partnership (WSLNP)Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 19th September 2012 – 9.30am – 12pm
Poulton Grange, Marlborough

1. Present:

Bill Dowling (BD) – Military Civilian Integration Officer, 43 Wessex Brigade
Fleur de Rhe-Philipe (FdRP) – Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning
 Wiltshire Council (WC) [Representing the Swindon & Wiltshire LEP]
Frances Chinemana (FC) – Consultant in Public Health, Wiltshire NHS-[Representing Maggie Rae]
Gary Mantle (GM) – Director, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT)
Gerry Hamersley (GH) – Area Manager for Wiltshire, Gloucestershire & Oxfordshire, Natural England
Hayley Bamborough (HyB) – Voice & Influence Team, Wiltshire Council [Supporting WAY representative]
Hugo Brooke (HB) – Trustee, Butterfly Conservation
James Sheppard (JS) – Deputy Chair, Wiltshire National Farmers Union (NFU)
Philippa Read (PR) – Chief Executive, Community First
Roderick Bluh (RB) – Leader of Swindon Borough Council
Sabrina Morice-Broom (SMB) – Youth Representative for Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY)
Toby Sturgis (TS) – Cabinet Member for Waste, Property, Environment and Development Control
 Services, Wiltshire Council
Zoe Pittaway (ZP) – WSLNP Coordinator

Abbreviations used within this document:		
LNP	Local Nature Partnership	
WSLNP	Wiltshire & Swindon Local Nature Partnership	
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper	
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership	
H&WB	Health and Wellbeing Board	
ToR	Terms of Reference	
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy	
NIA	Nature Improvement Area	
JSA	Joint Strategic Assessment	
LEDE	Local Economic Development and Environment Project	
Minutes:		Action
1. Welcome and Apologies		
GM welcomed the Board to the first WSLNP meeting; individual introductions were made by each Board member. Apologies had been received from Steve Waygood, (Head of Environment & Chemistry, RWE N Power) and Maggie Rae (Director of Public Health & Public Protection); Frances Chinemana was attending on her behalf.		
2. Appointment of a Chairman/Vice Chairman		
GM discussed the requirement for Board members to nominate a Chair/Vice Chair for the Board. All Board members agreed that the Chair would be appointed for a 3 Year term. TS nominated GM to Chair the LNP Board, this proposal was backed by the Board and GM accepted the role. JS was nominated by several Board members to act as Vice Chairman and accepted the role.		

3. Introductory remarks	
<p>GM thanked ZP for producing the supporting documentation for the first Board meeting.</p> <p>3.1 GM invited Board members to suggest any amendments to the <i>LNP/1/12/1</i> Briefing Paper. TS expressed his concerns with the ambitious list of targets that the WSLNP has adopted to achieve in the first year, suggesting the dates for completion should be reviewed, RdRP agreed with the concerns that TS had raised. BD suggested that aspirations for the LNP may be more appropriate than targets due to the uncertainty regarding funding and budgets at present. GM suggested that it was good for the LNP to set targets as this will ensure the WSLNP remained focussed on achieving outcomes and may also help with securing funding to deliver specific targets. GM suggested that the Board adopt a draft action plan to inform the Strategic Plan, and both documents should be discussed at the first annual forum with the wider partnership.</p> <p>GM provided a brief summary of the other issues addressed in the Paper and invited GH to summarise the development of LNPs nationally and update the Board regarding Defra's expectations for LNPs:</p> <p>GH explained that the LNPs were first introduced in the NEWP in 2011. Defra expect LNPs to reach out to new sectors and form more integrated relations with the environment. The ambition was for LNPs to have complete coverage of the England, this has nearly been achieved with the seven remaining LNPs due to be officially recognised shortly. Defra still expect the LNPs to be self-sustaining, breaking away from reliance on public sector funding will be one of the biggest challenges for LNPs in the initial stages of establishing.</p> <p>GH suggested that the LNPs need to provide a clear message at the first LNP event in Westminster on 5th October. ZP will attend this event on behalf of the WSLNP and agreed to raise this issue and lobby for Defra to provide core funding for the LNPs. FdRP mentioned that the LEPs have successfully lobbied the Government for core funding.</p> <p>3.2 GM expressed the Board's sincere thanks to the LNP Steering Group for their hard work over the last 8 months. ZP will officially thank the Steering Group on behalf of the Board.</p> <p>GM suggested that the Steering Group remained in place to support the Board during the initial start-up period, and proposed that the Steering Group becomes a 'Governance & Working Arrangements' Working Group focussed on reviewing and developing the Business Plan. This was agreed with the suggestion that the group is reviewed after 6 months/1 year period to assess the necessity and avoid over committing members of this new Working Group to an unachievable workload. This Working Group will next meet on 17th October 2012.</p>	<p>ZP</p> <p>ZP</p> <p>ZP</p>
4. Legal and Governance Arrangements for the LNP	
<p>4.1 The proposed WSLNP governance structure was presented to the Board; there was general support for the structure. GM reminded the Board that the WSLNP has a much broader remit than just the Board's duties and it will be important to ensure that messages and actions reached all levels, including the communities. TS and</p>	

<p>PR agree that the success of the WSLNP will be attributed to its success at engaging with people at community level and facilitating positive change for the environment.</p> <p>4.2 GM invited the Board to discuss the current representation of the WSLNP Board and enquired if certain sectors such as tourism and water resource management may need to be more comprehensively represented. FdRP observed that the current Board was comprehensive and it may become harder to stay focussed on achieving specific outcomes with a larger Board. FdRP reminded the Board that many of the current Board members represented more than one sector/organisation, for example: FdRP also represents the AONBs, Canal Trusts and Tourism Board. The Board agreed with the suggestion for maintaining the current LNP Board membership.</p> <p>TS suggested that the ToR for the Board should be amended to identify the sectors/organisations represented on the Board opposed to the names of the Board members. This would provide some flexibility for Board members who have positions that may be changed/re-elected in the future.</p> <p>PR suggested that expertise could be brought in via the working groups as required to inform the Board on specific matters. GM agreed that the Board members were not required to have detailed knowledge on every subject.</p> <p>JS was happy that the current membership of the Board was not too dominated by one sector or organisation, emphasising that it would be important to maintain a balanced view in light of many issues.</p> <p>It was agreed that the ToR be amended to clarify that Board members can nominate a deputy to represent them at Board meetings if they are unable to attend, with careful consideration given to who is being elected to stand in.</p> <p>4.3 GM suggested that the ToR's are amended in light of this meeting and constituted within one file to avoid duplication; this proposal was supported by the Board. GM invited Board members to discuss if the LNP required a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Partnership Agreement.</p> <p>It was suggested that the LNP should mirror the arrangements of the LEP; FdRP will contact the LEP secretariat to find out how the LEP is constituted and update ZP.</p> <p>GH informed the Board that Defra have no definite views on formal arrangements; they are expecting the LNPs to organise their own constitutions. Defra will be more interested in assessing the strength of the partnership and effectiveness to achieve their set objectives.</p> <p>TS commented that the danger of tying down the partnership too tightly under constitutional arrangements may lead to problems with allowing the WSLNP to transform as required over the initial period. It was generally agreed that the WSLNP should not produce a lengthy formal Partnership Agreement, and favour a succinct MoU that provides clear guidance as to working arrangements and duties. Thought needs to be given to appoint an accountable body for the WSLNP in preparation for management of funds for the WSLNP. It was suggested that interim arrangements should be made to ensure the ToR are reviewed and are fit for purpose as the WSLNP develops.</p> <p>GM requested that any comments should be sent directly to ZP and the new 'Governance & Working Arrangements Working Group' will review all of the documentation.</p>	<p>FdRP</p> <p>ZP</p>
--	-------------------------------------

5. Role and Work of the LNP	
<p>5.1 GM invited comments from the Board members as to their individual aspirations for the WSLNP. A number of common themes and issues emerged as to what the WSLNP should be aiming to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a more joined up and coordinated approach to environmental issues across the county, especially with regards to the planning and development sector. - Facilitate better partnership working, to achieve any progress everybody needs to be in agreement regarding the key environmental issues that need addressing. - Aim to marry the environment with the economics; the environment has to support farmers, tourism industry, LNPs needs to strive to find correct balance between the environment and the economics. - Address the balance between people and the environment. Landscapes are shaped by people therefore future actions need to be joined up with local communities. - Strive to achieve a better quality of life for local people. - Engage with the new H&WB Boards, the environment is a community and health issue. - Duty to get the message through to the general public; the LNP needs to address the gap in communications across the different sectors and groups. - Support children and young people, promoting the LNPs vision and help to make Wiltshire a place that young people want to live, need to get a sense of community back. - Create a better place to live for the people of Wiltshire, the LNP needs to help utilise land better especially as more Military land is released. - Acknowledge the good work that farmers have achieved and recognise that there is still a lot to do. Recognising that farms are also businesses, the WSLNP needs to consider these pressures and factor in other influences such as the tourism industry when strategically planning on a landscape scale. - Important for the LNP to instigate actions, not just words, think about local priorities, such as high phosphate levels in our watercourses and work out what and how we are going to tackle these local issues? - Campaign, educate, inform, and help to secure funding/grants. - Become a pressure group, influencing Defra, national and local decision makers to consider the environment and work to integrate the environment better in the future. - Seek a balance between responding to arising challenges and also enabling the LNP to be solution orientated and plan strategically for the future. - Adopt an opportunistic approach, bid for available money, identifying financial opportunities and respond accordingly. - Unite sectors, as more progress will be made by joining up campaigns and challenges. - Lead by best practice, promote how we can all work together better and achieve benefits for nature, local economy and local people. - Support and encourage local Government to consider how local money is going to be managed, address the weakness of previous fragmented schemes and support more integrated thinking and delivery. <p>5.2 The Board considered the development of a Strategic Plan and referenced the draft objectives in paper <i>LNP/1/12/2</i>. It was agreed that a good start had been made but that we should seek to clarify and simplify the terms and language used. It was suggested that the WSLNP should adopt a few concise higher level aims;</p>	

<p>these should then be supported by more detailed objectives. The aims should identify what the LNP is going to do; the objectives should identify how the LNP is going to achieve these aims. The Strategic Plan needs to outline in more detail how we are going to deliver the overall aims and objectives.</p> <p>It was suggested the WSLNP should prioritise actions over the next 5 years and agreed to give Education more focus in the main objectives</p> <p>ZP agreed to amend the aims and objective for review at the second Board Meeting.</p> <p>5.3 ZP provided a short introduction with regards to the recommendations for LNP working groups on Biodiversity, Community Engagement and Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Working Groups should focus on facilitating action and provide clarity and focus for the LNP to deliver its objectives; they do not want to duplicate existing work. Emphasising that the environment is a good hook for many other sectors, most people relate to environmental issues.</p> <p>It was suggested that each working group could be focussed on delivery or advisory support for the LNP; in some cases the role of the working group may be to provide the evidence base that is needed to help inform the LNP Board to steer decision making/ implement a campaign, etc.</p> <p>The Board discussed the necessity for the proposed Working Groups and agreed to support the formation of all three proposed groups. However the 'Community Engagement' Working Group will be renamed as the 'Education and Involvement' Working Group and will focus on addressing any gaps with on-going community work. It will also help the Board to consider what is missing and provide guidance to improve community partnership working and support for communities engaging with local environmental planning and projects.</p>	<p>ZP</p>
<p>GM invited Board members to lead on the three proposed working groups: HB offered to lead on the Biodiversity Working Group (<i>LNP/1/12/7</i>)</p> <p>PR, RB, SMB, BD and FC offered to support the Education and Involvement Working Group (<i>LNP/1/12/8</i>)</p> <p>TS offered to lead on the Green Infrastructure Working Group (<i>LNP/1/12/6</i>)</p>	<p>HB</p> <p>PR,RB,SMB, BD, FC</p> <p>TS</p>
<p>ZP will coordinate the establishment of all three working groups over the coming weeks. ToR for the Working Groups will need to be formalised in preparation for work to commence.</p> <p>5.4 GM explained that the Wiltshire Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) is due to be published in December 2012 and will include an Environment Chapter. GM explained that the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance (WEA) has recently ceased to exist. The Board agreed to be the responsible lead for the Environment Chapter of the JSA and approved the text for inclusion in the consultation draft of the next JSA. RB commented that Swindon Borough Council are moving towards a similar structure and reporting system.</p>	<p>ZP</p> <p>ZP</p>
<p>5.5 GM updated the Group that the LEP are preparing to submit a LEDE application to Defra by 21st September 2012. The LEP are applying for funding to develop a research toolkit that will enable the LEP and economic development departments to strategically build relationships between the local economy and the environment. The Board agreed to support the application; GM, RB, FdRP, SW and GH have all been named as potential members of the LEDE consortium who will support the research toolkit if successful.</p>	<p>ZP</p>

6. LNP Business Plan	
<p>6.1 GM thanked Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council for providing funding to continue supporting the position of the WSLNP coordinator until March 2013. The Board agreed that the Funding Requirements for the WSLNP would need reviewing in more detail and the Board should aim to secure funding for the next three years.</p> <p>6.2 GM suggested that the Board consider the funding requirements in more detail at the next meeting and requested Board members to consider if they had the capacity to lead on helping to develop a Funding Strategy for the WSLNP.</p> <p>6.3 TS confirmed that the Wiltshire Council Cabinet have supported the WSLNP and expected that contributions from Wiltshire Council would carry on. RB also expected that Swindon Borough Council would continue to support the WSLNP. At present funding contributions from the Local Authorities support the WSLNP coordinator; GM reminded the Group that funding would be required imminently to finance the Communications Strategy. GH requested that ZP provide a schedule of costs for the proposed WSLNP events to guide future discussions on funding availability.</p> <p>6.4 GM suggested the formation of a Small Grants Fund and explained that contributions may become available from a local waste management company. The Board agreed to support the formation of the fund, GM will pursue the establishment of the Fund.</p> <p>6.5 GM noted that HB had offered to assist with the formation of the WSLNP Communications Strategy. HB and ZP to coordinate the initial press releases and launch of the WSLNP to present a more detailed Communications Strategy to the Board at the next meeting.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>ZP, GH</p> <p>GM</p> <p>HB, ZP</p>
7. Brief Updates	
Due to a lack of time, these items were postponed until the second meeting.	
8. Any other Business	
No comments were offered.	
9. Date of next and future meetings	
The next WSLNP Board meeting was arranged for Friday 16 th November 2012. ZP to confirm the agenda and venue in due course.	ZP
ZP agreed to set up a doodle calendar to arrange the WSLNP Board meetings on a bi-monthly schedule.	ZP