

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The aim of this document is to define the Terms of Reference for **CEREDIGION LOCAL PLACES FOR NATURE GRANTS SCHEME PANEL (hereinafter 'the Panel')**.

### Project Background

Local Places for Nature (LP4N) is a Welsh Government funding stream, which aims to restore and enhance natural assets and to deliver 'nature on your doorstep' where people live, work and access public services. Ceredigion Nature Partnership, hosted by Ceredigion County Council, has been allocated £350,000 in capital funding to disburse in the financial year 2024-2025 to eligible projects which meet the funding criteria, and bring benefit to biodiversity and deprived communities within Ceredigion.

### Purpose of the Panel

Ceredigion Nature Partnership seek to put in place an open, transparent, and fair process for determining how this project funding will be distributed. The purpose of the Panel is to assess applications, decide which project will be awarded grant funding, and to agree any conditions or recommendations.

### Overall purpose of the terms of reference document

This document describes the Panel including its composition, powers, and duties.

- 1.2 The Panel shall comprise **a minimum of 5** members, being individuals drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors who are competent to assess grant applications and make decisions on the disbursement of £350,000 worth of public funds in the form of large grants of up to £50,000 and small grants worth up to £5,000 each in value. Members shall be able to demonstrate knowledge of at least one of the following areas: Environmental (biodiversity, ecology); Social / Cultural (deprived communities, equality, and inclusion); Economic (project management, finance administration). The Panel will be supported by advisors able to provide locally relevant advice to each of these areas.
- 1.3 Ceredigion Nature Partnership (CLNP) is supported by a staff team based in Ceredigion County Council and managed by a Coordinator. **The Coordinator or appropriate replacement** will be an advisory member of the panel and able to assist other panel members in interpreting the scheme guidance, with oversight from the LNP Cymru Programme Director at WCVA. Other members of the Conservation Team will **give advice on Ceredigion and site specific biodiversity and planning matters.**
- 1.4 CLNP employs two part time Biodiversity Assistants (and a third is employed by the Conservation Team). Each LP4N project applicant will be allocated to a Biodiversity Assistant to act as their Advocate, to support them through the process of developing their project, submitting their bid, delivering their project (if successful, or if not, perhaps revising, resubmitting, or signposting to other sources of funding) and completing the monitoring and claims process. Advocates will not be members of the Panel but will be available to advocate to the Panel on behalf of the projects if necessary.
- 1.5 The Panel may hold face-to-face, virtual or hybrid meetings to assess applications and decide on grant awards when required. An initial meeting will agree these Terms of Reference.

1.6 This document is constituted in accordance with these terms of reference agreed on **DATE**.

## 2. NAME OF GROUP

Ceredigion Local Places for Nature Grant Scheme Panel **2024/2025**

2.1 Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability are set out in the table below.

2.1.1 Membership shall comprise:

| Name              | Role / Organisation                                  | Responsibility / Sector / Expertise   |
|-------------------|--|---|
| <b>Internal</b>   |  |   |
| Cllr Keith Henson | CCC's Biodiversity Champion<br>Chair of CLNP         | Chair of Panel<br>Public Sector<br>Environmental / Social / Cultural / Economic             |
| Lindsay Harkett   | Community Facilitator,<br>CCC, Adult Social Services | Independent grant assessor<br>Public Sector<br>Environmental / Social / Cultural / Economic |
| <b>External</b>   |  |   |
| Becky Wright      | People and Places Team<br>Natural Resources Wales    | Public Sector<br>Environmental (Biodiversity expertise)                                     |
| Mair Davies       | Grant Scheme Manager<br>Keep Wales Tidy              | Voluntary Sector<br>Environmental / Social / Cultural                                       |
| Alastair Hughes   | Parents for a Future                                 | Voluntary Sector<br>Environmental / Social / Economic                                       |
| Joey Hughes       | Director<br>Merched y Berllan                        | Private Sector<br>Environmental / Economic  |

| <b>Supported by</b>    |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Rachel Auckland</i> | <i>Coordinator,<br/>Ceredigion Nature Partnership</i> | <i>Compliance with WG LP4N guidance and LNP<br/>Cymru best practice / Public Sector</i> |
| <i>Fiona Moran</i>     | <i>Biodiversity Assistant</i>                         | <i>Project support North Ceredigion</i>   |
| <i>Jake Rayson</i>     | <i>Biodiversity Assistant</i>                         | <i>Project support South / West Ceredigion</i>  |
| <i>Chris Harris</i>    | <i>Biodiversity Assistant</i>                         | <i>Project support East Ceredigion and Local<br/>Nature Reserves and Wildlife Sites</i> |
| <i>Gillian Clark</i>   | <i>Service Support Officer</i>                        | <i>Project Administration</i>   |
| <i>Anna Bransden</i>   | <i>Planning Ecologist</i>                             | <i>Specific local biodiversity and planning advice</i>                                  |
| <i>Alison Heal</i>     | <i>Senior Ecologist</i>                               | <i>Compliance with WG LP4N guidance and LNP<br/>Cymru best practice / Public Sector</i> |

2.2 Scope: **CEREDIGION LOCAL PLACES FOR NATURE GRANTS SCHEME** invites applications for eligible projects worth up to £50,000. Panel members must be competent and authorised to make decisions on projects up to that value, although a number of smaller projects are expected to bid. The panel will be responsible for deciding on how the funds will be shared over smaller and larger projects, to ensure fairness, and best use of funds to meet local and national priorities.

## 3. Wider internal / external stakeholder engagement (if applicable)

3.1 The following have been identified as key stakeholders that will be required to be kept informed of progress. The staff support team will ensure that they are included in all correspondence relating to panel meetings.

| Name            | Role                                     | Responsibility / Accountability |
|-----------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Internal</b> |  |                                 |
| Arwyn Davies    | Corporate Manager, Growth and Enterprise | Project Oversight               |
| Graeme Lane     | Asset Manager                            | Project Oversight               |
| Alison Heal     | Senior Ecologist                         | Project Oversight               |
| <b>External</b> |  |                                 |
| Chris Lazo      | LP4N Programme Director, WCVA            | Project Oversight               |

## 4. Quorum and Attendance

4.1a Should any Member be unavailable to attend, they may nominate a deputy, to attend in their place with delegated decision-making arrangements subject to the agreement of the Chair.

4.1b Should any Member or Members resign from the panel a replacement shall be found, following the process in 1.2 and in consultation with the relevant CLO (currently Economy and Regeneration).

4.2 A Quorum is formed when 5 members are present, one of whom must be the Chair.

4.3 There may be occasions when decisions need to be taken at short notice or when a meeting is held but is not quorate. In such situations decisions may be taken by written/electronic procedure.

4.4 The Panel will seek to reach agreement on recommendations by discussion and consensus. On occasions when a formal vote is required each Member or Alternate shall be entitled to one vote and decisions will be made on the basis of a simple majority.

## 5. Agendas and Papers

5.1 The agenda will be agreed by the Chair with support from the Project team in the preparation of papers.

5.2 All papers to be provided (ONE WEEK OR TO BE AGREED) prior to the meeting.

5.3 All meetings will be documented with key discussion and actions logged and circulated.

## 6. Frequency of Meetings

6.1 The Panel will meet to assess each round of applications, and may decide, in discussion with the support team, how many rounds are run in any given financial year.

## 7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 The effectiveness of the Panel structure and its governance will be subject to ongoing review and the Terms of Reference will be updated and reviewed periodically. A review will take place at the end of each financial year, for as long as the scheme runs.

## Other matters to consider:

### ➤ **Processes for Election of Chair and Vice Chair.**

Where possible, CCC's Biodiversity Champion / Chair of Ceredigion LNP will chair the Panel. In the event that they are unable to do so, for whatever reason, the Panel may elect a chair for the duration.

### ➤ **Member declarations of interest.**

In the event that a member of the Panel is linked with a project application in any way which might amount to, or be perceived as, a conflict of interest, that member may not assess or decide whether or not to award a grant to that applicant. Any conflicts of interest will be declared and recorded according to CCC policy.

### ➤ **Welsh language requirements - The Welsh Language should be given the same status as the English language.**

Applications are welcomed in both Welsh and English and neither language will be treated more or less favourably. All communications including minutes and agendas of meetings will be produced bilingually. Panel members and advisors will be welcome to contribute to meetings in the language of their choice. Wherever possible, simultaneous translation facilities will be made available if needed. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the Panel's decision in the language of their choice.

### ➤ **Communications plan for the Group.**

In order to ensure that the grant awards process is open, transparent, and fair, these terms of reference and details of the composition and membership of the Panel will be a matter of public record, available to anyone on request.

Communication between members, advisors, and the project support team outside of meetings will be by email. All stakeholders agree to communicate by 'open copy' email.

### ➤ **Putting in place a process for circulating documents, which are deemed confidential.**

All project applications are deemed confidential. Project application details will be uploaded to an assessment system which will be held online in a password protected area. Access will be available to all stakeholders who agree not to share any of the information contained therein with anyone outside of the stakeholder group. The system will allow members to score projects against a range of criteria and give comments on them. Advisors and support team members will be able to add comments but not to score projects.

## 8. Version Control

| Date     | Version | Description (Initial version / Update on XXXX) | Author          |
|----------|---------|--|-----------------|
| 17.05.24 | 0.1     | Initial version                                | Rachel Auckland |
|          | 0.2     |  |                 |
|          |         |  |                 |
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