



**The Sustainable Development Champion
Body in the North East**

Terms of reference

Key roles for the Sustaine Board

The role of Sustaine will be achieved through 4 high-level objectives.

Objectives	Actions	Outcome
Informing and influencing regional strategies and their integration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the development of the North East Strategy and other key strategies ▪ Input to the sustainability appraisal process for the North East strategy and other key strategies ▪ Ensure sustainability issues, in the North East Strategy and other key strategies, are dealt with in an integrated manner ▪ Promote debate and challenge offering independent thinking on issues and appropriate informed challenge to the evidence base. 	The principles of sustainable development are embedded within the region's strategies (policies, plans and programmes) so helping us move towards a more sustainable future and enabling us all achieve a better quality of life.
Providing high-level advocacy and support for sustainable development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide strategic advice through a 'support and challenge' role to organisations in the region ▪ Provide strategic direction on sustainable development through an integrated regional framework ▪ Promote and support regional leadership in the region on sustainable development ▪ Maintain strong links with national sustainable development organisations 	A well-managed and independent 'support and challenge' function in the region has helped to further thinking on sustainable development, contributing to the development and implementation of sustainable development in relevant regional strategies, plans and programmes.
Increasing the awareness and understanding of the holistic nature of sustainable development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify opportunities to facilitate independent thinking and support cross – sectoral discussions ▪ Collate and promote best practice and new ideas from within the region and 	Confidence amongst regional decision-makers has increased, leading to a bold approach to tackling

	elsewhere	sustainability issues in an integrated way.
Acting as a partnership platform to support and enable action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Champion Sustaine initiatives ▪ Provide advice and support to facilitate action ▪ Engage and liaise with appropriate national and regional sustainable development networks 	Programmes, projects and campaigns successfully delivered that improve the regional performance on sustainable development.

Sustaine values

Sustaine works in a holistic way, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability. In addition Sustaine has four overarching values that underpin its work.

- **Independent.** Sustaine is an independent body. This means being clear and open, but also responsive to stakeholders in the region.
- **Inclusive.** This involves listening to other organisations in the region, but taking a holistic view of sustainable development. It also includes being approachable.
- **Objective.** Sustaine should be open to others in the region. It should also be challenging and outcomes oriented.
- **Integrity.** Acting with integrity includes being open, honest, coherent and appropriately confidential.

How Sustaine will deliver its role

The process of review and production of the Integrated Regional Framework will be used as a method of bringing together delivery organisations in the region to work up a truly integrated set of objectives and actions to help move the region towards sustainable development.

The officer, together with Board members, will manage activities including commissioning and undertaking research, awareness raising events/programmes, providing expertise and advice, production of resources and reports, all of which will support individuals and organisations working to deliver sustainable development in the region.

Sustaine will be a reliable source of up to date and accurate information relating to sustainable development. It will be a source of advice, information or help in relation to sustainable development in all its guises.

1.0 Background

In the 2005 UK Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future', the Government set out the actions it would take to strengthen delivery of sustainable development, including at a regional level. Following a review of regional delivery by the Sustainable Development Commission, the Government subsequently published 'Securing the Regions' Futures' in 2006, which set out their approach to strengthening regional delivery. A key element of this was creating a strengthened role for regional roundtables for sustainable development as champion bodies for the regions.

In the North East, the Government Office, the Association of North East Councils and the Regional Development Agency (One North East) have worked together with regional partners to establish a champion body for sustainable development in the North East, to be known as Sustaine (Sustainability North East).

These Terms of Reference have been developed by representatives of the three key government organisations in the North East: the Government Office for the North East, the Association of North East Councils and One North East in consultation with regional partners.

2.0 Purpose

'Securing the Regions' Futures' stated that an effective regional sustainable development roundtable should be a champion body for sustainable development and be:

- Independent (providing an effective critical friend role to regional bodies and where appropriate constructively challenging regional policies or strategies from a sustainable development perspective).
- Inclusive (with wide cross-sectoral representation).
- Influential (as a result of its membership and actions).
- Capable of delivering campaigns, programmes and projects that exemplify sustainable development excellence.
- Well-networked (through partnerships within and beyond the region, including the SDC).
- Sustainable (run effectively with resources secured from within the region to ensure stability and from outside the region where relevant opportunities arise).

It also sets out the common purposes for champion bodies as:

- Raising the profile of particular regional SD issues based on sound regional evidence and data.
- Identifying opportunities for joint projects or initiatives which, by acting as catalysts, would significantly improve regional performance on SD and which could not be delivered by other existing mechanisms or single agencies working alone.

- Providing a well-managed ‘critical friend’ and ‘constructive challenge’ function in the region to further the achievement of SD through relevant regional plans, policies and programmes.

3.0 Structure

There will be two main aspects to the Sustaine structure: a Board and an Officer (appointed as the Policy Advocate).

Support to the Sustaine Board will be provided by the Policy Advocate, providing the secretariat service to the board.

A further support mechanism will be a strong link to officers at One North East, Association of North East Councils and the Government Office for the North East, known as the sponsoring bodies.

Sustaine will be supported by the Sustainable Development Commission and Defray, forming positive working relationships.

4.0 Membership

An appointments process has been established that will ensure that the region is supported by a board that is independent and fit for purpose rather than representative of particular interests. The process will be opened up to a wide scope to locate the expertise (whether gained through professional or life experience) that the board needs to function effectively. This will ensure that people appointed are independent, selected in an open and accountable manner, and are fit for the purpose of providing the board (and the region) with effective strategic direction.

As the host organisation the Association of North East Councils will have the right to make up to two appointments to the Board. These appointments will be made from amongst the Association’s members.

In addition, One North East is entitled to an appointment to the Sustaine Board.

The ultimate responsibility for making an appropriate appointment of board members that are fit for purpose will rest with the Chair of Sustaine, with support from the sponsoring bodies.

Appointments will be made in line with the principles of current government guidance for public appointments which requires responsibility, merit, independence, equal opportunities, probity, openness, transparency and proportionality to be applied.

All vacancies will be widely (but proportionately) advertised - local and regional press, web sites and specialist publications as appropriate. The

exceptions to this are the Association of North East Councils and the One North East appointments.

Board members will be appointed for a term of up to three years, and be eligible for re-appointment for a further term of up to three years, subject to satisfactory performance.

The general requirements for board members are:

- an awareness of the economic, social and environmental issues affecting the North East
- the ability to formulate strategy
- drive, vision & independence
- ability to challenge and take a proactive approach to board business
- ability to motivate and engender respect
- good negotiation and communication skills
- impartiality and integrity
- experience in public relations
- experience in community issues

The specific sectoral knowledge that should be sought for the board are in the areas of:

- business and commerce
- academia/scientific
- politics and government (national, regional & local),
- health and care
- education
- environment
- climate change and energy
- housing
- communities
- transport
- voluntary and community sectors

There will ordinarily be between 8 and 12 board members (including the Chair and Vice Chair) and for the purposes of meetings a quorum of 5 members will be required for any decisions to be made. If fewer than 5 members attend a meeting it will only be possible for recommendations to be made to a future meeting. Alternatively they may wish to operate a seven day rule, whereby the recommendations of a non-quorum meeting can be agreed by the wider board without having to wait until the next scheduled meeting.

The Board or the sponsoring bodies may wish to temporarily co-opt individuals to the Board to provide specialist and or technical advice and support. Such co-optees will not become members of the Board and will not have voting rights at any meetings they attend. They will attend meetings purely in an advisory capacity.

Observer status

Officers from Government Office for the North East, the Association of North East Councils and the Regional Development Agency will have observer status at the Board meetings. The Board may invite any other individuals or organisation representatives to observe a meeting.

Period of appointment

Board members will ordinarily serve for a period of three years. If at the end of the first term the Board member wishes to remain for a further term and the Chair and Vice Chair are agreeable they would make their recommendation to the sponsoring bodies. Board members will not normally serve for more than two terms.

Resignation

If a board member decides to leave the Board they should give a notice period of three months. This will allow an appointment procedure to begin prior to the Board having a vacant place.

Removal of Board Members

In exceptional circumstances the Chair may request that a board member relinquishes their place on the Board. This will only be done when the board member:

- Does not attend meetings regularly (see below); or
- Has openly criticised or questioned the Champion Body or sustainable development; or
- Is judged by the Chair, Vice Chair and appointing bodies to not be complying with the Nolan principles of standards in public life.

If a board member is asked to leave, their departure will take immediate effect and the appointment process started to find a replacement. The decision of the board is final and there will be no appeal.

Claiming Expenses

Allowances can be claimed by any board member who cannot claim payment from their employer or by any other means, or for whom contributing to the work of Sustaine is not deemed by their employer as related to their "business" activity.

The following expenses can be claimed when engaged on approved Sustaine business, which is defined as meetings required to represent Sustaine.

Travelling: standard public transport costs, casual user rate mileage expenses, car parking fees and by exception taxi fare costs. The mileage rate in line with the host organisation's standard rate for claims will be used, however, as part of Sustaine's commitment to sustainability, members are asked to consider using public transport when travelling on Sustaine business.

Members are requested to submit claims on a monthly basis. A claim form is available from the Sustaine Policy Advocate. Receipts are required for all claims.

Other information

Due to the limited availability of funds there will not be any remuneration offered to the members at the present time.

An agenda and board papers will be circulated by email to all board members no less than one week prior to the meeting. Board meeting papers may be presented by a board member or the officer. Draft minutes of meetings will normally be circulated within one week of meetings.

Chair

The appointment of a Chair will follow the same guidelines as above, with the posts advertised and people invited to apply followed by a selection and interview process. The process will be led by the Secretariat and the sponsoring bodies. The Chair will serve for a period of up to three years. This may be extended for up to a further term if the Chair is willing to continue to serve and the sponsoring bodies are agreeable.

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair will be appointed by the Chair, the Secretariat and the sponsoring bodies and serve for a period of three years.

Roles of the Chair and Vice Chair

- The Chair and Vice Chair are ordinarily expected to attend all meetings
- The Chair will be expected to chair all meetings. Where this is not possible the Chair will brief the Vice Chair who will stand in.
- The Chair and Vice Chair will be expected to represent and communicate the interests and messages of the champion body outside of the Board meetings.
- In their roles of Chair and Vice Chair they may be invited to speak publicly, it would be anticipated that they would take advantage of these opportunities to spread the message of sustainable development and cultivate interest in the champion body.

5.0 Mode of Operation

Induction

Board members will attend an induction session prior to their first formal Board meeting.

The objective of the session will be to enable new members to become familiar with the operation of the Board itself, their role on the Board, and the role of the Secretariat and the sponsoring bodies. The Board member's

portfolio (see below) and their role on the Board will be explained and explored.

It will be made clear at the induction session that all Board members will be expected to act within the Nolan principles for standards in public life which are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Portfolios

The majority of Board members will have a portfolio and members are expected to fulfil their commitment to the Board by actively developing and delivering against their portfolio. Their work will positively support other board members and the officers.

The allocation of portfolios will not necessarily relate exactly to the board members area of expertise, in this way board members will be encouraged to help each other and work together.

Board members will be expected to support project officers as appropriate, by accessing information, organisations and individuals where the project officer might not have connections. They will also act as champions for the topics at board meetings and events; chair and present on the topic at events; and feed in comments relating to their topic to consultation exercises and sustainability appraisals as appropriate.

General expectations of all Board members for Board meetings

- There will be up to six meetings per year. Meeting dates will be available one year in advance. The Secretariat will try their best to accommodate all diary requests;
- Members are expected to attend all meetings;
- Non-attendance should be notified to the Secretariat;
- If the Chair and Vice Chair are concerned about board members attendance, a meeting will be arranged to discuss their continued membership. If it is agreed that the board member should continue to have a place on the board they must commit to attend all future meetings during their membership. Otherwise the member will be invited to stand down so that someone else can take their place. ;
- Board members will not be able to send deputies to a meeting.
- Board members are appointed on their personal skills, knowledge and experience, therefore a deputy would not be appropriate;
- Board members will be expected to have read all paperwork prior to the meeting so that they are able to fully participate in meetings; and
- It may be appropriate for a board member with the relevant portfolio to support the officer in preparing a board paper.

Events

- Where the officer has organised an event board members would be expected to attend and show their support, networking effectively

during the event to help raise the profile of the champion body and of the issue which is the focus of the event;

- The Chair, Vice Chair and or board member with the portfolio relevant to the event may be expected to speak at events. Supported by the officer, board members will be expected to prepare their own presentations, using the standard corporate Champion Body imagery and layout;
- Every member of the board is expected to bring their knowledge, skills and experience to bear at events; and
- Board members are also expected to act as an ambassador for sustainable development and the champion body while in their everyday life.

Networking

Board members will be expected to use their networks of contacts to gain increased support for the organisation which could in turn bring in additional funding and support for its work.

Working with the Officer

Board members will be expected to support the work of the officer. Board members will not be expected to provide day to day management or disciplinary role in relation to the officer. This role will be carried out by the Officer's line manager at the host organisation.

There should be an open and co-operative relationship between board members and the officer, and particularly so between the portfolio holder and officer.

Any disagreements or disputes between board members and the officer should be raised with the relevant line manager and the Chair and Vice Chair for resolution.

6.0 Sponsoring bodies

To comply with 'Securing the Regions' Futures, Sustaine will work closely with the three sponsoring bodies: the Government Office for the North East (GONE), the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) and the Regional Development Agency, One North East (ONE).

The sponsoring bodies have all been involved in drafting this document and fully support the formation of the Champion Body for sustainable development in the North East. The sponsoring bodies will be involved in the appointment of board members.

Sustaine will seek support for its business plan from the sponsoring bodies but they will not have a 'sign off power' over any of the business plan, or indeed any of Sustaine's work.

The sponsoring bodies may choose to support Sustaine financially, or by other means, but they shall not be expected to provide financial support or resources. Sustaine will seek funding and other support from a wide range of organisations and stakeholders.

Sustaine will work throughout the region with people and organisations from the broadest range of background and interests to support and facilitate the delivery of sustainable development. Sustaine will also work with other national and regional organisations.

Representatives from the sponsoring bodies will take an active role in supporting the Secretariat and in this way provide support to both the board members of Sustaine.

Secretariat
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