

Limestone Landscapes

Vision and Aims

Vision

Working together in a landscape-scale Partnership to make a positive difference to quality of life and to the unique natural environment of the Magnesian Limestone area.

Aims

A1 Champion and co-ordinate informed, participative and integrated action on the environment across a broad range of sectors.

A2 Deliver environment-led actions that achieve social and economic benefits.

A3 Work with communities connected to the natural area to help shape a landscape that reflects their need

Limestone Landscapes, formerly known as Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership.

Vision, aims, objectives, high level action plan, criteria for projects, principles and partnership model were agreed by Limestone Landscapes task group on 22 April and 28 May 2008, based on stakeholder comments made on draft proposal during stakeholder workshop on 18 March 2008.

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Objectives

O1. Conserve and enhance the unique biodiversity, geo-diversity, landscape, heritage and cultural assets of the partnership area and strengthen and develop local character and distinctiveness.

O2. Improve access to countryside and natural green-space, and opportunities for healthy 'green exercise' that will improve mental, physical and social well-being.

O3. Raise awareness of the environment of the partnership area as an educational resource and a source of local pride, creating stronger links between urban and rural areas.

O4. Empower local people to participate in activities and decision-making on the environment.

O5. Improve, promote and use the environment as a stimulus for economic regeneration and sustainable growth.

O6. Support and promote activities that help to mitigate, or adapt to, the impacts of climate change.

O7. Support and complement the work of partners through linking and securing resources and expertise.

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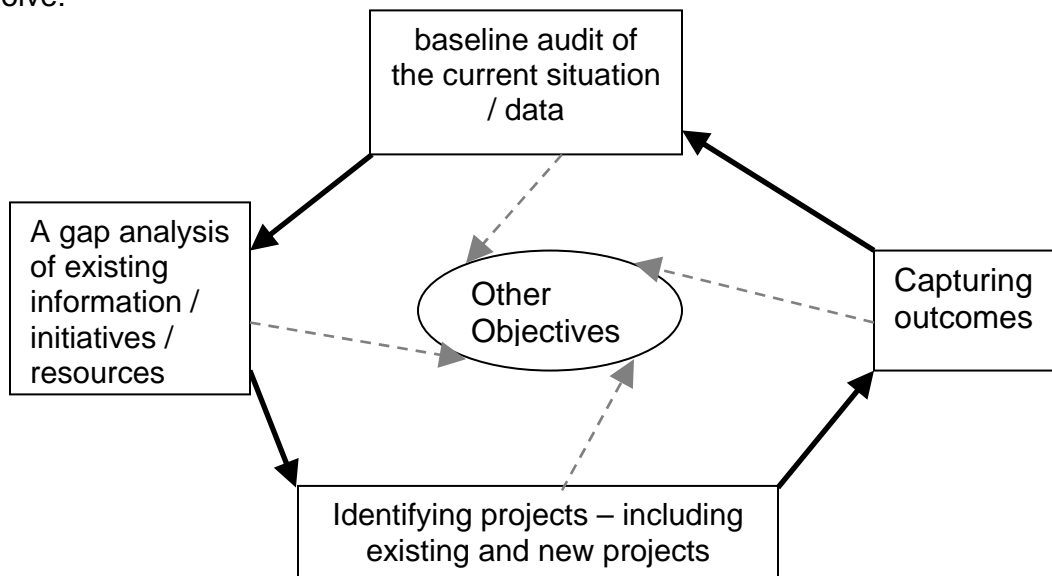
ACTION PLAN

Project Actions

AP1. The Action Plan would be structured around the following objectives:

- Conserving and enhancing natural and cultural resources
- Support and promote activities that mitigate climate change impacts
- Improving access to countryside and green-space
- Increasing opportunities for improving health through 'green exercise'
- Involving communities in activities and decision making on the environment
- Develop volunteering opportunities within environmental organisations in the area
- Improve the environment to stimulate economic regeneration and growth
- Use the local environment as an education and training resource
- Secure resources for action on the environment

AP2. For the development process (Phase 1) the above objectives would be the grouped into work-streams which would involve:



The different objectives will be at different stages in terms of the work required to accomplish the above and will therefore all move forward at their different stages of progress, however links will be made to capture multiple outcomes where relevant. Gaps in data requiring further work beyond Phase 1 would be identified.

AP3. The project ideas generated at the Partnership's First Workshop (20th February

2008) should be reviewed as part of the above process. (The Partnership would also support projects that were coming forward independently during Phase 1 as long as it fits with the criteria.)

AP4. Projects would be subject to a project integration process, which would be used to analyse the extent to which projects met the Partnership's wider objectives and to identify opportunities for refinement or synergies with other projects.

AP5. The Action Plan would identify priority projects for the Partnership to support, initiate or take forward itself based on agreed criteria.

AP6. A Green Infrastructure Strategy would be produced as a separate and parallel work stream to give the Action Plan a spatial dimension. The Green Infrastructure strategy would be 'strategic' in scale. It would identify existing environmental assets and the spatial issues affecting them (scale, fragmentation, connectivity) and identify opportunities and priorities for the development of new features.

- The Green Infrastructure Strategy would take on board any relevant projects identified elsewhere in the above work-stream.
- An implementation plan would need to be developed for the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

Process Actions

An additional Process Actions work-stream would run in parallel to the Project Actions to deal with Partnership issues. It would:

AP7. Investigate options for the Partnership's future constitution and core funding

AP8. Develop its communications strategy and means of building public and political support and secure full engagement with all sectors relevant for delivering objectives.

AP9. Set-up monitoring and evaluation framework including a review / evaluation of phase 1

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CRITERIA for projects

Context

- C1. The Partnership would be involved in projects in the area in a number of different ways. It would initiate projects and provide support for existing or new projects brought forward by partners. That support might range from financial contribution to simple endorsement.
- C2. The Partnership would be inclusive in supporting the projects of partners. The Criteria proposed here are those the Partnership would apply in prioritising the use of its own resources in bringing forward new projects or contributing to projects brought forward by others.
- C3 These criteria provide a basic checklist to help the partnership to consider which projects to get involved with. These are to help the Partnership to be clear why it engages with a project and how it can support and add value to a project.
- C4. These criteria will be reviewed for a more formal process once the partnership has control over its own funds and is approached for project funding.

Project enhancing Criteria

- C5. The Project meets at least one of the Partnership Objectives.
- C6. The project complements other Partnership Objectives.
- C7. The Project is robust and viable, based upon need and has a good prospect of delivering desired outcomes and securing the resources it needs.
- C8. The Project lies within, or specifically involves the Magnesian Limestone Natural Area.
- C9. The partnership will be able to benefit the project by providing steer, skills, expertise and links to other objectives, plans, sectors or resources
- C10. Communities are engaged and involved in project development at an early stage.

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PRINCIPLES

Aims, Targets and Aspirations

The Partnership should:

- P1. Have clear aims and objectives and clear targets
- P2. Have a strong consensus-based vision and an agreed set of priorities
- P3. *All people in the area have the opportunity to find out about the project*
- P4. Promote cooperation rather than competition; resources should be pooled; duplication of effort should be avoided
- P5. Work towards an independent constitution with its own bank account and financial arrangements.

Governance

- P6. The Partnership should be an organisation in its own right and employ its own staff; independent officers are needed – it is important that the Partnership is seen as being independent.
- P7. Personality of leadership is important.
- P8. There needs to be a balance between being inclusive and governance of the Partnership and getting things done effectively.

Communication

- P10. The Partnership should create a separate brand.
- P11. There should be a tiered approach to the Partnership's coordination.
- P12. The Partnership should have effective and very transparent communication methods.

Projects

- P13. Project priorities should be determined by the Partnership's Criteria.
- P14. The Partnership must support and add value to existing projects.

P15. Projects need to be integrated and should refer to the Partnership's Criteria.

Partners

P16. The cost and time implications of partners' input should be recognised.

P17. The Partnership is open to everyone, *is not fixed and actively encourages recruitment and participation of a wide range of individuals, organisations or partnerships.*

P18. The Partnership makes sure it has a wide suite of advice from a range of Partners.

Funding

P20. Two types of funding are needed: core funding and project funding.

P21.

P22. The Partnership should have independence to protect it from financial risk.

Monitoring and Evaluation

P23. The Partnership should be monitored and evaluated effectively.

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MODEL

Phase 1 Model

M1. A loose Partnership would be initiated as the model for the early, Phase 1 stage of the Partnership. This model seems more appropriate at this phase of the Partnership than a more formal model, given that a number of preparatory actions need to be undertaken (as described in the draft Action Plan) and that the Partnership will be in the phase of a 'groundswell'

M2. A Chaired Task Group could be set up to drive forward both the Project Actions and Process Actions identified in the draft Phase 1 Action Plan.

M3. A small representative group of volunteers from the Partnership would make up this Task Group. The Task Group could draw upon external expertise when required.

M4. The Task Group is deliberately proposed as a single entity to avoid silo working. It would be a committed group of volunteers who feed in when and where there are needs that they can help with.

M5. The Task Group would report back to the wider Partnership meetings to maintain broad involvement on an agreed timescale.

M6. There is an aspiration for the Partnership to be an independent organisation. In line with this aspiration, organisations would need to come forward to host future meetings for the wider Partnership, on a rotating basis.

M7. Natural England will perform the Secretariat function for the Partnership. Durham County Council is able to provide resources in the form of a staffing resource, to support the coordination of the Partnership.

Future Model (for Phase 2)

M8. The aspiration for the partners is the Partnership model of an independent legal entity, which has its own bank account and funding and which is not reliant on Durham County Council or Natural England.

M9. This aspiration should be re-visited at the conclusion of Phase 1. Partners would also need to consider whether such a model it is still appropriate for them at that point.

M10. The development of a formal model (such as the one aspired to) requires expertise and political buy-in. It would need to be added to the Partnership's Action plan if the Partnership wanted to go ahead with it.