

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP

Information sheet for Community Area Boards

A Steering Group formed in January 2012 with representation from Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the AONBs to guide the development of a Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Wiltshire & Swindon. As of July 2012 the Wiltshire & Swindon LNP has been officially recognised as a LNP by Government.

This information sheet provides a brief update on the progress that has been made and invites contributions from interested parties in relation to the strategic direction and future work of the LNP.

What is a Local Nature Partnership?

- LNPs have been introduced by **Government** as a new mechanism for people and organisations to **work together** to **protect and restore our local environment** more effectively.
- LNPs will drive **positive change** for the **environment** in the **local area**, taking a **strategic approach** to manage the environment for the benefit of **nature, people and the economy**.
- Importantly LNPs will encourage a **wide range** of **partners** to **work together** from many different sectors, helping to **secure new funding** to **support joint projects** and initiatives.

Why is the LNP important?

The environment is often undervalued in today's economy, without a healthy environment we would not be able to function in our customary manner. The 'State of the Environment Report 2012 for Wiltshire and Swindon' presents worrying evidence of the decline in our local environment over recent decades and the unsustainable impact of our lifestyles. Here are just a few reasons why we need to act:

- There are many essential **ecosystem services** we all rely on such as: clean air and water, pollination services, flood protection and raw materials that regulate and maintain our planet. We need to understand the impact of human activity on these **ecosystem services** to ensure we not exploit them irreversibly.
- There is growing recognition that the environment is essential to our economy and social well-being, attractive environments encourage business investment and tourism.
- A healthy environment provides the underlying basis for healthier lifestyles; the local environment provides neighbourhoods with character and their own identity.

How will the Wiltshire & Swindon Local Nature Partnership function?

The aim of the LNP is to ensure that it adds value to on-going work and creates opportunities for better partnership working in the future. A new governance arrangement has been developed and the following structure has been proposed:

LNP wider partnership:

The **wider partnership** will comprise of a diversity of organisations, charities, businesses and individuals with an interest in securing a healthy local environment in Wiltshire & Swindon. An **annual forum** will be organised, providing the opportunity for partners to come together and discuss the priorities and actions of the LNP and wider environment. A **LNP website** will also be launched and provide a means for people to be updated on the progress of the LNP.

LNP Working Groups:

Working Groups will be formed to assist with delivery of new projects and initiatives, the LNP will be keen to promote and support new working relationships especially between partners across the business, tourism, public health, community and environment sectors.

LNP Coordinator

An **LNP Coordinator** will be in place as a main point of contact and also to support the working groups and organise the annual forum. They will also be responsible for maintaining the website and assisting with securing funds for joint projects.

LNP Board

An **LNP Board** has been recruited and will provide a strong **strategic steer** for the LNP with **senior leaders** supporting the Board from a **range of sectors**. The Board will develop a long term Strategic Plan for the wider environment and seek new funding opportunities to support the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan.

Importantly the **LNP Board** will provide the opportunity for a diverse group of stakeholders to contribute towards **local decision making** relating to the natural environment, working closely with the local authorities, **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEPs)** and the newly forming **Health & Wellbeing Boards**.

HOW can Community Area Boards get involved?

We are at a very early stage of developing the partnership and there are many important environmental issues that the LNP needs to address. The LNP is being created to improve partnership working and would welcome the views and comments from local communities.

It is vital that community and voluntary groups are aware of the developing LNP and understand this new mechanism that will provide contacts, information, advice and support to help communities develop ideas/projects that support the local environment. We have outlined 6 key questions below that are based on the main objectives of the LNPs- please contact us with any comments as we welcome your feedback:

- **How should the LNP Partnership engage with groups/organisations outside of the environment sector?** *Such as local communities?*
- **How could the LNP support local communities more effectively?** *Providing support to develop sustainable neighbourhood plans, supporting local Green infrastructure developments?*
- **How should the LNP ensure that economic growth also supports the environment?** *Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and local businesses to make them more aware of their impact on the environment, encouraging joint ventures?*
- **How should the LNP ensure future developments are environmentally sustainable?** *The LNP Board will give the environment a strategic voice, working closely with local authorities aiming to ensure developments incorporate environmentally sound outcomes*
- **How will the LNP encourage healthier living and promote high levels of well-being?** *E.g: The LNP will work with the health sector to raise awareness of the health benefits of actively engaging with the environment*
- **What evidence will the LNP rely on to make key decisions about the environment?** *How do we ensure the decisions we are taking on based on reliable and representative data for the local environment?*

If you would like to be kept updated on the progress of the LNP or if you have any questions/ideas for partnership working please contact:

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