



A vision and strategy for enhancing 'natural value' in Dorset

Adopted March 2014

(Board Member List and Actions Updated October 2017)



1. FOREWORD TO THE VISION AND STRATEGY

As part of delivering the Government's ambition of being 'the greenest ever', Defra published a Natural Environment White Paper, *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature*, in 2011. The White Paper concluded that communities and the economy cannot survive or flourish without healthy natural systems to support them. It set out how nature provides valuable services directly and indirectly and pointed to economic opportunities arising from greener goods, services and greater resource-efficiency.

Among a range of proposals to restore 'natural value', Government proposed the establishment of a national network of Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) to develop a vision for the local environment, champion its interests and better integrate environmental objectives with social and economic goals, working closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Health and Wellbeing Boards in the process.

The Dorset LNP was officially recognised by government in 2012. It brings together a wide range of partners in public, private and voluntary sectors across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. The LNP exists to maximise the benefits to be gained from protecting and enhancing the unique natural assets of the area for people, wildlife and businesses. A Board was recruited in 2013 to provide strategic direction for the LNP. The Board felt that an important first step was to develop a clear LNP vision and strategy which is widely shared by a range of stakeholders.

This document has therefore been developed, informed by the views expressed by stakeholders at a conference in October 2012 at which the new body was launched. Our draft strategy was issued for wide consultation in July 2013, and this final version reflects the Board's discussions on over 200 comments received in response from stakeholders. It is clear there is much goodwill behind the principles set out in this strategy, and we look forward to working with partners to put these principles into practice.



Dr Simon Cripps

Chairman of the LNP Board on behalf of Board Members:



Dorset Local Nature Partnership Board Members (October 2017)

Will Bond (Vice Chairman - Independent member and member of the CLA National Environment Committee, owner of the Holme Estate and Alaska Environmental Contracting Ltd)

Paul Buckley (Independent member and RSPB South West Conservation Manager)

Angela Cott (Independent member and General Manager of Brownsea Island, National Trust)

Dr Simon Cripps (Chairman - Independent member and Chief Executive of Dorset Wildlife Trust)

Dr Bob Huggins MBE (Independent member and Chair of the Dorset Coast Forum)

Dr David Haines (Representative of the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board and General Practitioner)

Jenny Myers (Independent member and Business Advisor Kingston Maurward College)

Angela Pooley (Independent member, Co-ordinator, East Dorset Friends of the Earth, Trustee of Bournemouth 2026 Trust and Chair of SUSTAIN)

Cllr John Rampton (Cabinet Member, Borough of Poole)

Cllr David Smith (Cabinet Member, Bournemouth Borough Council)

Cllr Daryl Turner (Cabinet Member, Dorset County Council)

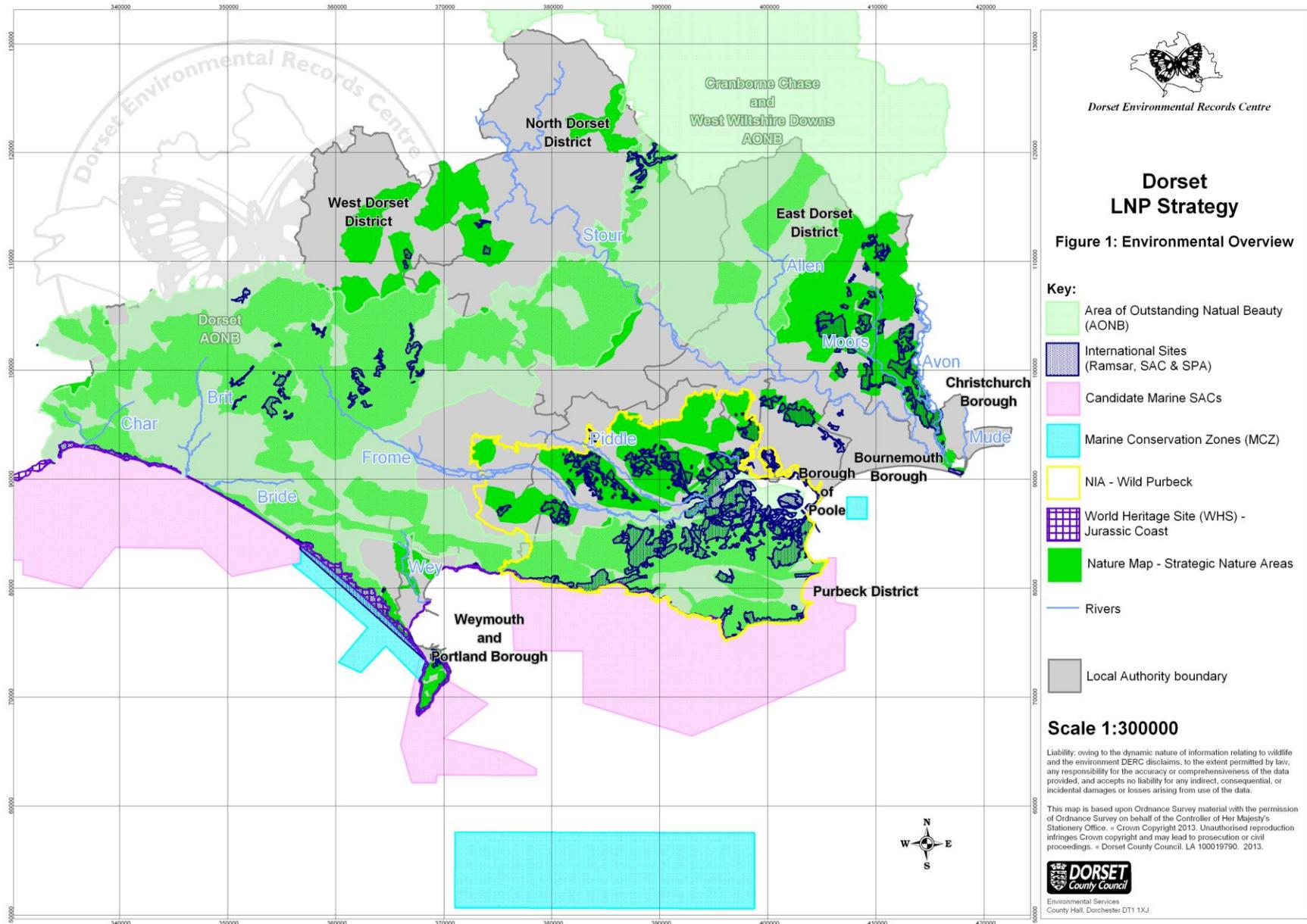
Alison Moore (Representative of the LEP Board)

Jim White MBE (Independent member, Chair of the Dorset AONB Partnership and senior ecological consultant with Footprint Ecology Ltd)

Simon Williams MBE (Independent member and planning consultant)



DORSET LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP
 Vision and Strategy for enhancing Natural Value in Dorset



2. DEFINING 'NATURE'

'Nature' is where we live: the places, spaces and resources we all rely on to live our daily lives. 'Nature' in the context of the Local Nature Partnerships is about more than wildlife. Rather it refers to the wider environment embracing the entirety of inter-dependent species, habitats, landscapes and underlying geology and natural systems and the 'ecosystem services' (see figure 1) that we tend to take for granted but which provide the very essentials for life and many additional benefits. The Dorset LNP is concerned about the rural, urban and marine environment of the area, and will seek to find solutions to Dorset's environmental challenges wherever they occur. This holistic approach will ensure that we are best able in Dorset to achieve the ambitions set out in the Natural Environment White Paper¹, Biodiversity 2020² and *Making Space for Nature*³.

Humans as a species are part of nature, not separate from it, and the LNP's strategy addresses the reality that virtually all of our landscapes, biodiversity and other 'natural' resources have been shaped by human influences. Many of our most cherished and iconic 'natural' features, like chalk downland, heathland and even ancient woodland, though not strictly man-made, have been strongly influenced by the activities of humans. These cultural landscapes are the result of Nature's response to millennia of human activity and exploitation. Their rich heritage of ancient monuments and archaeological artefacts are as much a part of the 'natural' scene as the wildlife they support. On a more day-to-day level, our gardens, parks, road verges, churchyards and hedgerows and in many cases even our buildings play their part in supporting nature and in doing so, enriching human life.

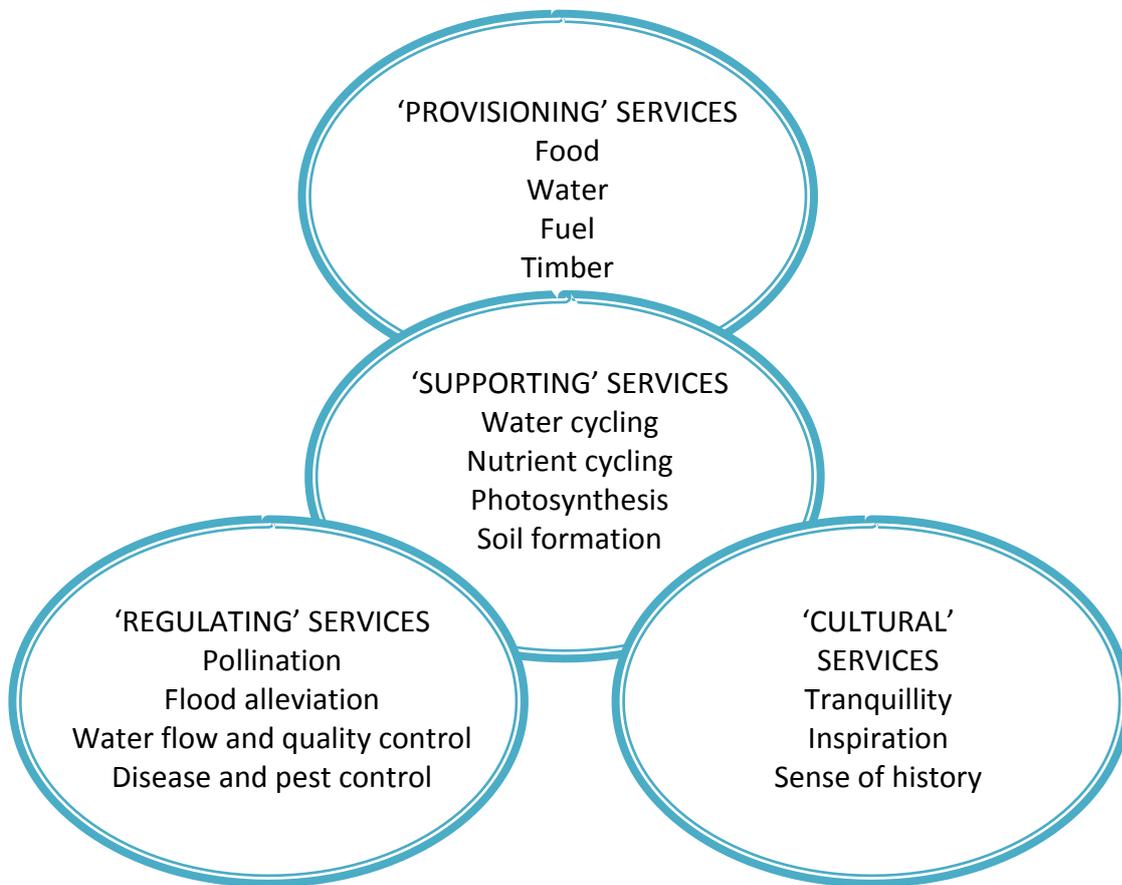
So, for LNPs, 'nature' is not something apart from 'society' or 'the economy' – rather it is the vital context within which all social and economic activity has to take place. As such, references in the draft strategy to 'the environment' or 'natural environment' should generally be taken to include the historic and man-made or cultural features of the natural environment as well as the natural and semi-natural aspects.

¹ www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.asp

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services

³ <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

Figure 2: Benefits provided by the natural environment – the ‘eco-system services’ which underpin wellbeing of people and communities.



3. OUR VISION

The Dorset LNP is working towards a future in which:

- Dorset's natural environment is richer in quality and diversity, and more resilient to change in urban and rural areas and in the marine environment.
- Dorset's natural systems are providing a wider and more valuable range of services, more reliably, to people and wildlife.
- Dorset's communities have increased understanding of, better access to and are more engaged in and supportive of the care and management of Dorset's environment, for its own sake, and for the benefits it offers them.
- Dorset's outstanding natural value is recognised, protected, enhanced, celebrated and invested in.
- Dorset's environment contributes to and benefits from development of a low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economy in which greener business practices are widely adopted.
- Dorset's wildlife sites are bigger, better and more joined up, giving them greater resilience in the face of future change and challenges.
- Dorset's world class terrestrial, coastal and marine environment is recognised as what makes Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.
- It is recognised that a healthy natural environment and a strong and sustainable local economy are mutually dependent.
- Maintenance of a healthy environment is recognised as a critical success factor in the wellbeing of current and future generations.
- Development and growth in Dorset is planned so that the natural resource on which the development is based is enhanced and not eroded, thus restricting future development.
- The natural environment is not thought of as a constraint to be overcome, rather it is the basis upon which growth and development can be sustained and therefore consistently requires both protection and enhancement to deliver such benefits.
- Dorset's impacts on the global environment are reduced.

4. THE ROLE OF THE DORSET LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP

The Dorset Local Nature Partnership will:

- Provide leadership for those working to protect and enhance the environment in Dorset.
- Advocate the good management of Dorset's natural environment for its own sake and the many benefits it offers.
- Articulate the importance of Dorset's natural environment to economic and social wellbeing in a manner appropriate to diverse audiences.
- Ensure that the natural environment is taken into account in policy and decision-making.

In doing so the LNP will be led by the following operating principles:

- Sustainable development: the LNP will promote the integration of social, economic and environmental goals and will work with partners to develop win-win solutions to achieve this, embedding the concept of natural capital into growth strategies and development projects.
- Vision and ambition: the LNP will promote the interests of Dorset's environment with confidence, vision, passion and ambition, reflecting the fact that our natural assets underpin Dorset's current and future success.
- Strategic overview: the LNP will work at a strategic level in policy and planning matters, and other than in cases of strategic importance will have neither the remit nor the capacity to become involved in site specific cases.
- Conflict resolution: the LNP will not avoid difficult decisions or potential conflicts but will approach them with a view to overcoming obstacles and finding mutually beneficial solutions, and will look to its strategic partners to do likewise.
- Results focused: the LNP's vision will be set and reviewed in the context of looking at where we want to be in future to help overcome past and current challenges.
- Evidence based: the LNP will be led by good science and evidence and, where there are gaps in the evidential base, we will seek to fill them, or encourage others to do likewise.
- Partnership working: the LNP has limited capacity so must work with and through existing and new partners and partnerships, bringing together all those with a stake in Dorset's environment to deliver targeted, co-ordinated action on shared priorities.
- Added value: the LNP will seek to add value to and support, rather than replicate, the work of existing partners and partnerships, providing an inclusive vision which all can work towards.
- Advocacy and leadership: the LNP will provide strong, collective leadership to ensure that the interests of the natural environment are heard and taken into account in the wider decision-making and political process.

- Early intervention: where possible the LNP will work early on in any policy or planning discussion to seek successful outcomes efficiently, without conflict and cost-effectively.
- Securing resources: the LNP will seek to secure resources, and support partners in doing likewise, to maximise our collective capacity to deliver the priorities set out in this strategy.



5. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The LNP has identified six strategic priorities which will guide its actions in the short and longer term:

i. Natural capital - investing in Dorset's natural assets: Dorset has some exceptional natural assets which already underpin the economic and social wellbeing of the county. There is a growing body of evidence that investing in natural areas produces benefits well in excess of costs. We need to apply this principle to maintain and enhance our finest natural areas so that we continue to receive these benefits, but also to improve the rest, address recognised challenges and respond to future threats. The LNP will make the case for such investment, and help partners target their resources where they can be the most effective and where they can achieve the biggest gains for the smallest effort. The outcomes we are seeking will include:

- Healthier natural systems which are managed in an integrated way.
- Bigger, better and more joined up wildlife sites.
- Moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature.
- Secure and stable support for the good management of the farmed and marine environment.
- Demonstrable improvements in the quality and accessibility of green and blue infrastructure in urban and rural areas.
- Maintenance and enhancement of high quality landscapes in which change is well managed.
- Demonstrable improvements in the condition of heritage assets.

ii. Natural value - adding value to the local economy: while a healthy environment is a pre-requisite for a healthy economy globally and locally, in Dorset it offers additional opportunities for sustainable economic growth which does not erode our natural capital. The Dorset LEP has already dubbed Dorset as 'the natural place to do business' for this reason, and green technology, local produce, food and drink, tourism and green energy sectors all provide significant opportunities for greater prosperity, employment and training. The LNP will work with the LEP to develop Dorset's green economic offer, as well as helping Dorset's businesses make more efficient use of scarce natural resources to deliver bottom line benefits. The outcomes we are seeking will include:

- A transition to a low carbon, sustainable economy in which every business is a greener business.
- Development of low impact business opportunities with reduced transport related impacts which contribute to a healthy environment.
- Support for the development of local, sustainable products and produce.



- More efficient and effective use being made of scarce natural resources, particularly land, water and energy sources.
- Productive agriculture which contributes to a healthy and attractive environment and sustainable management of fisheries.
- Sustainable tourism which contributes to the continued good management of the high quality environment on which it depends.
- Secure and affordable energy supplies making more effective use of locally available, appropriate renewable sources of energy.
- Reductions in waste in all its forms and further increases in the reuse and recycling of waste as a resource to be used rather than disposed of.
- Realising the economic, social and cultural potential of heritage assets which reduce resource use and reinforce local distinctiveness.
- An environment which proves attractive to business investors and helps retain and attract the skilled employees needed to meet Dorset's economic aspirations.
- Job creation in, for example, green technologies and rural communities where natural resources are concentrated.
- Enhance the workforce skills to benefit the environment.
- A new understanding of 'growth' which takes account of wider considerations beyond simply measuring Gross Domestic Product.

iii. Natural health - developing Dorset's 'natural health service': access to the natural environment already makes a major contribution to public health and wellbeing, and could do more so with improved access, more effective and well connected green infrastructure and better information on how and where to use the environment responsibly and safely. The LNP will work with local authorities, Health and Wellbeing Boards, the Dorset Local Access Forum and others to promote access to the natural environment as a key strand in the improvement of public health and wellbeing, the promotion of active lifestyles, independent living and as a potential means of reducing welfare costs.

The outcomes we are seeking will include:

- Improved physical connectivity between open spaces and access to the environment making a measurable improvement in public health and reducing the costs associated with health treatments.
- A reduction of health inequalities through improved access to the environment in areas and communities where there is currently a deficit.
- Promotion of access to nature as both a remedy and a preventative medicine for a wide range of physical and mental health conditions.
- An increase in healthy outdoor activities.



iv. Natural resilience - improving environmental and community resilience: Dorset faces a challenging future. Changes in the global economy, global climate and demography present a number of potential risks and threats to the resilience of both the environment and the communities which depend on it. But a well managed, resilient natural environment can make a major contribution to our ability to adapt to these changes. We need to look at the consequences down the line of action we take today, recognising that the geographic distance and time lag which can occur between action and consequence make cross-boundary collaboration necessary. We also need to understand changes in management practice required to operate under new climatic conditions. The LNP will work with a wide range of partners to scan the horizon for these threats and opportunities, to promote mutually beneficial solutions and action to adapt which enhances natural value.

The outcomes we are seeking will include:

- More widespread adoption of landscape scale approaches to extending and joining up natural areas as the best means of improving their resilience to future change.
- More working with rather than against natural processes in areas like coastal change and river basin management.
- Adoption of catchment-based approaches to managing the water environment, applying lessons learnt from pilot schemes operating in Dorset already to reduce diffuse pollution, conserve soil, maintain water quality and help manage flood water.
- More effective action to manage the risks associated with a changing climate, such as the spread of non-native invasive species and diseases, the accelerated impacts of coastal erosion and the increased incidence of flooding and other extreme weather events.
- Promotion of shorter, more local supply chains for key resources such as food and energy, to improve our resilience to future shocks and promote sustainable local produce in the process.
- A secure and sustainable future for land-based industries.
- A high quality built environment meeting increasingly high standards of sustainable construction, waste reduction, water and energy efficiency in new and existing development, and in which sustainable travel options are promoted.
- Effective management of increased demand for public access to sensitive and vulnerable environments.
- Support for more sustainably managed fisheries with minimal damage to the habitats on which those fisheries depend.
- A spatial planning system which is proactive in the way in which it seeks to deliver landscape scale, ecological networks that are able to withstand the pressures of climate change.



v. Natural understanding – improving understanding of, and engagement in, Dorset’s

environment: we know Dorset residents and visitors already value their environment, but improved public understanding of the environment as a system, and the benefits it offers, will be an important step in encouraging good stewardship now and in the future. The LNP will seek to define and promote the idea of ‘natural value’, identifying the financial benefits and costs associated with environmental goods and services, as well as providing honest and reliable assessments on the state of Dorset’s natural assets. The LNP will support a step change in our understanding of the environment, the quality of the environmental evidence base to inform planning and other decision-making processes, and the application of this evidence to the process of setting priorities and allocating resources. The outcomes we are seeking will include:

- Clear and accurate quantification of the health benefits, the economic value of, and the costs of providing, environmental goods and services.
- Regularly updated, accessible and authoritative evidence on the health and value of Dorset’s environment.
- More effective identification and fulfilment of opportunities for individuals and communities to get engaged in caring for and improving the environment.
- A greater focus in formal education on the value of the environment and its importance to economic and social wellbeing.
- More use being made of Dorset’s environment as a ‘living textbook’ through outdoor education, and greater opportunities for environment and wildlife education inside and outside the classroom.
- Improvement in the co-ordination and delivery of local environmental improvements with support for the development of Dorset’s vital network of environmental and conservation volunteers.

vi. Natural influence - integrating natural value in policy and decision-making, locally and

beyond: a founding principle of all LNPs is that they will embed the value of the natural environment in decision-making. The LNP will seek to influence the decision-making process locally and beyond to ensure that it takes better account of the costs, consequences, benefits and opportunities associated with natural assets and environmental change. Dorset has a national and international reputation for leadership in areas such as coastal management and biodiversity mitigation, and we will leverage this to ensure Dorset’s interests are reflected in national policy and that resources are attracted to Dorset to increase our capacity to deliver. In doing so, the LNP will promote creative approaches to overcoming traditional conflicts between economic and environmental objectives. The outcomes we are seeking will include:

- More accurate and transparent accounting for environmental costs and benefits in the planning and decision-making process
- Widespread adoption of the concept of ‘natural value’ in the planning and decision making process



- An holistic approach to planning and development which takes account of the need to maintain and create quality natural and historic environments near where people live, and space for wildlife to get food and shelter in a changing environment
- Greater awareness of the impacts of the decisions we take as consumers on the environment, and more sustainable choices being made as a result
- Dorset's 'ecological footprint' being reduced over time both locally and globally



6. IMPLEMENTING OUR VISION

The LNP will produce an annual action plan setting out the outputs it plans to deliver and the action it will take to deliver them, based on the vision and strategic priorities outlined above. Our Action Plan for 2017-18 will include:

- Provide support for landscape and catchment scale initiatives
- Develop more robust evidence base on economic value of environmental goods and services developed
- Support investment into Dorset's biodiversity conservation
- Provide support for local pollinator projects
- Develop a more robust evidence base on economic good and services
- Engage with the LEP on economic strategies and the Growth Deal to ensure they incorporate LNP objectives
- Discuss implications of and links with Dorset Combined Authority and/or devolution aspirations (i.e. potential for two unitary councils across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole)
- Ensure appropriate influence on European Structural Investment Funds
- Provide evidence on the value of Dorset ecosystem services
- Develop strong links between LNP and Dorset and Bournemouth & Poole Health & Wellbeing Boards
- Support delivery of appropriate elements of Health and Wellbeing Strategies
- Improve links between South West LNPs and the health sector
- Develop LNP position statement on Climate Change
- Support Local fisheries through community led planning
- Update and promotion of 'natural value report'
- Identify major threats and opportunities facing Dorset's environment
- Support the objectives of the Square Meal Debate
- Develop a joint 'planning charter' with the LEP
- Establish mechanism for biodiversity compensation payments to be collected and distributed
- Play a meaningful and valuable role in Dorset planning through facilitating win-win thinking on planning decisions.
- LNP 'natural value' report to be adopted as key part of the evidence base for local planning in Dorset
- Resources for effective operation of the LNP secured
- Programme of meetings for the LNP agreed and delivered
- Information on LNP and links to be available on a wider range of partner websites
- Wider ownership and awareness of the LNP's Vision and Strategy and ongoing work

The LNP will produce an annual report to highlight some of the key achievements. The annual report will be available on the website.

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www.dorsetlnp.org.uk