



**Suffolk & Essex  
Coast & Heaths  
National  
Landscape**



**Dedham Vale  
National  
Landscape  
& Stour Valley**

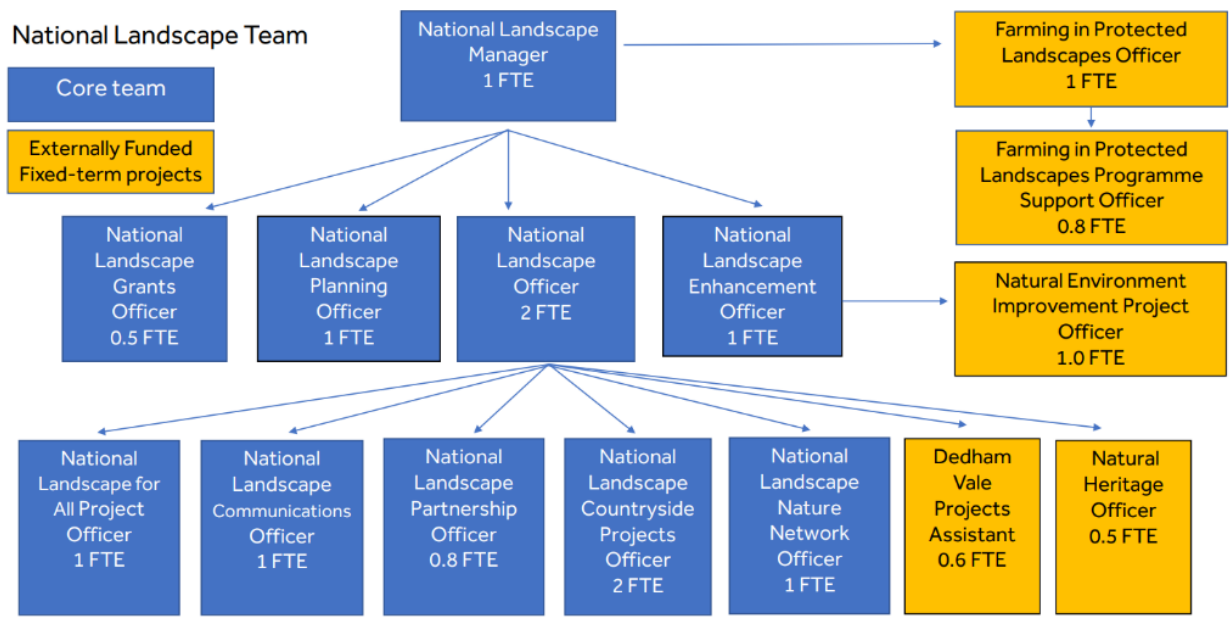
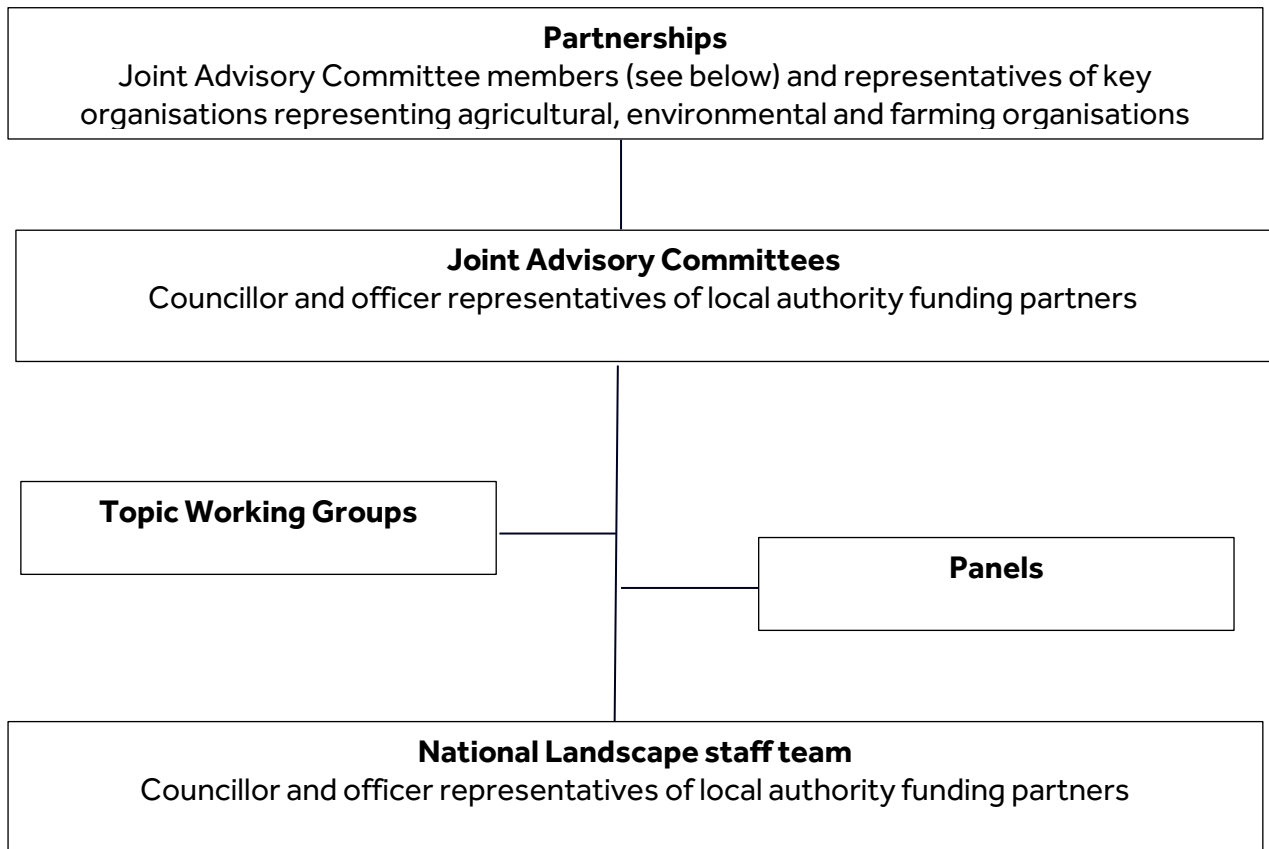
Guidelines for members of the  
Joint Advisory Committees and Partnerships of the:

**Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley and  
Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape**

National Landscape is the brand of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB.

July 2024

## Structure



Staff team structure: May 2024

## **A note on nomenclature and legalities**

The use of the brand name, National Landscape, is used throughout this document for legally designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB.

The AONB designation is a statutory one, but the staff team and Partnership are not statutory consultees. The Joint Advisory Committee may offer advice on National Landscape matters to others.

Statutory bodies, including but not limited to local authorities, have a legal duty to 'seek to further the purpose of a National Landscape' which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Natural beauty for each National Landscape has been defined.

## **PARTNERSHIP**

### **Key Purpose**

To deliver the vision of the Management Plan and champion the statutory purpose of the National Landscape and the qualities of the associated project areas. Partnerships may set up Topic Working Groups to develop advice for the Partnerships. Partnerships may endorse Position Statements on topics of interest to the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscapes.

### **What is expected of Partnership members?**

All members of the Partnership are expected to act as an advocate for the National Landscapes and the associated project areas and therefore may well be required to operate apart from their own organisation.

Partnership members will be expected to promote the objectives of the National Landscape within their own organisations and act as a conduit for information between their organisation and the Partnership and be active in implementing the Management Plan.

Partnership members are encouraged to bring forward items for the agenda. The National Landscape team acts as the secretariat.

### **Membership**

Local authority funding partners, representatives from Agricultural, Business, Tourism and Environmental sectors. Membership is reviewed on a regular basis.

Observers are permitted at the discretion of the chair.

### **Frequency and timing of meetings**

A minimum of twice per year.

### **Chairing**

Any member of the Partnership, bar members of the staff team, can become the chair. The chair will stand for 3 years. The vice chair is elected and serves on a similar basis. The chair will also be required to attend meetings with officers outside of the formal Partnership meetings. A vice chair will be appointed at the same time and will deputise for the chair as appropriate.

Voting procedures for the election of chair and vice chair are outlined in annex 1.

### **Voting on Partnership topics** (ie not chair elections)

The Partnership is encouraged to operate on a consensus basis, to choose options that are best for the National Landscapes and associated project areas. Each person on the Partnership will have a vote. The chair has the casting vote if necessary.

## **JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (JAC)**

### **JAC Membership**

- An officer and up to two councillors from each funding authority for each JAC.
- The National Landscape manager.
- Option to co-opt people to specific meetings.

Additional attendees (not members) at JAC meetings:

- Observers are permitted at the discretion of the chair.
- Presenters from non-members on relevant topics,
- Members of the staff team to help facilitate the meeting.

## **COMBINED JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CJAC)**

For efficiency purposes, the JACs of the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley and the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape meet at the same time in a meeting referred to as the Combined Joint Advisory Committee.

Elected members can only vote on issues relating to the JAC they sit on.

The CJAC will be chaired alternately by the individual JAC chairs.

### **Key Purpose**

As representatives of the Local Authority funding partners the JAC members will scrutinise finances, annual staff action plans and processes. JAC members are expected to offer support and advice to the National Landscape staff team.

Each JAC has the devolved responsibility for producing, monitoring and reviewing the statutory AONB Management Plan and will draw in expertise from the wider relevant Partnership.

Membership of the JAC does not replace the section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), as amended, on statutory authorities to seek to further the purpose of the AONB (branded as National Landscape) when decision making.

### **What is expected of JAC members?**

The requirements will be as for those on the Partnership. In addition, it is JAC members will:

- Provide vision, direction and support for the National Landscape team.
- Ensure financial stability for the National Landscape team including support to securing funding from partners and ensuring financial responsibility.
- JAC members liaise with other councillors and officers prior to, and between meetings, to promote issues of interest to the National Landscapes and associated project areas.

### **Frequency and timing of meetings**

The CJAC (ie the two independent Joint Advisory Committees) meets a minimum of three times per year.

### **Chairing**

A chair will be appointed for each National Landscape JAC. Any member of each JAC, except for the National Landscape manager, may be elected as a chair. The appointment of chair will run for three years. It is anticipated the vice chair will support the chair in running of the meetings.

The chair may be required to attend meetings with officers outside of the formal JAC meetings. A vice chair will be appointed following the appointment of the chair and will deputise for the chair as appropriate. Voting procedures for the election of chair and vice chair are outlined in annex 1.

### **Voting on JAC topics (ie not chair elections)**

Only elected councillors have a vote at each JAC. Elected members can only vote on issues relating to the JAC they sit on. The relevant chair will have a casting vote if necessary. The JACs are encouraged to operate on a consensus basis, to choose options that are best for the National Landscape and associated project areas.

**Members of the Joint Advisory Committee are expected to conform to the seven principles of public life, also known as the Nolan principles. These principles are listed below with a slight variation to reflect the National Landscape situation:**

1. **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. **Integrity:** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. **Objectivity:** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **Openness:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.
7. **Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge behaviour not in keeping with the said principles wherever it occurs

## **TOPIC WORKING GROUPS**

### **Key Purpose**

To work as task and finish groups on specific topics. Examples include formulating responses to significant planning applications impacting on the National Landscapes and associated Project areas, or issues of significance as to require support for the National Landscape staff team.

### **Membership**

Can be made up of any member of the Partnership and can call upon external expertise if necessary.

### **Frequency and timing**

By agreement of working group members.

### **Chairing**

Each group will nominate a chair at its first meeting who will be responsible for chairing the meeting and reporting back to the Joint Advisory Committee or Partnership, whichever is most relevant.

## **PANELS**

### **Key Purpose**

To act as a less formal forum for Partnership members to be briefed and discuss specific topics between Partnership meetings. These can be proposed by any member of the Partnerships.

### **Membership**

Can be made up of any member of the Partnership and can call upon external expertise if necessary.

### **Frequency and timing**

Ad hoc.

### **Chairing**

No chair required. But a named person to report back to relevant Joint Advisory Committee or Partnership, whichever is most relevant.

## **Annex 1: Chair and Vice Chair election procedures**

The process outlined below relates to elections to the role of chair and vice chair for both the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape and the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Joint Advisory Committees and Partnerships. Elections are due every 3 years reflecting the tenure of the role. There is no limit on elected chairs and vice chairs standing again.

Should a chair stand down, for example if they no longer represent the organisation, they were nominated to serve on at the JAC or Partnership then an election will be held to appoint to the role for the remaining time of the 3-year period.

For the avoidance of any doubt the roles are:

- Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape JAC chair
- Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape JAC vice chair
- Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Partnership chair
- Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Partnership vice chair
- Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley JAC chair
- Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley JAC vice chair
- Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Partnership chair
- Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Partnership vice chair

### **Notification of the election:**

The National Landscape team will notify the CJAC or Partnership members eligible to vote, by email, of the need for an election at least one month before the votes are due to be cast.

### **Call for nominations for roles of chair and vice chair:**

The National Landscape manager, or designated substitute, will request by email a nomination and seconder for each role at least 3 weeks before the scheduled election from those eligible to vote.

Those eligible to vote are not allowed to nominate or second themselves. The National Landscape manager, or designated substitute, will notify that the call for nominations will close one week before the scheduled election. Nominations for the roles are required to be submitted to the National Landscape manager, or designated substitute, by email within the prescribed times and dates.

Those nominated maybe required to submit a 350-word written statement indicating why they consider they should be chair/vice chair by the close of the nomination period.

### **Eligibility to vote (chair and vice chair elections):**

For JAC elections, only elected councillors are eligible to vote.

For Partnership elections, each individual organisation represented has one vote, bar the local authority membership where each elected councillor has a vote, but council officers do not have a vote in chair and vice chair elections.

Where a local authority member represents more than one authority on the JAC or Partnership, they are eligible to the number of votes consummate with the organisations they represent, eg a councillor that has a place on a JAC and Partnership from both a district and a county council will have 2 votes.

**Voting procedure:**

Once the nominations process has concluded the National Landscape team will inform those eligible to vote who the candidates are and share any written statements that are available of the candidates.

Those seeking election may contact those eligible to vote to outline their reasons for wishing to be elected.

Votes can only be cast by email. Votes should be sent to the National Landscape manager, or the designated substitute, from a recognised email account, ie from an address reflecting the organisation they represent. Only those votes cast from the moment the National Landscape team have informed those eligible to vote of the nominations until 11:59pm on the day before the election results are to be announced, usually the day of a JAC or Partnership meeting will be counted. Those nominated are eligible to vote.

**Counting the votes:**

The National Landscape team will count the votes and the count will be verified by a second member of the National Landscape team. The National Landscape team will inform the candidates at the earliest opportunity of the outcome of the vote after the vote closes and announce the result at the next meeting of the JAC or Partnership meeting.

- The winner will be those receiving a simple majority.
- In the event of a tie, when 3 or more candidates have stood for election, the last placed candidate will be withdrawn, and a new vote will be taken, this process will be repeated as necessary.
- If there is still a tie between two candidates, the vote will be decided by the toss of a coin.
- Once the chair is decided the new chair will run a vote for a vice chair using a similar procedure to that described above.

The winning candidates will assume the role with immediate effect.

**Where there is a contested election for a chair role:**

Should an election be required for the role of chair for either of the Joint Advisory Committees or Partnerships the election for the vice chair role will be held over until the subsequent meeting.

This is because candidates seeking the chair role may have decided not to have sought nomination for the vice chair role. The post of any vice chair role during this period will remain vacant.

**Disputed outcomes:**

Should anyone eligible to vote has concerns over the election process they should alert the National Landscape manager as soon as practically possible, or if appropriate to the National Landscape's line manager at the team's host authority.

Disputed outcomes will be forwarded to the host authority's monitoring officer for investigation.