

Tyne Catchment Project

Engagement and Communication Plan

This document describes how a Tyne Catchment Plan will be developed through collaborative working with individuals, groups and organisations who have an interest in the water environment.

The **process of planning and decision-making** will be managed and coordinated by the Tyne Rivers Trust (TRT) who in turn will be guided by a broad based Strategy Group of key stakeholders and its own Project Board. The function and scope of these key groups are set out in this document.

Contents

Background to the Project.....	2
Why working together will work for us.....	2
Roles and responsibilities	4
Influencing the plan.....	6
Challenges and risks	7
The key stages	9
Appendix 1 Tyne Rivers Trust – Working Together to Manage and Improve our River.....	12
Appendix 2 Terms of Reference of the Project Board.....	13
Appendix 3 Terms of Reference of the Strategy Group	15

Background to the Project

In March 2011, the government announced the launch of the '**Catchment Based Approach**'. This is a way of working at river catchment scale to improve the water environment.

The process nationally aims to:

- develop a clear understanding of the issues in catchments
- involve people in dialogue and decision-making by sharing evidence, listening to their ideas, and working out priorities for action
- write plans at the river catchment scale that will deliver integrated actions that address local issues in a cost effective way and which protect local resources.

This collaborative way of working is new territory for many catchments. To learn how this can be done effectively and to identify the approaches and resources needed Defra started working with 10 Environment Agency-hosted pilot catchments in April 2011, and then added a further 15 catchments in January 2012 hosted by external organisations.

Each of these **pilot catchment** projects is encouraged to try out and learn from a range of approaches that involve engaging with the public, communities and stakeholders to discuss and plan catchment issues. How they do this has been left to the pilot projects to decide according to local circumstances, issues and experience of collaborative working.

All pilots will run until **December 2012** with each presenting a catchment plan at that time. External evaluation of the pilots will inform the roll out of successful approaches to the remaining catchments across England. The initiative supports the goals of the **European Water Framework Directive (WFD)** which came into force in December 2000 and became part of UK law in December 2003. It aims to provide for a consistent and integrated approach to providing a better water environment, with a focus on ecology.

A catchment pilot will be considered by the government to be successful if it:

- increases participation to improve the water environment
- reaches a shared understanding of the catchment's priorities
- results in more commitment to action from partners
- participants feel the pilot made a difference to what can be achieved
- delivers a range of environmental benefits for communities
- provides value for money
- identifies components that can be replicated elsewhere.

Why working together will work for us

The **Tyne Catchment Pilot** is hosted by **Tyne Rivers Trust (TRT)**. TRT has appointed an experienced full time Project Manager to lead the project and deliver a catchment plan to Defra's deadline of December 2012.

TRT is committed to working collaboratively with people, organisations and groups throughout the Tyne catchment to deliver an effective, targeted and costed plan which delivers wide benefits for the water environment. Organisations, people and communities working together to tackle prioritised issues will achieve greater outcomes for rivers.

Below is set out the **purpose of collaborative working** both in terms of:

1. the changes that the plan will aim to achieve and
2. why the public, communities and stakeholders need to be engaged to better achieve this outcome – the collaboration objectives).

These statements are important as they set out what the project aims to achieve by December 2012 and will guide how this is to be done.

The ultimate **desired change** is a healthier river/water environment within the Tyne catchment. This includes both an improvement in water quality and the ecology of the catchment for the benefit of the water environment.

In achieving this central goal the process aims to:

- agree priorities and ways to tackle specific catchment issues
- identify methods of ongoing delivery and planning that have the continued support and participation of those who have been involved in the engagement process
- record good and bad experiences and outcomes to inform ongoing catchment planning in the Tyne and be of value to other catchment planning initiatives elsewhere
- increase the number of people who care about, understand, have a relationship with and are involved in achieving a better river environment
- enhance the cultural significance and 'brand' of the Tyne
- extend the influence and role of all the organisations and groups involved in developing the plan
- increase the potential to access funding for ongoing catchment planning work and other catchment based projects
- encourage and facilitate co-working, collaboration and synergies between the organisations who have been brought together under this initiative, both now and into the future, ensuring minimal duplication and synergy with organisations' own objectives
- consider socio-economic outcomes in decision-making.

Collaboration between interested individuals, groups and organisations will:

- produce a high quality well informed and widely owned catchment plan
- enable the delivery of a catchment planning process on the scale of the Tyne - no one organisation has the capacity, knowledge or information to do this alone
- bring together scientific, technical and experiential knowledge, data and understanding and apply this to catchment issues and solutions

- build trust, good relationships and make it more likely that the plan and decisions will be widely supported into implementation
- build understanding of the connectivity of organisations' and groups' interests
- build a coalition of practical support and ongoing collaborative working as the initiative moves into implementation and further phases of planning.

Roles and responsibilities

Agreed roles and remits for a range of groups will make sure the process of consultation on the catchment reaches as many people as possible and ideas and opinions can effectively feed into plans and actions.

Set out below are the main categories of people who will be involved in the catchment planning process with a brief description of who they are and their roles and responsibilities.

Group	Roles and responsibilities
<p>The individuals, groups and organisations to be consulted on the issues and asked to help develop the plan</p>	<p>This is the broad and varied group made up of people, groups and organisations who have an interest in the Tyne Catchment and are willing to be consulted about issues, ideas, options and ways forward. The detail of the consultation methods is still to be decided but people, groups and organisations whose remit coincides with the priorities identified by the Strategy Group for action in the Catchment Plan will be able to get involved.</p> <p>The role of this group is to be the engine room of local information, ideas, questions, challenges and proposals about how the Tyne Catchment can be improved. TRT will aim to design an engagement process to maximise the opportunity for anyone who has an interest in the issues to get involved, though this is likely to be limited by the tight timeframes of the project. Where necessary, relevant data and information will be provided about the catchment to help groups have informed and robust discussions. This group will generate the main ideas and recommendations that the Coordinating Team and the Strategy Group will then use to inform the catchment plan. This group has no direct decision making powers.</p>

Group	Roles and responsibilities
Coordinating team	<p>TRT has appointed a full time Project Manager to this project (Susan Mackirdy). She is supported by the Director of TRT (Malcolm Newson). Some additional engagement support is also available through an engagement specialist, Steve Smith, who is allocated to the project by Defra. The Coordinating Team is responsible for the management and coordination of the whole project and its day to day running. They report to the Project Board.</p> <p>The project will have to work within the capacity of this group and the time they can spend on the initiative. Typical tasks for this group will be overall planning, convening and facilitating Strategy Group and Project Board meetings, and the design, delivery, facilitation, data handling, and preparing of reports etc.</p> <p>The Coordinating Team has no decision-making powers over the final plan.</p>
Strategy Group	<p>The Strategy Group is a panel of people, representing groups and organisations that have a direct relationship with catchment issues and a vast amount of collective experience of the Tyne catchment environment. Their organisations are also likely to play a big part in the planning and delivery of the final Catchment Plan and so are key partners to the initiative.</p> <p>The Strategy Group will provide essential guidance, support, information, data and advice to make sure the right people are consulted, in the right way about the right issues, and have the most up to date information available. It will also be invited to review the plan at various stages as it develops and make comments and suggestions. Its members' specialist skills and experience may be drawn on as different issues are tackled.</p> <p>A TRT representative will also sit on this group, in an unpaid role as with the other organisations involved, to bring TRT's own extensive, practical knowledge and experience to the group.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Strategy Group are set out in Appendix 3.</p>

Group	Roles and responsibilities
Project Board	<p>The Project Board is a sub group of the main TRT Board of Directors and Trustees. It is the responsible body for this project in the contract with Defra and has a duty to deliver the Catchment Plan to time and budget. It is also responsible, on behalf of the TRT Board, for the management of the Coordinating Team and to ensure that the project is conducted in a way that reflects TRT's ethos, broad purposes and policies. It will have an overview of the process to ensure everything is on track, will mediate any disagreements and check the final drafts of the plan to ensure that TRT is not compromised by any of the content. The Project Board will not however get involved in the detail of the consultation process or the drafting of the plan - that relationship is between the consultees, coordinating team and Strategy Group. It will 'sign off' the plan before it is submitted to Defra. The TRT Project Board therefore will only make changes to the final plan if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the content of the plan challenges or works against TRT's aims and purposes • the plan does not meet Defra's requirements • there are inaccuracies in the plan or the information/data that has informed decisions • the TRT Project Board feels that the presentation, clarity or text needs minor improvement or additions. <p>If any of the above situations arise the Project Board will discuss ways forward with the Strategy Group with the intention of finding a mutually agreeable solution.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Project Board are set out in Appendix 2.</p>

Influencing the plan

In any collaborative planning and decision making process it is important to set out **what can and what can't be influenced** by the public, communities and stakeholders involved. The Tyne Catchment Planning process aims to be **open to** enabling those with an interest in the catchment to define the issues, input information and opinions, discuss options and make recommendations for actions.

Clearly the initiative will need to **work within the limits of the timescale, resources and the capacity** of the coordinating team, Strategy Group and Project Board. This will mean focusing on priority issues and specific areas within the catchment. It is hoped that the learning from this pilot stage can then be applied to other issues and the wider catchment if resources become available.

The Coordinating Team has undertaken a broad based survey to help identify priority catchment issues. It will work with the Strategy Group to identify the issues to be explored further and the areas in which to focus activity with the public, communities and other stakeholders.

The Project Board needs to retain the responsibility of agreeing the final plan, however it very much wants the process to be a collaborative venture and for the plan to accurately reflect the concerns and proposed ways forward of those who have contributed. It also recognises the value of a broad based Strategy Group which will guide the planning process and comment on drafts of the plan as they emerge.

Only one area of influence and discussion is **non-negotiable**. Any idea, plan or proposal must contribute towards maintaining or improving the rivers in the Tyne catchment. This is the underlying rationale to the whole project.

Challenges and risks

Set out below are critical challenges or risks for the engagement process. Potential actions or mitigations are suggested which may also provide areas of good opportunity for the project. A shared understanding of these crucial elements will support the design and management of the engagement work overall.

Challenge	Suggested actions
Physical elements	
The Tyne is a large, diverse catchment. There could be difficulties in achieving consensus on priorities for actions and/or solutions to problems. It would be impossible to tackle everything within the timescale and resources of this project.	Identify the issues across a broad range of stakeholders, including the general public. Using this information and the knowledge of the Strategy Group, prioritise the issues and/or focus on a limited number of 'hot spot' areas. Use this focused engagement to learn about participative planning and potentially roll out to other issues/areas as resources become available.
It may be difficult to prioritise the most pressing catchment issues, with tension between what the technical specialists and the public consider priority issues	Provide quality information and interpretation of data, particularly for lay people, to help everyone come to an agreement about priorities and impacts. If possible, address priorities from a range of different perspectives.

Challenge	Suggested actions
Technical uncertainties	
<p>Some issues and effective solutions are unquantified, uncertain or unknown.</p>	<p>Inevitably in such a diverse and dynamic catchment, with multiple issues and influences, there will be uncertainty, missing data and areas where the best course of action is unclear. Within the resources of the project, and those of its stakeholders and supporters, make the best attempt possible to identify key issues and bring together the necessary data and knowledge to inform good planning and decision making. Use a stakeholder approach, which brings many perspectives and skills to the issues, to bring quality thinking to the planning process. Record uncertainty in the plan, with actions to deal with this, for example identifying the need for further research. Dealing with uncertainty is a given in a project of this nature and will provide good learning as the work progresses.</p>
<p>It may be difficult to establish a shared understanding/ knowledge of the issues and potential solutions when dealing with a diverse range of stakeholders, some of whom are new to river issues</p>	<p>Finding common ground for good quality discussions between technical specialists and lay people will always be challenging. Carefully plan the way data/technical information is communicated/interpreted and design and facilitate meetings to enable technical specialists to communicate effectively and productively with people who bring local knowledge and insight to the table. Use opportunities to bring university research strands into the public domain.</p>
Resources issues	
<p>The resources available (budget, and particularly time) are severely limited and may reduce further as the project progresses.</p>	<p>The catchment is large and complex with a multiplicity of issues and areas of interest to explore. Limit the scope and remit of the plan to ensure delivery of a quality, if limited, plan within the timescale.</p> <p>Where appropriate (with guidance from the Strategy Group) incorporate current actions, future planned projects and previous relevant plans into the new plan.</p>
<p>The plan may be challenged for tackling some issues and not others. Some will wish to see actions which go against current policy (eg. fish stocking, culling predators).</p>	<p>A transparent process, starting with a broad based survey to identify priority issues and then an explanation of how the areas for more in depth study are selected, will help mitigate concerns. Communicate the greater benefit and learning in prioritising issues and certain areas of the catchment than trying to cover every issue and area.</p>

Challenge	Suggested actions
External organisations may not have the time and capacity to get fully involved in the planning process. They may not see any value in being involved in planning with no commitment to the future funding of actions.	<p>Recognise the capacity limits of all and work within these constraints. Allow everyone to bring what they can to the table and choose to participate or not without criticism or sanction.</p> <p>Make organisations aware of the potential value in being able to put forward and tackle issue that are on their agendas, pool resources and potentially access additional resources/funding for catchment related planning.</p>
The Project Board must ensure that TRT complies with Defra’s requirements.	Develop well communicated, clear and agreed roles, remits and terms of reference for each level of activity in the project.
Critical relationships	
Ensuring that the key planning and decision-making parts of the project know their role, contribute well and do not replicate each other’s work (particularly important for the Project Board and the Strategy Group).	Develop a clear understanding and agreement between the Project Board and the Strategy Group about their specific role, remit and terms of reference. Monitor and manage this as the project proceeds.
Inclusion of and collaboration between environment focused NGOs in the context of limited resources.	Collaboration between environment focussed NGOs will be critical to the success of the project. However there is a potential tension as this sector will be looking for sources of future funding and resources which may involve competition and rivalry. Discuss this tension at an early opportunity and either accept as a given or agree to forge partnerships, joint bids or a division of focus, responsibilities, and areas of operation.
Limited existing relationships with business and urban sectors.	Use the broad coalition of stakeholder groups to mitigate the limitations of one partner by pooling experience and connections with different sectors. Carry out a detailed stakeholder analysis at the Strategy Group level to map existing stakeholder knowledge, access and relationships.

The key stages

The broad timeframe for key stages of the project are:

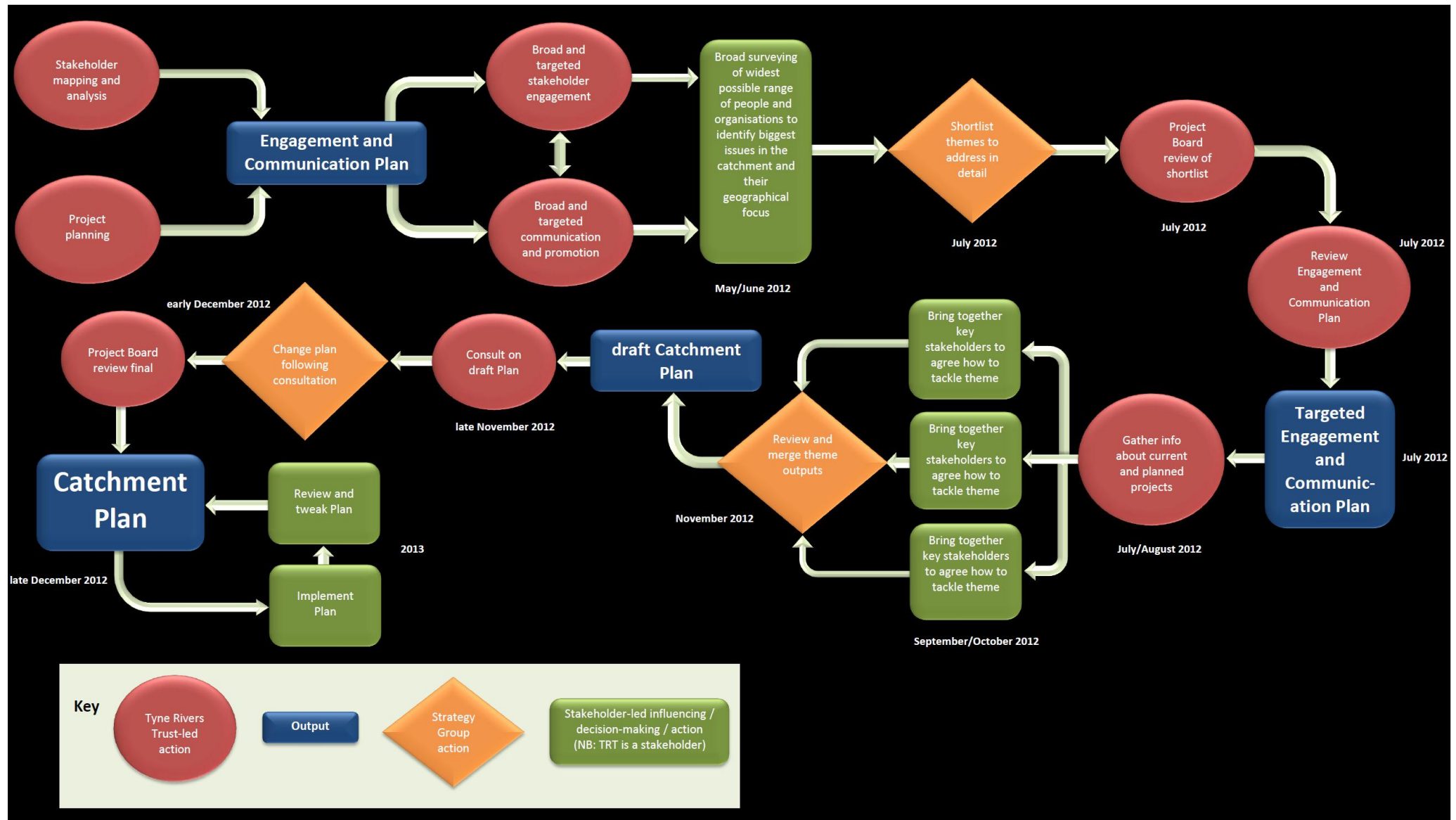
- May / June 2012 – catchment-wide surveying of environmental organisations, key local stakeholders, community groups and the public
- July / August 2012 – gathering information about current projects going on in the Tyne area

- September / October / November 2012 – detailed planning with the people and organisations who are able to deliver improvements and writing a draft plan
- November 2012 – consulting on and amending the draft plan
- December 2012 onwards – publishing and implementing the plan.

The consultation on the draft plan will be limited due to the very tight timeframes of the project. It is likely that only the organisations named in the draft plan or involved in its development will be consulted on its contents. The Strategy Group will guide the development of the plan at key stages through the project and will play a key role in deciding how consultation comments should influence changes to the draft plan.

A diagram showing the key stages of the project is set out at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Process diagram for the Tyne Catchment Pilot project



Appendix 1 Tyne Rivers Trust – Working Together to Manage and Improve our River

Tyne Rivers Trust (TRT) is hosting and managing the Tyne Catchment Pilot. TRT is a charitable company established in 2004. Its vision is to make the name 'Tyne' recognised for its catchment-wide environmental excellence.

TRT exists to develop projects, raise funds and carry out improvements to the environment of the River Tyne, its tributaries and surrounding land. It works to raise awareness of the value of the river to people from all over the region, country and abroad by marketing fishing opportunities, carrying out research and supporting local events. It is managed by a Board of volunteer Trustees.

The Tyne Catchment Project is overseen by a small Project Board made up of Trustees who report to the Trust's Board. Stakeholder guidance is achieved through a Strategy Group of key external partners and the day to day work of the pilot is delivered by one full time project officer. For more information about governance and management see www.tynecatchment.org.

Appendix 2 Terms of Reference of the Project Board

Background

A plan for the Tyne Catchment will be developed through a process of collaborative working that will involve individuals, groups and organisations who have an interest in the water environment. The overall process will be managed and coordinated by the **Tyne Rivers Trust (TRT)** through a **Project Board** who in turn will be guided by a broad based **Strategy Group** of key stakeholders.

Overview of the Project Board

The TRT Board is the responsible body for this project in the contract with Defra and has a duty to deliver the Catchment Plan to time and budget. It has delegated this responsibility to the Project Board. It will have an overview of the process to ensure everything is on track, will mediate any disagreements and check the final drafts of the plan to ensure that it meets Defra's requirements and TRT is not compromised by any of the content.

Aims and purposes of the Project Board

1. To lead the project and take overall responsibility for it and to ensure the observance of goals and deliverables in the contract with Defra.
2. To ensure that the project is conducted in a way that reflects TRT's ethos, broad purposes and policies.
3. To ensure the effective management of the TRT staff responsible for day to day delivery of the project (the Coordinating Team).
4. To mediate and endeavour to solve any difficulties or disagreements that may arise as part of the project delivery.
5. To approve and 'sign off' the plan before it is submitted to Defra.

The Project Board will not get involved in the detail of the planning process or the drafting of the plan - that relationship is between the consultees, Coordinating Team and Strategy Group. The Project Board therefore will only make changes to the final plan if:

- the content of the plan challenges or works against TRT's aims and purposes
- the plan does not meet Defra's requirements
- there are fundamental inaccuracies in the plan or the information/data that has informed decisions
- the Strategy Group is unable to resolve any conflicts in the plan's contents or which occur as a result of comments made during consultation on the draft plan or
- the Project Board feels that the presentation, clarity or text needs minor improvements or additions.

If any of the above situations need addressing the Project Board will endeavour to discuss ways forward with the Strategy Group with the intention of finding a mutually agreeable solution but without compromising the project timetable.

Membership

Membership of the Project Board will be determined by the TRT Board and it will operate under TRT's constitution and policies. It is a sub group of the main TRT Board of Directors and Trustees and comprises 3 experienced professionals:

- Charles Beaumont - an experienced company director, riparian owner and Tyne angler
- Andrew Davison – a commercial lawyer and Chairman of the TRT Board
- Martyn Howat – former Director for England's Uplands (Natural England), part-time environmental consultant, and member of a number of environmental trusts and associations.

Operation of Meetings

The expectations and commitments for the effective running of meetings are the same as those that apply to the TRT Board. Meetings will follow agreed agenda, be fully Minuted and will generally follow good governance practices.

Communications

The following agreements are designed to ensure accurate reporting of the work of the project and avoid the circulation of rumours or inaccurate information.

All members agree to work together to ensure that communication of the group's business is clear, consistent and accurate. In this spirit, all members agree:

- not to talk for the group unless mandated to do so by the group
- to notify the Project Manager in advance of any intention to communicate widely, for example speaking at a conference or mailing their sector or organisation, about the initiative and the group's business so that communication opportunities can be coordinated and maximised
- to use existing forms of words or other agreed text where possible to describe the group's business in their own communications
- to make the group aware of inaccurate communication or reporting by others, so that the group's view(s) can be clarified
- the Coordinating Team has the mandate to manage urgent communication issues on behalf of the group, for example responding to media requests, and may call upon members of the group for further information or support.

Appendix 3 Terms of Reference of the Strategy Group

Background

A plan for the Tyne Catchment will be developed through a process of collaborative working that will involve individuals, groups and organisations who have an interest in the water environment. The overall process will be managed and coordinated by the **Tyne Rivers Trust (TRT)** through a **Project Board** who in turn will be guided by a broad based **Strategy Group** of key stakeholders.

Overview of the Strategy Group

The Strategy Group is an invited panel of people, representing groups and organisations that have a direct relationship with Tyne river catchment issues. They are knowledgeable in their field and able to offer advice, resources (such as data, information, access to other groups) and practical support to the project. They are also likely to be organisations who will play a big part in the planning and delivery of the final Tyne Catchment Plan and so are key partners to the initiative.

The Strategy Group is not a decision-making forum; its role is to support, refine and improve the development of the Tyne Catchment Plan. The Project Board will however pay close attention to the Strategy Group's suggestions and recommendations and will not challenge its work without good reason. A TRT representative will also sit on this group, in a voluntary role as with the other members of the Strategy Group, to bring TRT's own knowledge and experience to the group.

Aims of the Strategy Group

1. To draw on the experience, resources and constituencies of its members to provide guidance, support, information, data and advice to the Tyne Pilot project to make sure the right people are consulted, in the right way about the right issues and the final plan is based on the most up to date information available.
2. To discuss and recommend priorities for the plan.
3. To review the plan at various stages in its development and make comments and suggestions.
4. To estimate costs for actions identified in the plan.
5. To attempt to resolve any conflicts in the plan's contents or which occur as a result of comments made during consultation on the draft plan.
6. To approve the final draft of the plan before it is passed to the Project Board for final validation and sign off.

Membership

Membership of the Strategy Group will be by invitation from the TRT staff responsible for day to day delivery of the project (the Coordinating Team). The Coordinating Team will aim to bring together a broad cross section of key stakeholders to the initiative to maximise different areas of knowledge, influence and access to the different sectors that the project would like to reach.

Strategy Group members should:

- be knowledgeable about the wider sector that they are representing and willing to actively speak about the interests of their stakeholder sector in discussions and engage positively in the process
- have awareness/understanding of other sectors engaged in the process
- commit time to attend meetings. A deputy may be nominated but it is the responsibility of the Strategy Group member to fully brief the deputy on progress prior to any meeting attended. Deputies must be identified and operate within these terms of reference.

Operation of Meetings

- Members must be willing to listen, understand, communicate and respect other members.
- To encourage free expression in meetings, participants can request that their views are not attributed. The meeting record will not normally attribute comments unless requested in a specific instance, for example where agreed and necessary for clarity in the record.
- It is anticipated that three meetings will be needed up to the point when the Tyne Catchment Plan is signed off, though additional meetings may be required if there are conflicts in the contents of the plan that require the Strategy Group's input to resolve.
- Meeting times and locations will be selected to ensure the maximum possible attendance and appropriate notice will be given.
- Members are expected to read papers in advance and be appropriately prepared for meetings. Meeting materials will be circulated with appropriate time for reading and preparing.
- All present will contribute as fully and openly as possible (while respecting, for example, commercial confidentiality).
- Decisions will be reached by consensus. Insurmountable differences of view will be clarified and recorded (including attribution where necessary).
- Full Minutes will be made from each meeting and circulated to all participants (and any sending apologies) as soon as possible after meetings.
- It is the responsibility of each member to check the meeting Minutes for accuracy and raise any concerns as soon as possible with the Project Manager.
- Final and agreed reports will be available to anybody via the project website and/or on request.
- Meetings will be chaired [*Strategy Group to decide at the first meeting if a standing chair will be nominated*] or, when needed, facilitated by an external independent facilitator.

Communications

The following agreements are designed to ensure accurate reporting of the work of the project and avoid the circulation of rumours or inaccurate information.

All members agree to work together to ensure that communication of the group's business is clear, consistent and accurate. In this spirit, all members agree:

- not to talk for the group unless mandated to do so by the group
- to notify the Project Manager in advance of any intention to communicate widely, for example speaking at a conference or mailing their sector or organisation, about the initiative and the group's business so that communication opportunities can be coordinated and maximised
- to use existing forms of words or other agreed text where possible to describe the group's business in their own communications
- to make the group aware of inaccurate communication or reporting by others, so that the group's view(s) can be clarified
- the Coordinating Team has the mandate to manage urgent communication issues on behalf of the group, for example responding to media requests, and may call upon members of the group for further information or support.