

Heaths to Sea Landscape Recovery Project

Project Board, Project Advisory Groups & Project Secretariat & Management Team

Terms of Reference

Date written: 6th February 2024 (updated June 2024)

1. Background

Clinton Devon Estates has been awarded a grant from Defra to deliver a two-year 'Development Phase' for a Landscape Recovery project focused across 4,000+ hectares in the lower Otter valley, East Devon.

Landscape Recovery initiatives are part of the government's new Environmental Land Management Schemes that also include Countryside Stewardship and the Sustainable Farming Incentive. Landscape Recovery aims to deliver nature recovery at scale as well as contributing to national environmental priorities including achieving net zero carbon, reducing flood risk and improving water quality. Clinton Devon Estates' project is one of 34 successful projects funded in round two of this scheme (from 2024). Round one (2021/2022) funded 22 projects.

The development phase will be informed by various technical studies (ecological; hydrological & flood risk; cultural heritage etc.) that will be commissioned by the project during 2024 and 2025. These studies will help ensure that any potential future implementation phase of the project is technically feasible and will deliver landscape recovery aspirations to the maximum degree. A key output of the development phase will be a Land Management Plan that will show what land management changes will be made to the landscape in the delivery phase and what the anticipated benefits to wildlife, ecosystem services and society will be over a 20+ year timescale.

In addition, an important part of the development phase will be to secure green private finance agreements to part-fund a subsequent implementation phase over the long term. The government's ambition is that in future, environmental improvements nationally will be funded by both public and private investment. The data produced through the commissioning of baseline studies of this project will also need to inform the metrics that will be required to provide potential investors and associated shareholders with the confidence that any uplift in wildlife/ecosystem services promised over the delivery phase (20 years+) is reliably monitored and measured to fulfil the requirements of their investment.

A broad summary of the project ambition is outlined below:

The project will power nature recovery across the agricultural hinterlands linking three parts of the Pebblebed Heaths NNR. It seeks to build connectivity through 4,144 ha of the lower Otter catchment and includes floodplain restoration of 9km of the main River Otter and a further 9km of its tributaries as well as 96+ hectares of riparian and multi-purpose woodland creation. This vision is compatible with a productive and accessible landscape that supports food production, net zero and timber needs.

A map of the broad landscape recovery area is provided in Appendix 1.

2. Project Governance

Project governance for the Landscape Recovery project is shown in Appendix 2. It comprises: a *Project Board* that will be accountable for the success of the project; a *Technical Advisory Group* to advise on land management change; a *Stakeholder Communication Advisory Group* to understand community priorities and concerns for the landscape and to inform project design; a *Green Finance Advisory Group* to help inform the business model; a *Project Secretariat* and *Project Management Team* to be responsible for project management and delivery and to ensure that reporting requirements of the funder are met.

3. Project Board

The purpose of the *Project Board* is to:

- i) Be accountable for the success or failure of the project.
- ii) Provide direction to the project team, including the Project Sponsor, Manager and Executive.
- iii) Provide the resources and authorise the funds for the project as outlined in the budget.
- iv) Make decisions on escalated issues.
- v) Provide final project assurance.

The Project Board will run for the duration of the project development phase (24-months, 2024 – 2026) and will meet quarterly.

Membership:

Name
CEO, Clinton Devon Estates, Executive & Chair
Project Liaison Officer, Environment Agency - Defra representative, Advisory
Lord Clinton, Senior User
Director of Agriculture, Clinton Devon Estates, Senior User
Director of Forestry & Reserves, Clinton Devon Estates, Senior User
Director of Environment Strategy & Evidence, Clinton Devon Estates, Senior Supplier / Project Sponsor

The Project Board will be supported by a *Project Secretariat* and *Project Management Team*, who will undertake the day-to-day project management and reporting responsibilities as defined below:

- Responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the project including implementing and monitoring a schedule of project activities to achieve project objectives and indicators.
- Leading the development of several of the required Project Plans, including the:
 - Land Management Plan
 - Project Management and Governance Plan
 - Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. There is in-depth guidance in the project Handbook on what must be included in these plans.
- Leading contract and tender process management in line with project guidelines and Defra procurement processes.

- Working with the Estate’s Finance Manager to complete quarterly project claims, and to ensure works are kept within budget and accounted for following Defra’s financial procedures.
- Managing project reporting processes, including keeping risk registers and action logs up to date.
- Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of those involved with project delivery.
- Chairing internal, contractor and client project meetings.
- Providing sign off on documents and tenders under delegated authority from the Board.
- The Project Management team comprises a Project Executive (Senior Project Manager), Project Manager and Project Support Officer

4. Technical Advisory Group

The purpose of the Technical Advisory Group is to:

- vi) Advise the project team on key ecosystem service enhancements and wildlife priorities for the lower Otter catchment to ensure the nature recovery ambitions of the project are fulfilled; the maps in Appendix 1 will provide an initial reference point for discussion.
- i) Advise on the content and focus of any technical work briefs to be commissioned by the project to ensure that public money is spent wisely and that the data collected is relevant to informing the Land Management Plan and associated Monitoring & Evaluation Plans, thereby achieving the project aims;
- ii) Comment on technical reports received by the project and advise on how their findings should inform land management changes that will form part of the Land Management Plan and suggest where data gaps remain and where further technical studies may be required.

Membership

Membership of the group will run for the duration of the project development phase (24-months, 2024 – 2026). The following table lists the initial membership of the Advisory Group. The members have been approached to represent a broad spectrum of technical interests and experience, locally, nationally and internationally. They include statutory and non-statutory organisations, environmental bodies, research interests as well as independents with relevant experience. This list is not fixed and we anticipate that the individuals representing organisations may change over time; it is also our expectation that new members will be invited as the project progresses and where knowledge gaps are identified.

Natural England
Environment Agency
East Devon AONB
Devon Wildlife Trust
RSPB
County Ecologist, Devon County Council
County Archaeologist, Devon County Council

East Devon District Council
Westcountry Rivers Trust
Exeter University
Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV)
Independent members x3

It is proposed that Clinton Devon Estates will chair the first meeting, with the permanent Chair agreed by the group at the inaugural meeting.

Meetings

Meeting frequency to be agreed by the Technical Group at the first meeting as deemed appropriate but likely to be two to three times a year, each lasting two hours and hosted at the Rolle Estate Office. Participants who are not able to attend in person will be able to join remotely via Microsoft Teams. After the first inaugural meeting all others to be scheduled at least six months in advance. It is anticipated that it may not be possible to find dates that suit all members, in which case the dates and times that suit the majority will be chosen. Field trips will be arranged as requested by the Advisory Group.

Meetings will be minuted with summary of discussions focusing on actions circulated to group members for comment within two weeks of the last meeting being held. Minutes will detail all recommendations made by the group.

Attendees

The group will be attended by the members of the group or by their deputies if they are unable to attend. It is possible for those in the group to suggest additional members should the need arise.

Sharing of Information & Resources

Members can share information and resources with other members of the group during the meetings. Group members must give permission to be contacted by email by other members or meeting attendees regarding the project. The project team wish to maintain a culture of openness and transparency with confidential information kept to a minimum. Where a document is confidential it will be clearly stated as such.

Documents of interest or for review will be shared by email in advance of each meeting (ideally at least two weeks).

Commitment

All Technical Advisory Group members are expected to: participate constructively in agreed meetings; use the benefit of their experience and knowledge to try and help the project team deliver the project's landscape recovery objectives; to consider and respond to requests for technical advice from the project team as best as they are able with the time available to them.

The project is grateful for the Technical Group's support and will endeavour to respect their time and be focused regarding requests for advice with this focused around meeting dates.

5. Stakeholder Engagement Advisory Group

The purpose of this advisory group is to:

- i) Act as a formal forum for discussion around the project's goals, actions and plans as they develop.
- i) Provide advice on how best the project can achieve its aspiration that its engagement process follows the principles of empowerment, representation, trust, working with uncertainties and providing clear and accessible information.
- ii) Provide advice on how local people should be kept informed on project progress and can reasonably contribute to it; as part of the project process an Engagement Plan will be developed by the project secretariat.
- iii) Ensure that the Technical Steering Group and Project Board understand community priorities and concerns from the earliest stages of project development with a view to this informing project design; as part of the Stakeholder Communication Advisory Group an **Issues Log** will be kept and maintained by the project secretariat.

The remit of the Stakeholder Group does not extend to land management decision making or providing strategic direction.

There is a desire that any plans resulting from this initiative have broad community support. For the project to proceed to a delivery phase at the end of the development phase it must also provide a fundable proposition for landscape recovery that:

- i) Fulfils the government's objectives for this scheme
- ii) Is technically feasible to deliver on the ground
- iii) Is affordable and adequately financed
- iv) Has the support of those managing the land

Thus, it may not be possible to accommodate all community and stakeholder wishes into the plan, but where it is not possible to take suggestions forward to delivery, the reasons why will be made clear.

Membership

Membership of the group will run for the duration of the project development phase (24-months, 2024 – 2026).

- Budleigh Salterton Town Council
- East Budleigh Parish Council
- Otterton Parish Council
- Colaton Raleigh Parish Council
- Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council
- Otter Valley Association
- Devon Countryside Access Forum
- East Devon District Council (Chair)
- River Otter Fisheries Association
- Clinton Devon Estates
- *Tenant Farmer Representative(s) (TBC)*
- *National Farmers Unions and / or Countryside Landowners' Association (TBC)*

Meetings

Meeting frequency to be agreed by the Stakeholder Group but likely to be two to three times a year, each lasting two hours and hosted at the Rolle Estate Office or an alternative local community venue (local hall) of preference. Where technology allows, participants who are not able to attend in person will be able to join remotely via Microsoft Teams. Due to numbers that can be easily accommodated a maximum of two people can attend from each organisation. After the first inaugural meeting all others to be scheduled at least six months in advance. It is anticipated that it may not be possible to find dates that suit all members, in which case the dates and times that suit the majority will be chosen.

Meetings will be minuted with discussion summary focussing on actions circulated to group members within two weeks of the last meeting being held. It is proposed that Clinton Devon Estates will chair the first meeting, with the permanent Chair agreed by the group at the inaugural meeting.

Attendees

External experts are the only non-group members who may at times be invited to the meetings, to provide additional explanations and information on the latest findings and research. It is possible for those in the group to suggest additional stakeholder representation as the need arises.

Sharing of Information & Resources

Members can share information and resources with other members of the group during the meetings. Group members must give permission to be contacted by email by other members or meeting attendees regarding the project. The project team wish to maintain a culture of openness and transparency with confidential information kept to a minimum. Where a document is confidential it will be clearly stated as such.

Documents of interest or for review will be shared by email in advance of each meeting (ideally at least two weeks).

Commitment

All Stakeholder Advisory Group members are expected to: participate constructively in agreed meetings; actively feedback to and represent the interests of their specific community; to consider and respond to issues, risks and opportunities identified by the Technical Steering Group or Project Secretariat.

The project is grateful for the Stakeholder Communication Advisory Group's support and will endeavour to respect their time and be focused regarding attendance of meetings and the reviewing of information.

6. Stakeholder Engagement Advisory Group

The purpose of the *Green Finance Advisory Group* is to:

- ii) Advise on the most appropriate green finance model that should be pursued by the project team and how best to succeed in the marketplace (what are we selling, who would want to buy and why, and what do they require in return?)
- iii) Advise on short-listing of likely priority investment areas within the project area and associated business risks
- iv) Advise on metrics, baseline data and governance that will be required to fulfil the requirements of long-term private investment (see also 'i' above)
- v) Advise on market value of proposed ecosystem services uplift from the scheme; this may involve the project commissioning of additional supporting natural capital valuations
- vi) Advise on the approach that should be taken in approaching potential investors – whether bespoke or via existing trading platforms - including the appropriate format of a prospectus or similar
- vii) Advise on where an aggregated finance model (with adjacent clusters) may be of benefit

Membership

Membership of the group will run for the duration of the project development phase (24-months, 2024 – 2026). The following table lists the initial membership of the Green Finance Advisory Group. The members have been approached due to their wide range of experience in green finance. It is proposed that Clinton Devon Estates will chair the first meeting, with the permanent Chair agreed by the group at the inaugural meeting.

Name
GlenSilva GmbH and Adhoi Partners
Green Finance Institute
North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster CIC
University of Exeter
Devon Wildlife Trust
Clinton Devon Estates

Meetings

Meeting frequency to be agreed by the Group at the first meeting as deemed appropriate but likely to be two to three times a year, each lasting two hours and hosted at the Rolle Estate Office. Participants who are not able to attend in person will be able to join remotely via Microsoft Teams. After the first inaugural meeting all others to be scheduled at least six months in advance. It is anticipated that it may not be possible to find dates that suit all members, in which case the dates and times that suit the majority will be chosen. Field trips will be arranged as requested by the Advisory Group.

Meetings will be minuted with draft minutes focusing on actions circulated to group members for comment within two weeks of the last meeting being held. Minutes will detail all recommendations made by the group.

Sharing of Information & Resources

Members can share information and resources with other members of the group during the meetings. Group members must give permission to be contacted by email by other members or meeting attendees regarding the project. The project team wish to maintain a culture of

openness and transparency with confidential information kept to a minimum. Where a document is confidential it will be clearly stated as such.

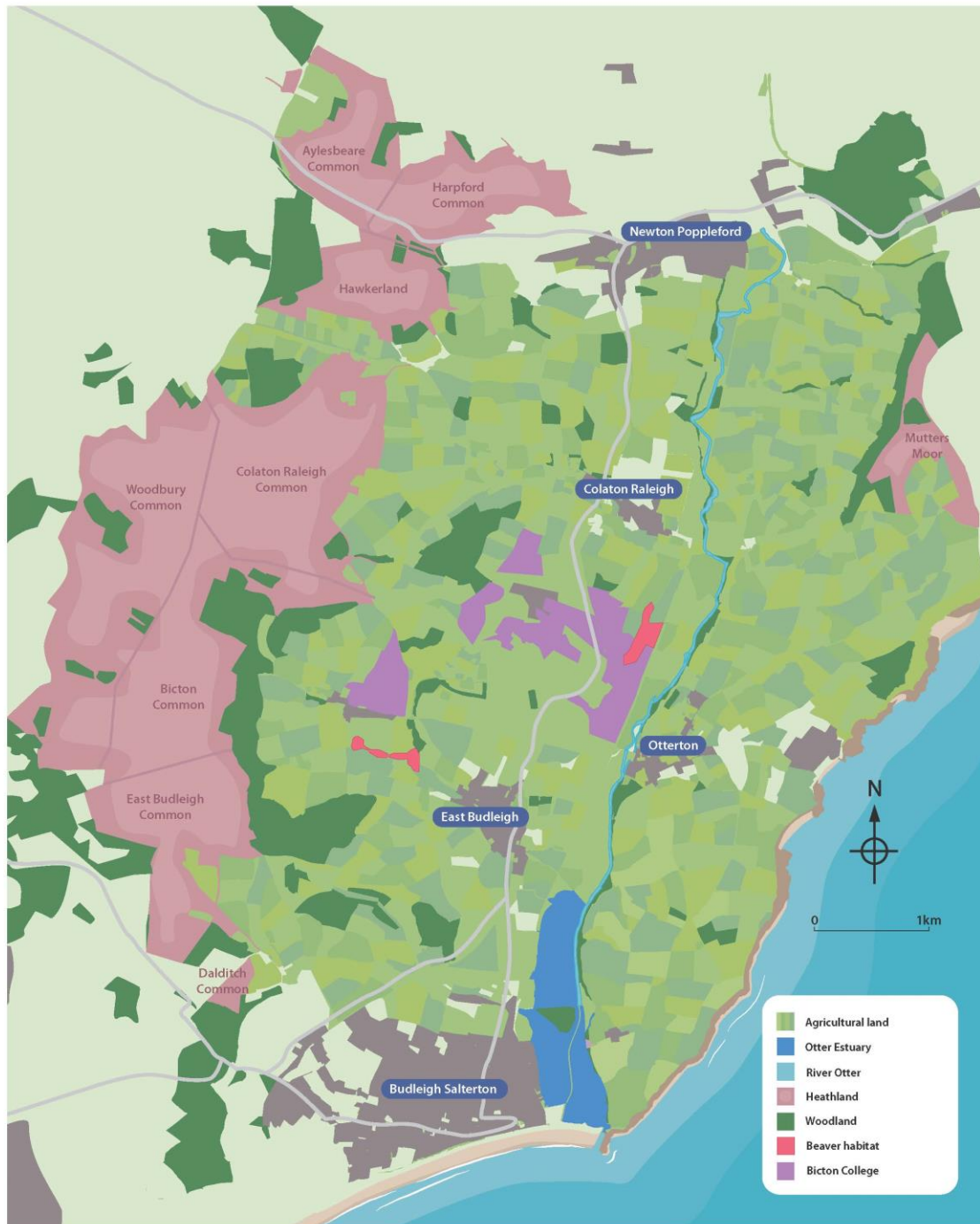
Documents of interest or for review will be shared by email in advance of each meeting (ideally at least two weeks).

Commitment

All Advisory Group members are expected to: use the benefit of their experience and knowledge to try and help the project team deliver the project's landscape recovery green finance objectives; to consider and respond to requests for green finance advice from the project team as best as they are able with the time available to them.

The project is grateful for the Technical Group's support and will endeavour to respect their time and be focused regarding requests for advice with this focused around meeting dates.

Appendix 1: Map of broad project area



Appendix 2: Governance Model

