TYNE CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

Management Plan 2025 – 2030

Tyne Catchment Partnership - Management Plan

The Tyne Catchment Partnership was established in 2014 and has been hosted by Tyne Rivers Trust ever since. We currently have 20 partners from large businesses to local authorities and charities to individuals who come together to achieve improvements and resilience for the Tyne Catchment and its inhabitants. Over 10 years we have achieved more than we could have working in isolation (See section 4). Now we are looking to build on the strengths of the partnership, the working relationships we have established and the opportunities of the era such as nature-based solutions, green financing and AI. Indeed, it is essential we come together to address the urgent challenges of today and tomorrow including poor water quality, habitat and biodiversity loss and more frequent and extreme flood and drought conditions driven by a changing climate. Partnership working is essential if we are to address challenges of this scale with the urgency required, while making the most of new opportunities. The purpose of this management plan is to support this partnership while defining its focus and priorities.

If our values and ambition match with yours, and/or you think our work can help or complement yours, please get in touch.

Contents

Management Plan 2025 – 2030 0
Tyne Catchment Partnership - Management Plan 1
1. Introduction 3
2. Vision 3
3. What is the Tyne Catchment Partnership? 3
4. Description of Tyne Catchment 4
5. Tyne Catchment Partnership Achievements 2020-2024 5
6. Strategic priorities for the Tyne Catchment 5
7. Delivery Programme 6
Current programme 6
8. What Next? 10
Appendix I. Local evidence base 12
Appendix II. Fit with existing partner plans 13
Appendix III. Government requirements 15
Appendix IV: List of Partners 16

1. Introduction

Since the last Tyne Catchment Management plan, the UK has left the European Union and we have survived a global pandemic, which hopefully has refreshed our motivation to achieve substantive change urgently. This learning needs to be applied to the climate emergency, the effects of which have become more evident year-on-year. The pandemic also expedited a reconnection of people to local nature, pushing rivers higher up the social and political agenda. More groups than ever are now campaigning for cleaner water in our rivers, yet there is still considerable debate as to the cause of poor water quality and who bears the responsibility to solve the problem. However, poor water quality has many sources and is only one problem of many that needs to be addressed if we are to see the thriving river ecosystems that are more resilient to a changing climate which we evidently desire. Indeed, across the Tyne, our rivers and their catchments have been impacted by land drainage, channel modification and diverse pollution sources for centuries. All these issues need to be addressed with urgency and at scale if we are to achieve our goals. The only way this can be achieved is through genuine partnership working. By bringing together diverse organisations with different interests, skillsets and motivations, this is what the Tyne Catchment Partnership aims to achieve.

2. Vision

The vision of The Tyne Catchment Partnership is to work together to protect and enhance our rivers and wildlife to improve the wellbeing of people across the region. Our diverse partnership will work to promote the vital reliance of communities on a healthy and functioning Tyne catchment ecosystem.

3. What is the Tyne Catchment Partnership?

The Tyne Catchment Partnership is a varied group of organisations that represent regional and local stakeholders. Membership is open to anyone concerned about the state of our rivers and catchment and want to become actively involved in protecting, enhancing and celebrating the Tyne for future generations. Our membership currently includes active representation from statutory agencies, local government, the regional water company, research institutions, NGOs, local community organisations and individual concerned citizens.

From an information sharing forum the TCP is actively moving towards a more strategic approach amongst trusted partners. Members acknowledge the value of thinking at a Tyne catchment-scale but also the need to function pro-actively at smaller scales such as sub-catchment or within specific themes in order to affect change.

4. Description of Tyne Catchment

The River North Tyne flows from Deadwater Fell in the Scottish borders, through Reiving country and past fortified properties steeped in history, Kielder forest, the largest man-made forest in England, and spectacular geology such as at Barrasford gorge. In marked contrast, the South Tyne rises high up on Cross Fell in Cumbria from where it cuts a more braided route through landscape now a legacy of the metal mining industry. Both North and South Tynes drain peatland giving the water its natural characteristic rich reddish-brown hue. They join at Watersmeet, just west of Hexham in the Tyne corridor and follow the valley south of Hadrian's Wall to empty into the North Sea at Tynemouth.

Collectively these rivers and their tributaries which amount to 4,400km in length, drain 3,000km^2 of the northeast landscape. They are affected by past and current industry and the changing nature of farming and land management.

The River Tyne first cut its course approximately 30 million years ago in the early Tertiary era. The tertiary Tyne rivers entirely removed the soft chalk rocks revealing harder, more ancient rocks which were subsequently elevated to create the plateau forming the moorlands we see today. Quaternary icesheets and valley glaciers further etched the etched the pre-glacial surface, diverting and blocking the river systems to create the origins of today's river landscape.

In more recent times, the dynamics of sediment movement has attracted more interest relating to flooding, bank erosion, loss of native riparian tree cover, the disconnect of the natural river processes caused by engineering such as Kielder dam, straightening of channels to 'make space' for roads, railways and domestic/industrial developments. The contribution of soil enriched by land practices adds a modern chemical and biological component to the river environment.

The challenges faced by the Tyne catchment and all of its residents include adapting to the local effects of climate change, accommodating a rising population and the demands / impacts of an increasingly affluent society.

5. Tyne Catchment Partnership Achievements 2020-2024

Figure 1: Tyne Catchment Partnership CaBA Monitoring and Reporting (Benefits) 2020 - 2024

6. Strategic priorities for the Tyne Catchment

The framework for the Tyne Catchment Management Plan are the strategic priorities listed below. These were identified by the Tyne Catchment Partnership and encapsulate key priorities associated with habitat and species, water management, land management and community affluence:

1. Improve the resilience of our catchment and its watercourses to the known impacts of climate change, anticipate further effects and mitigate them. (Aligning with the Water Industry Environment Programme)

2. Protect existing and increase quality and quantity of biodiversity. This follows the global target within the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework agreed at COP 15 to protect 30% of the planet for nature by 2030
3. Improve water quality and reduce incidents / impact of water pollution (Clean Water is a clear aim of the UK Government's 25- Year Environment Strategy)
4. Protect and restore the function and natural processes of our watercourses (Natura 2000)
5. Increase confidence in the evidence for the benefits of prioritising water and catchment within planning processes and decision-making.
6. Improve access to nature.
7. Engage with and educate, schools, communities and businesses so they value and protect the Tyne catchment to achieve all the above.

7. Delivery Programme

Current programme

The partners of the Tyne Catchment Partnership have delivered and will continue to drive forward a diverse array of projects to achieve its vision. A list of projects to be delivered by partners over the next five years are provided in the associated project pipeline document. Note this is a dynamic document with projects regularly being added and updated as opportunities, evidence and priorities change. Below is a small sample of projects from the current programme that demonstrate the diverse work being undertaken by the partnership both in its nature and geography. However, many more projects underway with information available on each partners' websites.

The drivers for projects are all rooted in robust evidence and align strongly with the strategic priorities listed above. They also support a range of national, regional and local plans and government requirements for which information is provided in Appendix I, II and III.

MaST: Flying the flag for endangered species in the North Tyne and Rede

This project takes a targeted catchment-based approach to addressing the multitude of challenges freshwater pearl mussels (***Ma****rgaritifera margaritifera*), salmon (*Salmo* ***s****alar)* and trout (*Salmo* ***t****rutta*) face. This is vital because the River North Tyne and its tributaries host the second largest population of Freshwater pearl mussel (FPM) and the highest numbers of Salmon and Brown/Sea trout in England. However, numbers of all species are in decline due to a range of environmental stressors including excessive fine sediment and nutrient input, habitat loss and exposure to unnatural extreme flows and temperatures.

We are addressing this by working at scale to create new woodland and wetlands, install in-river habitat improvements, and identifying and tackling major sources of fine sediment and agricultural pollution. While funding from Natural England's Species Recovery Programme enabled major improvements from August 2023 to March 2025, there is much more to be done and collaborative working is essential to achieve this. Therefore, many organisations within the Tyne Catchment Partnership will come together to work with farmers and other landowners to deliver projects across the landscape that safeguard the future of these species.

Extensive network of wetlands created alongside floodplain reconnection work on the River Rede through the MaST project.

It is anticipated that the gains achieved through this project will be built upon in future years.

Hadrian's Wall Recovering Nature Project

Working across 4500Ha, this Defra-funded national ELMS Landscape Recovery Pilots aims to restore natural hydrological processes to reduce wetland habitat fragmentation and improve water quality in the Haltwhistle and Chainley Burn catchments. It will restore and create more wildlife rich habitats; create a more resilient landscape, sequestering more and emitting less carbon; help farming, forestry, and other land-based businesses to become more resilient; benefit local business and community; enhance people's access to and engagement with nature and the cultural landscape; and demonstrate nature recovery in a cultural landscape.

Tyne Estuary Partnership

By working strategically with multiple partners, this partnership aims to have a meaningful and sustainable impact on the River Tyne and the North East as a whole. This will be achieved by delivering a range of nature-based solutions while demonstrating improvements in the ecology, water quality and biodiversity of the estuary. In so doing, there will be much broader economic and community benefits that will be realized by working in partnership.

Specific projects include retrofitting nature-based solutions to hard infrastructure, providing habitat and space for nature.

Metal Mining Legacy

England has a long history of mining for minerals that has contributed to our economic wellbeing but has left a legacy of hundreds of closed mine sites and the resulting environmental impact.

Tyne Catchment Partnership partners are working to tackle the remains of metal mining in the Pennines which still pollutes the river today, from source to sea. Metal mining in the North Pennines dates back hundreds of years with the peak of activity in the 1800s, but due to the unstable nature of spoil heaps, metal rich sediment still finds its way into the South Tyne, unbalancing its natural ecology.

We're addressing this problem using green engineering methods such as log revetments, geocoir matting and leaky dams to stabilise spoil heaps, reduce erosion and limit the amount of contaminated sediment that enters the river. In other cases, heavier interventions using stonework or other materials have been required to both limit erosion in the face of highly energetic watercourses and fit in with the industrial heritage of the landscape.

Example of interventions delivered through WAMM project to stabilise spoil heaps and prevent their erosion by the watercourse.

For more than ten years, the partnership has delivered dozens of these projects across the South Tyne Catchment, funded through the Water and Abandoned Metal Mines (WAMM) programme to improve water quality and biodiversity. This also protects the regional economy by limiting the accumulation of contaminated sediments in the estuary, which must be removed to maintain shipping lanes at the Port of Tyne. However, there is much more to be done.

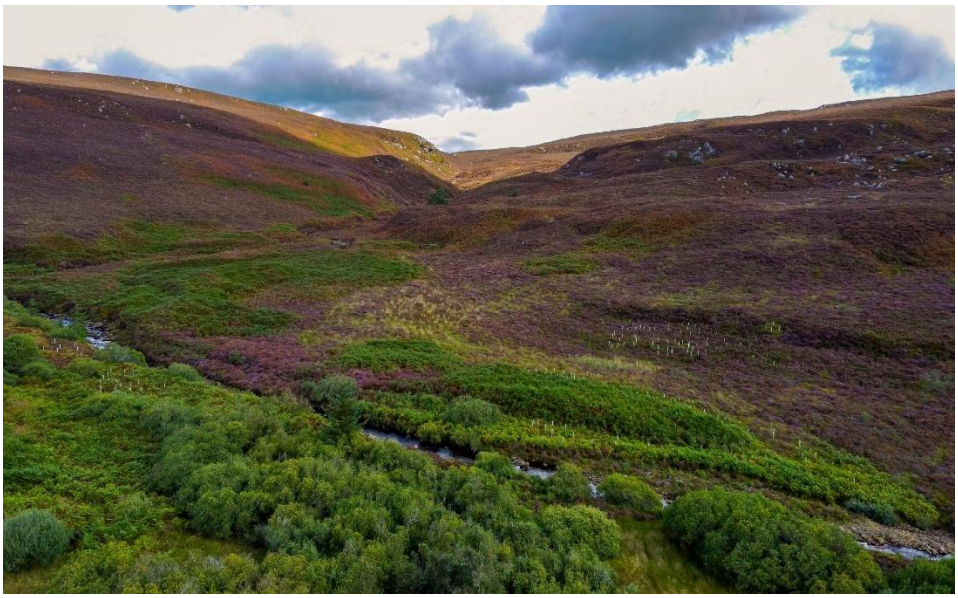
Urban Catchment Restoration

Our urban tributaries, such as the River Don and Ouseburn, are complex catchments, facing multiple pressures from development, misconnections and pollution to habitat loss and lack of connectivity to floodplains and natural processes. Conversely, these blue corridors are important refuges for people and wildlife alike, and more populated areas often allow more opportunities for catchment restoration to involve local residents and community groups in the process.

Climate change will continue to have a big impact on urban spaces, including increased risk of flooding and associated negative impacts on water quality. Projects such as the UK Shared Prosperity funded 'Total River Therapy' allowed Tyne Catchment Partnership partners to promote SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) interventions with the involvement of local organisations. These demonstration sites, like rain gardens and rainwater harvesting tanks, are small steps towards catchment restoration in an urban environment, but one that can be replicated repeatedly to achieve the scale needed to restore our urban catchments.

Wild Kielder

Wild Kielder aims to restore natural hydrological function of watercourses and wetland habitats with the aim to improve water condition, restore fully functioning peatland, develop riparian/wet woodland/open habitat, minimise the risk of sediment flow arising from anthropogenic land use into watercourses, minimise artificial drainage and reduce flood risk. The aim for the project is to work towards reducing management interventions, however, early actions to kick-start natural processes may include peatland restoration, wetland and watercourse restoration, tree planting, changes to herbivory. Forestry will continue to be an



important, sustainable activity however, plantations will gradually be transformed, offering greater resilience to climate change and pests and diseases.

8. What Next?

A pipeline of ambitious and impactful projects to be delivered over the next five years sits alongside this catchment management plan. Each project meets at least two of the strategic priorities in Section Six and will be delivered by organisations within the Tyne Catchment Partnership. In terms of scale and value, these cumulatively represent the largest and most ambitious projects ever proposed by the Tyne Catchment Partnership over a five-year period. This demonstrates the ambition of the partnership, and the fact partners recognise the need to scale up the rate of delivery in the face of the many challenges our environment faces. It is also important to note many of the projects are ambitions not yet certain to be delivered, so the requirement to work in partnership to achieve these goals remains absolute. By contrast, further opportunities and priorities are likely to emerge over the next five years that the partnership must be nimble enough to react to and take advantage of. Therefore, ongoing development of the Tyne Catchment Partnership is essential to maximise its impact.

Despite the ambitions stated above, it is important to recognise the challenges that are likely to emerge over the next five years. The international political outlook will likely remain highly volatile and this will impact the finances available to deliver the ambitions of the partnership. Clearly, the climate and biodiversity crises are likely to intensify. Therefore, there will be a need to diversify funding streams, develop new opportunities and work more efficiently through opportunities such as biodiversity net gain, AI and private financing. Partnership working offers the best opportunity to maximise these prospects and build resilience against the challenges.

Finally, it is important to note the Tyne Catchment Partnership is an open and welcoming group of organisations with opportunity to grow. There are currently 23 engaged organisations within the partnership, but more voices in different parts of the catchment and in front of different audiences makes us stronger. Therefore, there is value in diversifying our membership. In particular, river users such as canoeists, anglers, paddle boarders and free swimmers with a vested interest in the river's health and a strong voice would be welcome. As would businesses and any organisations impacted by or interested in the river who would like to contribute to our work. As such, we will be pro-active in seeking new partners to energise the membership.

As we enter a new phase of unprecedented opportunity and challenge, the Tyne Catchment Partnership will continue to meet regularly to share project progress, ideas and aspirations while welcoming new partners to strengthen and diversify impact. Ongoing collaboration among partners will be essential as we face the multiple, diverse environmental challenges of the

present and future. The Tyne Catchment Partnership is the ideal forum to make sure we tackle these challenges at the scale and with the urgency and innovation required.

Appendix I. Local evidence base

Include infographic for TCP delivery. Use CaBA data – where is this

The Tyne Catchment Partnership will use national data sets to direct action agreed as mutually beneficial across the priorities listed and the stakeholder plans. The Partnership will also use local evidence and datasets. The Partnership will encourage that these data sets are made available in a way that is understood across a variety of disciplines, members will commit to honest and candid communication to ensure the best understanding possible. Data sets used include but are not limited to:

1. The Environment Agency's Catchment Data Explorer and Ecology and Fish Data Explorer
2. The Catchment Base Approach (CaBA)
3. The Rivers Trust Sewage Map
4. Northumbrian Water Limited's Storm Overflows Map
5. A variety of Storymaps produced by Tyne Rivers Trust including:
    a. Summary of our work
    b. Diffuse Metals
    c. MaST
6. Citizen science data collected on a range of environmental metrics including invertebrate populations (RiverFly), water quality, river geomorphology (MoRPh), barriers to migratory fish (AMBER) and invasives species distribution.

In addition, an extensive list of project and location-specific data and reports have been produced that will be drawn upon by those leading the projects described in the pipeline.

Appendix II. Fit with existing partner plans

Due to the number and diversity of organisations involved in the Tyne Catchment Partnership, there are strong links between this Management Plan and a range of other relevant plans and strategies. Those that are relevant are listed below with hyperlinks for further information where relevant.

- 25 Year Environment Plan
- Environmental Improvement Plan 2023
- Shoreline Management Plans
    - SMP1 Scottish Border to the River Tyne
    - SMP2 The Tyne to Flamborough Head
- Local Authority Local Plans
    - Northumberland Local Plan 2016 - 2036
    - Newcastle Local Plan
    - The Gateshead Plan
    - South Tyneside Local Plan
    - Sunderland Core Strategy and Development Plan
    - County Durham Plan
    - Northumberland National Park Local Plan
- National Parks and Protected Landscapes
    - Northumberland National Park Natural Environment Vision 2014-2035
    - North Pennines National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan (not yet published)
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
    - North of Tyne
    - South of Tyne and Wear
    - County Durham
- Climate change
    - Northumberland: Climate Change Plan
    - Durham: Climate Emergency Response Plan
    - Net Zero Newcastle
    - North Tyneside: Carbon Net Zero
    - Sustainable South Tyneside
    - Sunderland: Low Carbon Action Plan
- Flood Risk Management Strategies
    - Northumberland Flood Risk Management Strategy
    - Sunderland Flood Risk Management Strategy
    - Newcastle: Flood Risk Management Strategy

- Durham: Flood Risk Management Strategy
- North Tyneside: Flood Risk Management Strategy
- South Tyneside

Appendix III. Government requirements

- Environmental Land Management Scheme

Paying farmers and land managers to provide environmental goods and services alongside food production. Essential to grow and maintain a resilient, productive agricultural sector.

- Sustainable Farming Initiative

Incentives to farmers and land managers to protect/ benefit the environment, support food production and improve productivity.

- Farming Rules for Water

To reduce and prevent diffuse water pollution from agricultural sources.

- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Nutrient Neutrality

A means of ensuring that a development plan or project does not add to existing nutrient burdens within catchments. Where neutrality measures are needed, the purpose of these mitigation measures is to avoid impacts to the designated sites, rather than compensating for the impacts once they have occurred.

- Drainage and Wastewater Plans

Planning ahead to provide effective services for drainage and wastewater that do not adversely affect our environment and personal health.

- Water Industry National Environment Plan
    - NWL WINEP 25 Year Environment Plan

A comprehensive programme of investment that contributes to the governments 25 Year Environment Plan, allowing water companies to go above and beyond their regulatory obligations. It supports enhanced operational performance, improved resilience, customer protection and delivery of positive environment and social impact.

- Regional Water Resources initiatives (WReN)
- Climate Adaption and Mitigation
    - Climate change adaptation: national policy information
- Net Zero
- Flood Risk Management - Northumbria Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-2027

Appendix IV: List of Partners

Durham Wildlife Trust

Environment Agency

Forestry England

Gateshead Council

Groundwork NE & Cumbria

Mining Remediation Authority

Natural England

National Trust

Newcastle City Council

Newcastle University

NFU

North Pennines National Landscape

North Tyneside Council

Northumberland National Park Authority

Northumberland County Council

Northumbrian Water Limited

South Tyneside Council

Sunderland City Council

Tyne Rivers Trust

Woodland Trust