
Defra Network Offer to LEPs and City Deals

This Offer is prepared by the Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission and the Marine Management Organisation – the Defra Network in this context.

We have looked at ways in which we can help facilitate and support sustainable growth and respond to localism. Our Offer builds on the potential to support sustainable growth by enhancing our service and using our resources, networks and expertise.

We have set out a broad offer as the framework for a local discussion with individual Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and City Deals, including on Enterprise Zones. We recognise that every LEP and City Deal is different and we will want to tailor our offer locally. The specific components of the offer have not been costed and may not be available everywhere.

We are easy to do business with

We will provide high quality advice quickly on planning, permit and licence applications and help business meet the requirements of environmental legislation.

We will:

- seek customer feedback and challenge ourselves to find ways to make regulation easier.
- provide planning application responses and determine permits and licences quickly.
- engage early and openly to discuss proposals before applications are made.
- explain what environmental legislation applies in any particular case.
- offer to join up our advice on planning, permit and licence applications for complex development where it will be simpler and quicker.
- offer an account manager for our organisations, where it is cost effective and will speed up decision making, to co-ordinate our work on planning and permitting, agree timescales and find solutions.
- simplify data collection and, where possible, reduce the amount of data we require for determining permits and licences.

We actively facilitate sustainable growth

We will use our work and assets to help promote growth that is sustainable and resilient to a changing climate.

Promote sustainable growth and increase certainty by working with businesses and communities to manage flood risk and coastal erosion and encourage the sustainable management of water and land. We will:

- invest Government money to reduce the risk of flood and coastal erosion and work with you to explore how partnership funding can create opportunities for sustainable growth.
- support the development of long term and affordable approaches to flood and coastal risk management as well as encourage the wise and sustainable use of water.
- advise on adapting businesses and communities to deal with future flood risk, coastal erosion and drought – including through the Defra/Environment Agency Climate Ready Programme.

- identify changes to land management that will improve resilience to flood risk, coastal erosion and drought.

Promote the value of Green Infrastructure to business, communities and the environment. We will:

- encourage inward investment by making places better, healthier and more rewarding to live and work in, by strengthening environmental assets that underpin growth and helping to fund high quality Green Infrastructure.
- promote Green Infrastructure in the built environment that helps us deal with a changing climate, including reducing the urban heat island effect and providing more resilient habitats.

Build the visitor economy and strengthening supply chains

We will:

- help the visitor economy by developing strategies to strengthen the relationship with the environment, improve recreational opportunities and public access, and promote the use of National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and the Forest Estate.
- strengthen farm and woodland-based business by improving collaboration between owners and help ensure supply chains are resilient to a changing climate
- encourage the appropriate use of more British grown wood and link potential end users to woodland owners.

Enable marine industries to grow by providing greater certainty for investors and developers. We will:

- offer clear mapping of marine uses and guidance on how to gain the most from sustainable development through a new system of marine planning.

Maximise skills and knowledge for businesses and the jobs market

We will:

- actively work with the forestry, agri-environment and natural environment sectors to build skills and capacity to improve business management, resource efficiency and environmental improvement.
- use the natural environment to provide training and development opportunities to help get people into jobs and provide career development, including apprenticeships for people not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

We use our evidence and knowledge to help business grow sustainably

We will share our evidence and knowledge in ways that are relevant and compelling for LEPs or City Deals and work with them to help them understand and manage the relationship between the economy and the environment and bring a long term perspective to growth decisions.

We will:

- map environmental assets and issues to help businesses identify opportunities for economic growth.
- make available a toolkit¹ that helps LEPs and their partners better understand the relationship between the economy and the environment in strategic economic planning.

¹ Local Economic Development and Environment toolkit being trialled with a LEP for publication in Summer 2013

Expectations of LEPs and City Deals

- Involve Defra Network in the development and, where appropriate, delivery of LEP Strategic Plans and Structural and Investment Fund (SIF) Investment Strategies so that we can help to build resilience to extreme weather events and help to ensure that growth, where possible, leads to enhancement of important habitats and species.
- Engage early with Defra Network agencies where we will be critical to the successful delivery of plans and projects.
- Take account of the work of [Local Nature Partnerships](#) and Nature Improvement Areas in growth planning.

Further information on the Offer

For information on how to take forward any aspect of this Offer locally please contact:

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