

NATURE IMPROVEMENT AREA

# GREATER THAMES MARSHES

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## Terms of Reference NIA Advisory Group

### Purpose

The NIA Advisory Group (AG) is to act as a sub-forum of the Project Steering Group (PSG) to promote and deliver wider engagement and discussion from stakeholders and to provide advice to the PSG on the delivery of objectives and projects of the Greater Thames Marshes NIA.

Members of the Advisory Group (AG) are to act individually as Ambassadors for the Greater Thames Marshes NIA by promoting the NIA and encouraging their peers to engage.

### AG Aims and Objectives

- To provide a forum for stakeholders to engage with the PSG, leading to increased awareness and shared understanding of the Greater Thames Marshes NIA objectives.
- To identify barriers and solutions to ensure effective delivery of NIA objectives across partner organisations escalating statutory and regulatory barriers to the PSG.
- To seek a joined-up approach to ongoing activities across the Greater Thames sharing with the group other relevant work being undertaken by your respective organisations, for example, Local Nature Partnerships (LNP's) and action planning.
- To act as an open forum for discussion where all members hold an equal say and conflicts are resolved through discussion and debate, with the remit to provide advice and recommendations to the PSG regarding the delivery and legacy of the NIA.
- To bring together interests across east London, south Essex and north Kent on NIA issues, building a common understanding of issues affecting biodiversity, green infrastructure, climate change in relation to the natural environment and a way forward to deal with these changes.
- To have complementary policies within neighbouring Authorities' LDF, facilitating the duty to co-operate, where there are cross boundary natural environment issues, such as policies relating to the SPAs, Climate Change, Biodiversity, Water Framework Directive, Flood Risk and Green Infrastructure.

### Review

There will be an annual review of the aims and purposes of the Advisory Group.

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## Membership

Representatives from PSG will be required to attend these meetings but it is not obligatory for all to attend all meetings (although preferable where possible / appropriate).

The following organisations have been suggested as members of the Advisory Group. Final membership will be determined by the PSG following consultation with the AG:

- Barking and Dagenham Borough Council
- Bexley Borough Council
- Bretts
- Buglife
- Canterbury City Council
- Castle Point Borough Council
- Church Commissioners
- Country Landowner and Business Association (CLA)
- Crown Estate
- Dartford Borough Council
- DP World London Gateway
- English Heritage
- Essex Field Club
- Gravesham Borough Council
- Hadlow College
- Independent Farmers (Kent and Essex)
- Kent County Council
- Kent Wildfowlers
- Leigh-on-Sea Borough Council
- London Borough of Havering
- Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board
- Medway Council
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Peel Ports
- Plantlife
- Port of London Authority (PLA)
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- Swale Borough Council
- The Wildlife Trust (Kent and Essex)
- Thurrock Council

## Format

The agenda and papers for each meeting will be set and circulated in advance by the NIA project administrator (based at TEP) and the attendance or apologies will be noted. The format of meetings will be adapted to take into account the needs and demands of the Advisory Group, but should include the following standing items:

1. Review of actions and recommendations from previous meeting (5%)
2. Progress report from NIA Project Steering Group (15%)
3. Discussion time and Topical issues (70%)
4. Summary of other pilot NIA activities (5%)
5. AOB (5%)
6. Date and location of next meeting

The Advisory Group will meet 3 times a year with meeting locations alternating between London, North Kent and South Essex, lasting approximately ½ day with the possibility of a site visit for the other half of the day. Active engagement between meetings with NIA Lead contacts and others to promote delivery is encouraged.

Additional meetings may be organised outside this structure if the demands of the project require. Thematic “Task and Finish Groups” may be formed to cover specific projects or sectors involved in the NIA, for example a Farm Conservation Advice Steering Group. Task-Finish Groups will report back to the AG.

## Scope

The Advisory Group are able to hold the PSG to account, requesting access to information regarding the decision-making, budget management and delivery process of NIA objectives.

The Advisory Group does not have decision-making powers, but can put forward recommendations and advice to the PSG. The PSG are obliged to give full consideration to these recommendations, but hold final decision-making power.

## Structure Chart

