

The Tamara Landscape Partnership –draft scheme outline for an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund

Background

Straddling the border between Devon and Cornwall, the Tamar Valley is defined and shaped by the rivers Tamar, Tavy and Lynher. The importance of water to this landscape is both tangible and intangible as it infiltrates and travels through and across the land both naturally and unconfined but also as a resource harnessed by man being intrinsic to water supply, water quality, biodiversity, heritage, recreation, transport etc. The rivers are central to the character of the landscape and the lives of the surrounding communities. The Tamara LP aims to strengthen links, raise awareness of the importance of the many cultural, historic and natural assets of the area. It will help to conserve the landscape heritage particularly associated with this watery legacy and will find new solutions for a more resilient future in the face of climate change and population growth.

The rivers are 'shouldered' by steeply sloping woods often cloaking the hidden but strong cultural legacy of industrial heritage and halcyon days of market gardening in the Valley. This landscape is under threat from development pressure to the south, reduction in small landholdings and loss of key habitats and species within the scheme area. The advent of Brexit poses uncertainty but also offers opportunities. Ensuring that the enhancement and management of this valued landscape is at the heart of new approaches during this transition period is a high priority.

Due to the geographic location, the topography, limited river crossings and convoluted roads and lanes, the Tamar Valley has remained a hidden gem. Under-utilised railways of great scenic value wend from Plymouth to Gunnislake and cross from Plymouth to Saltash and St Germans. The potential of the river to transport visitors is unfulfilled and existing long distance routes and the proposed creation of new walking and cycling routes could bring more local and visitors from afar to explore in a sustainable way that supports the local economy.

Much of the strong and distinctive character and sense of place relies on traditional approaches and techniques, many of which are becoming scarce or lost. The TLP will deliver training and skills, rooted in the heritage, but with a view to a sustainable future, developing local supply chains and supporting small businesses. The refinement and development of a fledgling Visitor Giving pilot will develop businesses as heritage ambassadors, but also help to sustain the TLP legacy.

The Partnership is concerned about the separation of communities from their landscape and cultural heritage. Opportunities to work and involve people living in the towns and cities surrounding the AONB are being explored, especially relating to the production of local food and supporting people to get out and about into the countryside, to enjoy the heritage and the health and well-being benefits that this brings with it

The Tamara LP partnership will deliver a fully integrated scheme connecting heritage, communities and people in this extraordinary watery and woodland landscape on the doorstep of Plymouth and Saltash to deliver a resilient valley with a vibrant, sustainable and positive future.

Scheme Area

HLF guidance suggests that a Landscape Partnership should be a maximum size of about 200 square kms, which is the actual area of the designated AONB boundary. However, in the development phase we can scope potential areas beyond the boundaries of the AONB that share the special qualities for which the AONB has been designated and that may share the same of similar Landscape Character. If a larger area is proposed for delivery, we will have to show the benefits of a wider investment and the positive impact that it would have to justify the case. We are considering the potential of the Lynher Valley and also the medieval field patterns and settlements of Harrowbarrow and Metherell that are outside of the AONB. A final scheme boundary will be agreed at the end of the Development phase, once survey work and community consultation has been undertaken.

Aims

1. To conserve, restore and develop the future resilience of the valleys and rivers, maintaining and enhancing the high landscape quality and sustaining the unique wildlife and remarkable heritage
2. To inspire people to learn about, explore and get involved and become supporters and stewards of the Tamar Valley.
3. To engage and work with communities, to sustain, understand and care about this unique valley and the river heritage

If successful the Scheme will run for 5 years, potentially delivering between 10- 12 projects. Together these projects will address the scheme aims, bringing long-term and sustainable benefits to the area. It is proposed that the TVAONB Partnership will be the lead applicant and Cornwall Council the Accountable Body.

Consultation and collaboration with partners and local groups, has identified the priorities attached as opportunities that could be developed into projects as part of a future scheme.

The TVAONB Partnership that is already a formal Partnership will be the vehicle for the application (27 bodies represented including 5 Local Authorities). There will be additional partners not already part of the current AONB Partnership who will be part of the delivery Partnership.

At present there is an active and engaged Steering Group, which has Terms of Reference that meets monthly. Members of the Steering Group are Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Environment Agency, Natural England West Country Rivers Trust/Catchment Partnership, Tamar Community Trust, Tamar Grow Local, Environmental Record Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, and Devon Biological Records Centre.

There is a Land Management Working Group and a Heritage Working Group that are meeting every two months or as necessary. An additional piece of consultation has been carried out with Tamar Valley farmers and farmer led discussion groups.

Grant request

We will be looking at a grant request of between £1.75million and £2million from the Heritage Lottery Fund with additional match funding in cash and in kind from Partners for the development and delivery phase.

Applicant

The Lead applicant will be the TVAONB Partnership and Cornwall Council as Accountable Body in the first instance for the Development phase. A review of the appropriate body to be the AB in the Delivery phase will be undertaken once the Development phase funding is secured.

Timescale

First round application – 31 May 2017, decision end of October 2017

If successful:

Development phase starts c January 2018, Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) completed and submitted by September 2019 as part of the **Second round application**. Informed by further research, survey, public consultation and community engagement.

Delivery phase start, c January 2020 and will be for 5 years.

Annex 1

The Tamara Landscape Partnership scheme will deliver a series of a dozen connected and interlinked projects under six inter-related themes:

Unlocking Heritage

1. ***Small Detail / Big Difference:*** Vernacular buildings and distinctive regional details place a key role in giving a place its identity. This project aims to identify these key elements and compile an evidence base with local communities to inform future management and to identify potential threats and opportunities. Other subject areas include market gardening, historic daffodil collection, orchards (cherry/apple) and hidden/undiscovered archaeology.
2. ***Heritage of Innovation:*** This project explores the pioneering innovation throughout the ages that this small part of the world has generated including ground-breaking mining technology, experimental research for the market gardening industry and pioneering forestry techniques. This will be carried out through a variety of creative media and activities to raise awareness and to strengthen the understanding of the evolution of the Tamar Valley landscape through time and how the challenges of tomorrow can be met and how things may be done differently to ensure a more sustainable future.

Grow with the Flow

3. ***New Approaches:*** This project incorporates three elements. i) To pioneer the practical application of the Natural Capital approach and provision of ecosystem services, working with the farming community to develop useful and deliverable on farm approaches. ii) To manage rivers and the riparian corridors to optimise their functionality – for water, biodiversity and people – and to identify opportunities for improvements which accommodate future pressures. iii) Use a catchment wide approach to deliver positive and sustained outcomes for the (water) environment. Focus will be given to providing natural flood management, improving connectivity of habitat and ecosystem services within the catchments.
4. ***Making Connections / Making it Work:*** To provide landowners / managers and river users within the Tamar Valley with accessible advice and support that encourages sustainable and traditional land management activities within the Tamar.

Explore Tamar

5. ***Accessible Heritage:*** Creating sustainable and integrated transport links throughout the Tamar Valley to enable better access and enjoyment of the heritage and landscape of the Tamar Valley. This will include establishing a walking route as part of the Kylgh Kernow project linking with the existing Tamar Discovery Trail to create a circular walk. It will also examine the potential for restoring riverside quays and re-establishing a reliable ferry service for local people and visitors.
6. ***Come, Visit and Stay Awhile:*** Develop a series of themed heritage focussed itineraries and trails that are promoted and interpreted to encourage local residents from surrounding areas and visitors to make

repeat visits and explore the Valley and learn about and appreciate its history. These will be packaged together under a new brand for the area.

Building Connections

7. ***Outstanding Valley, Outstanding Communities:*** This project seeks to establish better links with the rural communities within the Valley, and also with the urban communities on its periphery, who do not currently engage with their neighbouring area. It seeks to raise awareness and provide opportunities to engage with the AONB and partners both through events and activities and through volunteering opportunities.
8. ***Sharing and Celebrating this Beautiful Place:*** To develop a sustainable programme of events which celebrate the heritage and unique landscape of the Tamar Valley. This will include the TVAONB Silver Anniversary celebrations, annual Trails Festivals and themed events related to wood products, cider / apple, artistic and cultural events.

Green Shoots

9. ***Future Skills / Tamara Trainees:*** A multi disciplinary training programme, including annual placements with bursary support, which provides the opportunity to strengthen local landscape character and to increase the resilience of local communities by expanding their capabilities. The project will deliver this through supported routes to new skills and knowledge, within a structured programme of workshops and training sessions covering three vital elements central to the areas landscape character.
10. ***River School:*** Delivery of a suite of hands-on educational activities that aim to develop the interests of local communities in their river environment. Activities delivered at a range of levels with an emphasis on enjoyment rather than academic results. Citizen Science activities will encourage fieldwork and exploring of the Tamara LP area, especially 'exchanges' between parishes or schools.

Growing Connections:

11. ***Natural Connections:*** i) This project will help people to engage with the landscape creatively and therapeutically, using landscape to improve people's physical health and mental well-being by helping them to reconnect with nature and heritage and to encourage social interaction.
12. ***Promoting our Produce:*** Supporting market gardening enterprises; community allotments integral to the history and landscape character of the area, but with a forward looking approach, including training programmes for new plot holders; and looking at feasibility of establishing new markets through promoting heritage varieties through new branding to give added value.