

Northern Rural Network Governance 2008 -2011

February 2009

Introduction

This governance agreement sets out how the NRN project is managed and governed. It forms a milestone for the NRN project due in June 2009. The document explains the function of the NRN management board and the NRN steering group. The final section set outs what constitutes NRN membership and how membership records are used and managed.

NRN Management Board

The NRN project team consists of the following Centre for Rural Economy staff:

Dr. Jane Atterton (project leader, rural business survey manager)
Dr. Nicola Thompson (project delivery and evaluation)
Dr. Kayo Murakami (project administration and financial reporting)
Arthur Affleck (business survey research assistant)
Nicola Parker (secretarial and administrative support)

In addition Terry Carroll (independent consultant) works on the NRN project 2.5 days per week. Terry leads on event organisation. Dr. Cathy Sharp (Research for Real) acts as the project 'critical friend'. The role of the critical friend is to provide constructive advice to the management team on NRN development for the first two years of the project.

NRN management board membership is: Jane Atterton (chair), Nicola Parker (secretary), Terry Carroll, Nicola Thompson, Kayo Murakami. A representative from the Regional and Special Projects Team is usually in attendance. The board meets on a monthly basis and its proceedings are fully minuted. There are a number of standing items on the agenda including:

- Financial report
- Progress with outputs and milestones
- Progress with organisation of events
- Feedback from events
- Progress with business survey and related activity
- Critical friend business
- Steering group business

Members of the NRN management board also meet with ONE North East on a quarterly basis. The purpose of these meetings is to keep ONE informed of project progress and work on elements of the project which require close collaboration (for example, project evaluation).

NRN Steering Group

The steering group meets twice a year. Its functions are set out in the terms of reference appended. The current membership of the steering group is as follows:

- Peter Jackson (chair)

- Frances Rowe (ONE North East)
- Angus Collingwood Cameron (regional director, Country Land and Business Association)
- Steve Urwin (Business Link)
- John Banks (County Durham Economic Partnership)
- Christine Venus (Natural England)
- Sandy Rutherford (Hexham Courant)
- Prof. Mark Shucksmith (School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University)
- Jane Atterton
- Terry Carroll
- Nicola Thompson

In addition to the formal meetings steering group members receive periodic email updates from NRN management board. Occasionally members are also asked to be members of a 'task and finish' group on a specific area of NRN work (for example, the Matthew Taylor follow up events).

Members of the steering group have the opportunity to serve for the full three year lifespan of the project. If a member resigns they are replaced with someone from the same type of organisation. The steering group membership can not and does not represent the breadth of organisations and interests present in the NRN membership. The members are drawn from a variety of private and public sector organisations and Newcastle University. This ensures a range of the most relevant interests are present while also ensuring that the group is a manageable size for efficient decision making.

There are two ways in which the NRN membership feeds into the development of the Network. The first is a feedback function on the web site which invites unstructured feedback on any aspect of the project. The second is through specific event feedback. A structured questionnaire is sent by email to everyone attending an NRN event. This detailed evaluation informs future event planning.

NRN Membership

An individual is regarded as being a member of NRN once they ask to be added to the email list and supply the following information:

- Name
- Email address
- Professional and/or voluntary affiliations

Members receive emails about forthcoming NRN events including booking forms and programmes. They are also sent details of forthcoming events run by third parties if these are judged to be particularly relevant and are being organised by a body already known to us. Decisions on the appropriateness of third party events are taken by members of the management board.

To rescind membership an individual must send an email to northrn@ncl.ac.uk asking to be taken off the email list.