

Terms of Reference for Dorset Local Nature Partnership Board



1. Purpose of the Local Nature Partnership

- 1.1 The Dorset Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is a voluntary partnership established at the invitation of the Government to act ‘as a strategic body to help the local area manage the natural environment so that its value is embedded in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy’ across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and Dorset.

2. Status of the Local Nature Partnership

- 2.1 The Dorset LNP has been established initially as an independent voluntary partnership, without formal legal status. It will conduct its activities in the interests of the area it serves and secure its long-term objectives without giving undue favour to any organisation or board member. Where a legal status is required to enter into contracts, the Partnership will act through one of its partners as accountable body.

3. Purpose of the LNP Board

- 3.1 The purpose of the LNP Board will be:

- To lead the LNP in **delivering positive outcomes** for Dorset’s natural environment.
- To **champion** Dorset’s natural environment and the benefits it offers.
- To **raise awareness** of, and communicate, the value of Dorset’s environment.
- To give **direction and leadership** to the LNP, informed by the wider LNP membership.
- To develop **strategic and tactical plans** for the LNP to guide the work of the partners.
- To **create a climate** in which partners in the LNP can better achieve their objectives.
- To define the terms of the LNP’s engagement in wider **policy and decision-making**.
- To develop and keep under review an **effective, efficient structure** for the LNP.
- To ensure the **good governance** of the LNP.
- To **secure resources** as necessary for the effective and efficient operation of the LNP.
- To ensure **effective collaboration** with other strategic partnerships to achieve sustainable development in Dorset and beyond.

4. Membership of the Board

- 4.1 The Board will consist of up to 18 board members:

- Nine independent members selected on merit by open recruitment.
- Two elected members (1 per council) appointed by local authorities of Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council and Dorset Council (each being the relevant Portfolio Holder).
- One Board member on behalf of the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (to be nominated by the LEP Board in discussion with the LNP Chair).
- One Board member on behalf of Dorset’s two Health and Well-being Boards (to be nominated by the Boards in discussion with the LNP Chair).



- One youth representative appointed from an appropriate group (to be nominated by the relevant group in discussion with the LNP Chair).
- Up to four co-opted members – see 6.7.

5. Observer status at Board meetings

5.1 The Board may invite appropriate officer support to attend meetings in the capacity of observers. These invitations may vary from meeting to meeting, but with an aim of continuity. There will be a standing invitation to the following to attend:

- A senior representative of at least one of the Defra family of agencies (Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Marine Management Organisation)
- Senior officer support to the local authority elected members on the board
- Offer support to the youth representative
- Members of the officer working group or successor body

5.2 Other observers may attend, and may be invited to comment, in a non-voting capacity at the invitation of the board or board members via the chair.

6. Role of board members

6.1 Board members will pursue the purposes of the board as set out in 3.1 and serve in a personal capacity (with the exception of local authority members and those appointed by other strategic partnerships):

- The role of **9 members appointed via open recruitment** is to represent the views and interests of voluntary, community and private organisations with an interest in the natural environment, whilst always ensuring that decisions are taken in the best interests of Dorset's environment as a whole.
- The role of **local authority** members is to represent their constituents, whilst acting in the interests of Dorset's environment as a whole.
- The role of **members appointed by other strategic partnerships** is to represent the views and interests of those partnerships to ensure the development of shared aims and joint working in as far as possible between those partnerships and the LNP.
- The role of the youth representative is to bring views from a younger person's perspective to bring some balance to the age demographics of the board.

6.2 All Board members will be expected to act in accordance with the seven principles of public life, as set out in the Localism Act 2011 section 28: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

6.3 As a voluntary partnership most decisions will be by consensus. Where voting is required the following process applies:

- Only Board members present at a meeting may vote, including independent, ex officio, local authority, youth and co-opted members.
- Voting is by a show of hands in open forum.
- Proxy voting will only be allowed through agreement with the chair.
- The Chair has a second casting vote if voting is tied.



- 6.4 A **Chair** and up to two **Vice-Chairs** will be elected by the board from all board members. Both positions will be subject to annual renewal.
- 6.5 **Alternate or substitute members:** in order to maintain consistency and focus alternate members will only be allowed with the prior agreement of the chair.
- 6.6 **Period of office:** the period of office for board member shall be as set out below.

Member category	Term of office	Replacement if vacancy arises
Independent members appointed via open recruitment	Initially up to 3 years, renewable for one further 3-year term and then subject to open recruitment process	Open recruitment through an application and interview process
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset & Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the term of office as Portfolio Holder (or equivalent) covering environmental issues 2. As determined by the council 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By succeeding Portfolio Holder (or equivalent) 2. By appointment from the council
LEP and Health and Well-being Boards	Initial 3 years, renewable for a further two terms subject to re-nomination by the appropriate Board	Nomination by the appropriate Board
Youth representative	Initially 1-3 years renewable for two further 1 year terms subject to re-nomination by the appropriate group	Nominated by appropriate group e.g. Youth Parliament

- 6.7 **Additional members:** the board may co-opt up to **four** additional people to serve as members, if there is a clear requirement for additional expertise and experience for the successful delivery of the LNP's objectives. Board members will approve the appointment of co-opted board members. Co-opted members may serve for a **three**-year term before reapproval by the board.
- 6.8 **Attendance:** Board members (or approved deputies) are expected to attend not less than 50% of board meetings (assuming 4 meetings p.a.) over a 12 month period. If this attendance rate is not achieved by any member, the board through the Chair is entitled to review their membership and ask for an explanation before taking further action. A 75% majority is required to rescind the membership of any individual.
- 6.9 **Resignation and removal of members:** members (excluding local authority members) may resign giving one month's notice by writing to the Chair. ***The Chair has explicit authority to hold Board members to account for their performance of their duties.***
- 6.10 The board acting with a 75% majority of all members may require a member to resign if, in the view of the board:
- The member has failed to attend sufficient meetings or to contribute to the activities of the Partnership.
 - The member has not acted in the interests of the Dorset LNP.



- The member has failed to declare and/or resolve or otherwise deal with conflicts of interest.
- The member has failed to act in a collaborative manner with other board members at meetings or in other settings and is obstructing the furtherance of the work of the Partnership.
- The member is involved in activities which could bring the Dorset LNP into disrepute.

7. Board Member Recruitment

7.1 Dorset LNP recognises that diversity in the widest sense is essential, the more diverse our board is, the better able we are to respond to and reflect our audience in all their diversity. The term 'diversity' includes the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 but goes beyond that to include social, economic and educational backgrounds as different life experiences bring different perspectives, attitudes and skills.

7.2 An open recruitment process will be held for the independent board members. This will include submission of an application (CV and covering letter outlining reasons for applying). A group of existing board members will shortlist applicants for interview and form the interview panel.

7.3 As noted in 6.1, Independent board members will serve in a personal capacity. Nevertheless, it is recognised that some come from organisations that wish to support the work of the LNP. Individuals, or organisations, that show a significant commitment to the purposes of the LNP are particularly encouraged to put forward suitable candidates for recruitment onto the board when space is available.

Adopted by Dorset LNP Board June 2024

