

ITEM 12

Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

SRA representation on Somerset Local Nature Partnership Board

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Approve the request for the SRA Chair to sit on the Board of the Somerset Local Nature Partnership and represent the interests of the SRA.

Purpose of the item

The Board is asked to consider and approve the request from the Somerset Local Nature Partnership for SRA representation on its Board.

Background and context

Georgia Stokes, Chief Executive of the Somerset Wildlife Trust, wrote to the SRA on 7 January 2020 inviting representation from the SRA onto a relaunched Local Nature Partnership (LNP). In her letter she stated:

“Local Nature Partnerships were a key Natural Environment White Paper commitment established by the government in 2012, intended to work alongside Local Enterprise Partnerships. As DEFRA says: ‘The ambition for LNPs is that 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. To do this effectively they will need to be self-sustaining strategic partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people with the credibility to work with, and influence, other local strategic decision makers’.”

The LNP Board will be the body that sets the strategic direction of the LNP and will include sector leaders in agriculture, health, business, academia, education, community and conservation.

Given the very direct link between the impacts of effective water and flood risk management and the special characteristics of the Somerset environment, it is felt that it is important that the SRA has a voice on the LNP Board. The SRA representative will be able to provide an overview of SRA projects and activities and identify synergies with LNP-promoted projects.

Representation on the LNP Board will enable the SRA Chair to build even stronger links with the environmental sector and ensure that SRA objectives and priorities are taken account of within LNP projects and vice versa.

The role of the LNP, as set out in its terms of reference, is set out below. The full terms of reference of the LNP are provided as appendix 1.

Role of Somerset Local Nature Partnership

Somerset Nature Partnership will be a strong, strategic champion for the county's important and valuable natural environment. The SLNP Board and Forum will together embed the value and importance of the natural environment into all decision-making processes, planning and policy decisions and provide leadership, co-ordinating delivery to achieve long-term strategic objectives to:

- Protect and improve the county's unique natural environment through a shared vision and strategy for the county.
- Embed the intrinsic value of Somerset's natural environment into cultural, political and economic agendas.
- Show leadership in bringing sectors and people together to realise economic, social, health and environmental benefits from an improved, coherent and resilient ecological network for Somerset.
- Communicate and improve the economic, social and health benefits that the natural environment brings for everyone who lives, works or visits Somerset.
- Natural solutions to climate change identifying carbon sequestration opportunities (respond to emissions in the air).

Recommendation

1. Approve the request for the SRA Chair to sit on the Board of the Somerset Local Nature Partnership and represent the interests of the SRA.

Date: 27 February 2020

Author: David Mitchell, Senior Manager, Somerset Rivers Authority