

Natural England Landscape Advisory panel:

Terms of Reference 2024

Purpose

The Natural England Landscape Advisory Panel (NELAP) has been commissioned by Natural England's Board to advise and support the organisation to deliver strong landscape leadership and achieve transformative change for England's landscapes and people.

The Panel will provide independent and expert advice and assistance to Natural England's Board on the discharge of its landscape functions. It will support Natural England's drive for innovation and ambition in its role as government's statutory landscape advisor and work to strengthen Natural England's relationships with the wider landscape community and across Government.

Key responsibilities

NELAP will be an advisory group to Natural England's Board. It will:

1. Provide strategic advice and steer to the Natural England Board on Natural England's vision and ambition for all England's landscapes, including, but not limited to, those designated as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or defined, such as Heritage Coasts.
2. Provide independent expert advice, analysis and review to the Natural England Board on its priorities, plans and approach to delivering its landscape remit.
3. Review and comment on the effectiveness of Natural England's landscape delivery, including its:
 - advice on policy to all parts of Government and to its stakeholders
 - landscape designation and evidence programmes
 - collaboration and delivery through partnership
 - use of innovation to achieve transformative change
4. Scrutinise landscape indicators, standards and targets and comment on how these could be developed, improved and delivered.
5. Provide strategic leadership and advice within the landscape community and help to drive stronger collaboration and the formation of effective partnerships in the sector.
6. Act as an external champion and strong national advocate for the role and contribution of designated and non-designated landscapes and their relevance to other sectors, disciplines and across Government.
7. Act as a powerful adviser and supporter for the resources needed to underpin consistent and effective delivery of landscape objectives.

Membership

The Panel will be co-chaired, with the two individuals selected by Natural England's Chair.

One of the co-Chairs will be a Natural England Board Member. The other will be an independent and authoritative figure within the landscape community. The co-Chairs will be accountable to the Natural England Chair. Co-chairs will work closely together to clearly agree roles and responsibilities, and how each meeting will be run.

Membership of the Panel will comprise of at least 13 individuals:

- Co-Chairs, one independent and one from the Natural England Board.
- One other representative from the Natural England Board.

- At least nine independent external members, three of whom bring specific understanding of English National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Trails to the Panel.
- Natural England's Resilient Landscapes and Seas Programme Director.
- Invited / co-opted members recruited on a time-limited basis, as needed, to offer input on specific issues.

The Defra Deputy Director with responsibility for Landscape will be invited to attend the Panel in an observer capacity.

The co-Chairs and nominated Natural England Board Member will normally be expected to serve for a term of three years and may serve more than one consecutive term.

Independent members will be selected to reflect the range of expertise required to support fulfilment of Natural England's landscape remit. These members will be expected to serve for an initial three-year term, with no overall term limit. Initial terms of appointments are likely to be more varied to create overall continuity in the Panel. Membership of the Panel will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to address evolving priorities and demonstrates diversity and inclusion. At the end of the initial three-year term, all members will be invited to a one-to-one meeting to identify their preferences to continue serving on NELAP, and reappointments made as appropriate by joint agreement by the co-Chairs. Where changes are made, this provides an opportunity to strengthen diversity on the Panel.

Membership of the Panel will normally be drawn from experts in strategy and operational delivery, from national and local organisations, business, government and academic institutions across the diverse disciplines that contribute to landscape delivery. All members will have a passion for securing resilient landscapes to benefit people and nature.

Collectively the Panel will possess significant expertise in the following areas:

- Urban and rural landscape planning and management
- National and international designated landscapes
- Landscape character assessment, landscape condition and quality, landscape monitoring
- Forces for landscape change including farming and land management, land use planning, economic and business development, climate change
- Health and wellbeing, recreation and people's engagement with landscapes
- The historic environment and landscape history

The success of the Panel will also be dependent upon combining landscape expertise with expertise from a wide range of complementary sectors. For example:

- Community engagement and participation, youth engagement and behavioural sciences
- Community, tourism and economic development in rural and urban areas
- Marketing and communications
- Central and local government
- Development of policy and strategic approaches
- Delivery of significant projects and programmes
- Strategic influencing and advocacy
- Commercial funding and resource generation
- Collaboration, partnership building, diversity and inclusion

The intention is that participation will be inclusive and will enable members to make contributions in a variety of ways. To this end, it will make full use of digital tools and communication methods.

Recruitment and appointment of NELAP Members

Natural England is committed to inclusion and diversity and will welcome Panel Members who provide new voices and perspectives. Lived experiences will be as valuable as academic qualifications or professional experience.

Panel Members will be appointed by agreement of both NELAP Chairs following a full assessment of all Expressions of Interest received by stated closing dates.

Expressions of Interest will be assessed on the basis of demonstrable:

- Passion for securing resilient landscapes to benefit people and nature
- Experience or expertise relevant to the work of the Panel
- Ability to be creative, forward looking and collaborative
- Capacity to network and draw in experience, intelligence and advice from a wide range of contacts
- Attributes not offered by another Panel Member.

Additionally, Natural England's Chair, and/or, NELAP co-Chairs may invite/co-opt individuals for a time-limited period, through a direct approach in order to provide input on specific issues.

Ways of working

Meetings (combination of online or in-person) will be held at least four times per year, with the Natural England co-Chair reporting to the full Natural England Board the outcome of discussions. The Secretariat will be provided through Natural England's Strategy Directorate with support from Private Office / Governance Team.

Papers may be commissioned by:

- i. Requests from the Natural England Board to scrutinise landscape functions, or aspects underpinning key work areas or decisions.
- ii. Topics proposed by NELAP co-Chairs and Members, or Natural England officers.

An outline future programme will be maintained by the Secretariat and reviewed by NELAP at least annually.

Agendas should be a two-way flow, comprising specific requests from NE Board and issues identified by NE staff, and topics that NELAP think NE should be considering. Proposals from members should be raised and agreed with both Chairs in advance of a meeting. A Register of Interests will be maintained by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat will submit detailed agendas to be agreed between the Natural England Landscape Director and NELAP co-Chairs one month in advance of meetings. Secretariat will submit papers to NELAP co-Chairs for QA 12 days before meetings and will circulate finalised copy to NELAP members at least seven days before meetings. Any variations to this timetable will be approved in advance by one or both co-Chairs.

Actions/notes:

- i. Any direct actions will be circulated within two working days of meetings to members of group/authors.

- ii. Draft notes and confirmed actions will be circulated within three working days of meetings.
- iii. A full report of each meeting will be produced for the next NE Board meeting and circulated with papers for the subsequent NELAP meeting.

Guiding Principles for meetings

NELAP members will

- Take action to improve the quality of life for everyone.
- Actively promote democracy, justice and equity in their decision making.
- Regularly consider the emerging culture of the panel and call out any imbalance with honesty and respect.
- Be passionate, provocative, challenging, and inspiring and direct this energy to other panel members, Government, ministers, policy makers, and funders.
- Promote freedom for people to experience beauty in the landscape in their own way by respecting identities, cultures and personal histories.
- At all times be empathetic.
- Take an interest in all landscapes, rural and urban, recognising that everywhere deserves to be cared about.
- Compromise, if necessary, to present a consensus of opinion to Natural England's board.

Information sharing

Between meetings, NELAP members will be kept informed of relevant NE new items, progress of work, projects, and policy updates via the sharing of information, such as, quarterly NE newsletter and monthly NE landscape briefings.

These Terms of Reference may be amended at any time in consultation with NELAP co-Chairs and members. The final decision on the changes to the terms lies with Natural England Chair.

May 2024