LANCASHIRE
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Lancashire **Green** Infrastructure Strategy

2009

Lancashire Green Infrastructure Strategy

section 1

What is **Green Infrastructure?**

In the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS 2008)[1] Green Infrastructure is defined as:

"...the region's life support system – the network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lies within and between the North West's cities, towns and villages which provides multiple social, economic and environmental benefits..."

The Green Infrastructure approach is holistic, the approach emphasises that planning in this way is good for the environment, the economy, tourism and health and well being.

This is not business as usual. No longer does the economy have to be seen as somehow being separate from the environment. Through Green Infrastructure planning we are showing how we can support the economy by managing and planning our critical environment.

Photograph Courtesy of Preston City Council

section 2

Why get involved in **Green Infrastructure?**

Green space is important in shaping communities, providing areas for leisure and recreation and a quality environment which attracts people and investment. It will also reduce flood risk, cool our towns and cities as temperatures rise, reduce pollution, and improve health and well being. Green Infrastructure provides our water supplies, cleans our air and provides our food. Investing in Green Infrastructure safeguards these essential services and is vital for healthy communities and the economy.

- **Economic Developers:**
  Will lead to better development of sites and infrastructure to attract and retain businesses
- **Planners:**
  Will lead to better land use planning
- **Health Professionals:**
  Will lead to better development of and access to recreational facilities
- **Tourism Professionals:**
  Will lead to better development of the natural environment as a visitor attraction
- **Environmentalists:**
  Will lead to better co-ordination of activity to maintain and encourage diverse habitats

Lancashire Vision

"...The Vision for Lancashire's Green Infrastructure is for the development and maintenance of multifunctional green spaces and places, connecting urban areas to rural hinterlands, and ensuring that those continue to contribute towards the economic, social environmental well-being of the sub-region..."

section 3

Opportunity for Lancashire

The Lancashire sub-region is 81% rural. [2] It is also polycentric in nature - having a number of key urban centres. Lancashire's urban areas are very close to some of UK's most beautiful natural environment. We also have some outstanding green spaces within the urban areas; for example Witton Country Park in Blackburn, Avenham Park in Preston and Williamson Park in Lancaster. To turn this natural environment into an asset that can contribute to realising a number of policy objectives, we need to:

- identify what we need, and where appropriate, to create it,
- improve what we already have to do a better job, and
- maintain the existing resource.

In Lancashire we have an opportunity to invest in Green Infrastructure in such a way that it will:

- enhance economic performance,
- enhance the natural tourism offer,
- enhance the quality of life for those living and working in Lancashire,
- safeguard the landscape and biodiversity,
- help mitigate and adapt to climate change, and
- help manage the impacts of mainstream investments.

Strategic Objectives

Lancashire Economic Partnership and its partners, as part of the Green Infrastucture steering group, have identified the following seven key strategic objectives:

- To Improve Quality of Place
- To Improve Health and Well-being
- To Create the Setting for Investment
- To Enhance the Tourism, Recreation and Leisure Offer
- To Enhance Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
- To Adapt to and Mitigate the effects of Climate Change
- To Grow and Develop the Regional Parks in Lancashire

The Lancashire Green Infrastructure Strategy will underpin and enhance the delivery of a wide range of strategic plans and programmes. These include the **Regional Integrated Strategy (RS2010)**, **Lancashire Economic Strategy (LES), Lancashire Integrated Strategy (LIS), Multi Area Agreements**

Roman Way, Photograph Courtesy of Preston City Council

(MAAs), Local Area Agreements (LAAs) to the more specific service plans developed by the authorities, agencies and businesses.

The challenge for Lancashire is to realise these benefits in a way where the outputs can be identified, measured and valued in a multi-functional way. In this way benefits to the economy will be measured in growth in GVA and improvements in productivity; benefits to the visitor economy will be measured in an increase in visitor numbers and spend; benefits to health will be measured in positive impacts on health indicators and benefits to the environment will be measured in terms of the diversity and quality of the wildlife habitats. We can also assess benefits contributing to the adaption and mitigation of climate change through indicators such as carbon storage through peat restoration. These benefits are captured as a series of strategic objectives [3] that the action plan [4] will deliver.

Case study : **Blackpool Sea Defences**

Blackpool's new sea defences provide important protection against flooding and are the centrepiece for the regeneration of the sea front area, providing recreation, economic and health benefits.

The scheme was designed to help adapt to the impact of climate changes, which in the future may lead to more extreme weather events and flooding. The new defences reduce wave energy, which reduces flooding and erosion of sand, and connects the beach with the urban areas.

Lancashire faces a range of issues in order to drive up the sub-region's GVA contribution. Many of our towns have high levels of deprivation, poor health and low levels of physical activity. Despite outstanding landscapes beyond the urban areas, the quality of our urban and semi-urban areas is often low. The LES has identified improvement in 'Quality of Place' as a key driver in improving GVA. Robust evidence demonstrates that investment in Green Infrastructure will improve the quality of place, productivity and the enhancement of skills attainment and attraction in a way that will drive up performance in the manufacturing and the service sector. This will improve the economy of Lancashire.

The development of Public Art on Green Landscapes has already proven to enhance the natural environment in a dramatic way. This was demonstrated by the Panopticons project in Pennine Lancashire. We will take this approach forward in the Lancashire Green Infrastructure project.

Green Infrastructure is core to the Central Lancashire City Region programme to the extent that the Central Lancashire City Region is defined as **'the city with room to breathe'**

Case study : **Platts Lodge, Accrington**

Platts Lodge is a 2 hectare site to the south-east of Accrington town centre. The reclamation of the former derelict mill lodge into a high quality open space has been a catalyst for regeneration activity, economic growth and investment in the town centre. National Cycle Network, Route 6 runs through the site forming part of the Hyndburn Greenway, a cycle and pedestrian route, linking the East Lancashire towns of Rishton, Great Harwood, Accrington and Baxenden. The redundant supports from a former railway which used to run over the lodge, form a visually exciting element to the site through their new found use as a causeway carrying the cyclepath. Since the completion of the reclamation works, new businesses and organisations have moved into the area including the East Lancashire Primary Care Trust.

From the analysis in the LES, in real terms Lancashire's economy is growing but in relative terms it is falling behind other competing economies. The main cause of this is the proportion of low value goods and services produced in the manufacturing and service sectors. The LES identifies the main challenge is to "move the Lancashire economy up the value chain". Investment and planning in Green Infrastructure can help to attract and retain high value businesses in the manufacturing and service sectors, evidence shows Green Infrastructure contributes to an increase in productivity.

Investment and planning in Green Infrastructure will help to develop a more sustainable economy. A recent study [5] showed that some of the major risks to growth such as flooding, poor air quality and image all have Green Infrastructure solutions.

In the future, Lancashire will face the challenges of climate change, with higher summer temperatures and warmer, wetter winters. Enhancing Green Infrastructure can help us adapt to this changing climate. This will be done through local temperature management and reducing flood risk by intelligent design of greenspaces, sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) and new tree planting.

Lancashire has a unique opportunity to develop the contribution of Green Infrastructure in rural areas of Lancashire to underpin its future through development and investment in the three Regional Parks [6] ; East Lancashire, Morecambe Bay and Duddon, and the Ribble Coast and Wetlands. This will also be done through the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs); Forest of Bowland and Arnside and Silverdale.


Singing ringing Tree: Burnley
Photo by Ian Lawson

section 4

How will Lancashire's Green Infrastructure **be different?**

Lancashire will safeguard its key Green Infrastructure assets, whilst also looking to enhance and create Green Infrastructure in target areas to meet identified needs. For example, improving attractiveness of an area, or helping to deal with flood risk and health issues. Green Infrastructure will be planned both in rural areas and urban centres.

All Lancashire residents will have access to high quality, local green space. New green spaces will be created where needed and existing green areas maintained and enhanced in our towns and cities. We will take opportunities to increase Lancashire's woodland and forests, and plant new trees in urban settings, improving quality of place, increasing biodiversity and providing shade and cooling as future temperatures rise. Public agencies will work together to address flood risk and water management issues, including the use of SUDs, and green roofs.

We will look to create better links between our towns and the rural hinterland, linking our food and timber producers with nearby markets and encouraging people to use the countryside on their doorstep for leisure and recreation.

Not only will we have a high quality, well managed Green Infrastructure, it will be valued and cherished by those who live, work and visit the area.

Weavers Triangle - Burnley

Rough Hey Industrial Estate
Photograph Courtesy of Preston City Council

Case study : **RSPB Reserves and Local Economies**


Ben Hall © rspb-images.com

Leighton Moss RSPB Nature Reserve is situated in Silverdale, Lancashire. The area is very important for wildlife and is one of the richest parts of the UK in terms of biodiversity.

The Leighton Moss Economic report [7] has demonstrated that the wildlife and scenery of Leighton Moss and its environs are directly or indirectly responsible for the equivalent of at least 59 full time equivalent jobs. 27 of these jobs can be attributed to the wildlife of the reserve, 20 jobs can be attributed to the landscape of the area. 10 of the full time equivalent jobs are directly employed at Leighton Moss.

The economic impact of Leighton Moss is significant in North West England and is a key feature in creating a positive image of the area.

It is estimated that visitors spend a total of £1.2 million per year in the local economy within 20 miles from the reserve, on the day of their visit. In total, these visitors are estimated to spend £2.7 million during their entire stay or day trip in the area.


Morecambe Bay Wetlands


Morecambe - Photo by Susannah Bleakley

Green Infrastructure & flood risk management

Well planned Green Infrastructure can play an essential role in managing and reducing flood risk. Through investing in Green Infrastructure we can help reduce flood risk in the future, through recreating functional flood plains and setting back defences. Flood plains can also be managed for recreational space for local people, provide valuable habitat, be agriculturally productive, and provide a cleaning function for water run-off from new developments, helping to improve water quality.

Hesketh Bank managed realignment scheme in the Ribble Estuary was developed to improve flood defences and recreate the natural habitat, as well as providing recreation and tourism benefits, and provides a good example of developing Green Infrastructure solutions.

Across Lancashire there are over 52,000 properties at risk of flooding (within Flood zone 2). With the potential impacts from climate change and the expected housing growth, this figure is likely to rise, so limiting inappropriate development in our flood plains is essential. The estimated damages cost from the consequences of flooding to properties is £3,540m over the next 20 years across the North West. With further flood plain development this figure will rise. Promoting and incorporating Green Infrastructure within future development will be important in reducing these costs.

section 5

How do we exploit **these opportunities?**

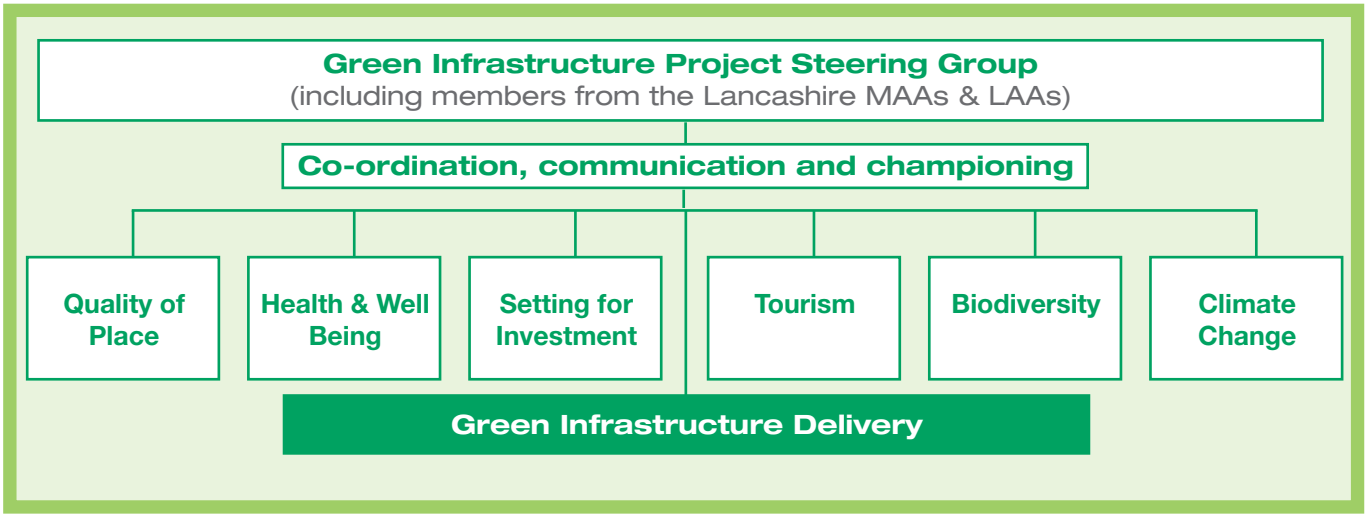
To capitalise on these opportunities Lancashire will improve the way the mosaic of Green Infrastructure assets work, both in rural and urban centres. Where there are gaps, we will create new assets; where assets are already in place, we will maintain or enhance them to maximise the contribution they can make to our sustainable development. This approach will contribute to a number of multi-functional outputs. [8]

All agencies/partners need to play their part, through coordinating their investments and strategic plans. Green Infrastructure presents a challenge and an opportunity for agencies and partners to work together to tackle some of the greatest issues faced by the sub-region.

Green Infrastructure is by its nature holistic. A public park is also a green gym, improving health through exercise and so reducing healthcare costs. It also provides a habitat for wildlife, reduces urban heat island effect and can reduce downstream flood risk. The benefits of Green Infrastructure span organisational responsibilities.

Delivery of the strategy will require a partnership where stakeholders come together to develop, coordinate, plan and manage Green Infrastructure. The partnership will comprise stakeholders with expertise in the economy, visitor economy, health and well-being, environment and education.

To deliver the strategy we will develop a delivery structure which takes forward the key themes as outlined in the diagram below.



Delivery of the strategy is underpinned by the production of an:

- **action plan** - a live document which addresses each of the strategic objectives that have been identified. A steering group will oversee the delivery, co-ordination and future development of the action plan. It will be the responsibility of the steering group to identify additional opportunities through cross functional working.

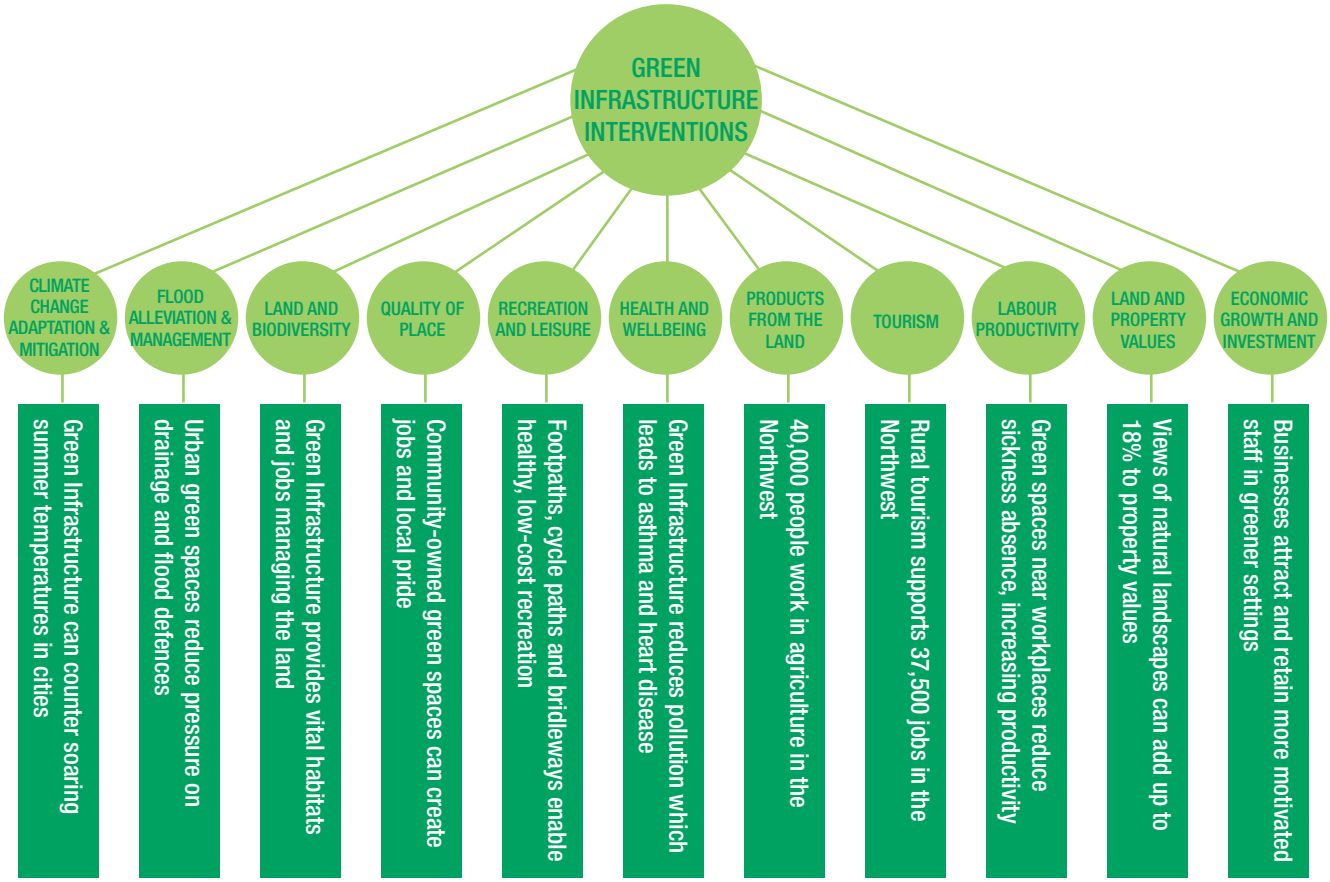
- **website (living strategy)** - www.thegreencity.org.uk with an interactive mapping system to highlight proposed Green Infrastructure investment using the Lancashire County Council MARIO mapping tool. This will help communicate ongoing activity and identify who is delivering the activity so that partnerships can be developed where a common goal exists. The mapping system will be accessible to all. The MARIO mapping system is an interactive map which allows you to go to anywhere in Lancashire and view information. Other mapping systems also offer this facility, but the MARIO maps contain more technical information on Green Infrastructure in Lancashire.

- **inventory** - using a set of maps and data to demonstrate the extent of functionality of Green Infrastructure across the sub-region, and how well it is connected. The maps and datasets can be found in the Inventory and Spatial Analysis. The mapping can be used as a baseline of current Green Infrastructure against which to measure progress. This includes the proposed Green Grid strategic access network. The mapping will be used to demonstrate how investing in Green Infrastructure in different ways can deliver different outputs.

Case study : **Fishwick, Preston**

The 17 hectare site is located within the deprived ward of Fishwick within Preston and has been transformed from a derelict landfill site to an award winning local nature reserve and recreation ground. Site works between 2004 and 2008 have included the development of new ecological habitats, a BMX track, football pitch, car park, cycle and footpaths, bridges and the removal of widespread flytipping. The works have improved the quality of place of the site as the southern gateway into Preston and have delivered other Green Infrastructure benefits including recreation and leisure, health and well-being, biodiversity, flood management and climate change adaption. The site will also encourage tourism into the city as a key attraction within the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park. This Project is funded by Lancashire County Council REMADE Programme from NWDA funds.


Brockholes artist's impression



Source: Natural Economy North West

Natural Economy North West (NENW) has undertaken work to measure the benefits of investment in Green Infrastructure.[9] This work will be used to help make the case for investment in Green Infrastructure and measure the impacts of investment. Further work is being carried out by NENW to continue to refine this approach.

The development of the Regional Parks and the other important natural areas are an important part of Lancashire's Green Infrastructure. The lessons learnt from the East Lancashire Regional Park are being used in the development of Green Infrastructure. [10] We are working on the development of the other regional parks: Ribble Coast and Wetlands, Morecambe Bay & Duddon, the NW Coastal Trail and the two AONBs.

We will continue to influence the positioning of Green Infrastructure within the Regional Integrated Strategy (RS2010), the Lancashire Integrated Strategy and other strategies. We are working with the local authorities and the Multi Area Agreements /Local Area Agreements [11] to ensure Green Infrastructure is embedded in those frameworks.

The evidence base will be used to create a sound business case for investment. Various projects within the action plan have defined funding streams attached to them. It is envisaged that without co-ordination the Lancashire Green Infrastructure project will not realise its full potential. Creating a project of this sort will enable funding from mainstreaming activity to be better aligned to the defined objectives of the individual projects. The Action Plan clearly demonstrates where funding for projects will come from.

Case study : **Within Grove, Huncoat**

This 2 hectare housing clearance land has been transformed from a derelict area into a green open space, helping to rejuvenate a deprived housing estate and create a sense of local pride. Located in the Within Grove estate of Huncoat in Hyndburn, the site had suffered from extensive littering, fly-tipping and arson. Site reclamation works between April 2008 and July 2009 involved path creation, landscaping, tree planting and the refurbishment of an electricity sub-station. The path network within the site will form part of the Huncoat Greenway, a cycle and pedestrian route linking Huncoat Village to Millshaw, providing a safe off-road route to local schools and businesses. The greener setting of the site has helped improve the image of Huncoat from the East Lancashire railway line and is expected to help attract businesses and retain motivated staff at Huncoat Industrial Estate.

section 6

How do we measure success?

We will develop success indicators as part of the action planning and delivery phase. Some can be direct outputs eg:

- access to green space – 95% of people having access to high quality green space within 100m of new build,
- increase in street trees in urban areas; +10%
- implementation of SUDs schemes for 100% of new residential build,
- woodland cover – increase from 6% to 10% by 2030, with intermediate targets,
- increase in footpaths and cyclepaths,
- diversity and quality of the wildlife habitats; % of SSSIs in 'good' or 'recovering' status,
- carbon storage – protection of upland peat bogs (primary) and sequestration through tree planting (secondary).

Other improvements will flow from this investment, but may be influenced by other factors as well:

- increase in visitor numbers and spend;
- increase in participation in physical activity, including usage of green routes;
- positive impacts on health indicators;
- high value companies attracted to the county.

The action plan will be monitored by the Project Steering Group, whilst suitable indicators for success will be developed and agreed. Specific timescales and objectives are identified with the action plan.

An annual Green Infrastructure event will showcase and celebrate the successes, provide progress updates and plan future activity.

Case study : **Tramper Trail Project**

The tramper routes have been developed as part of the Lancashire Green Tourism project which aims to develop the sustainable tourism offer and profile of Lancashire and the Forest of Bowland. The project is a partnership between Forest of Bowland AONB Team, Lancashire County Developments Ltd and Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board. This strand of the project promotes the creation of tramper routes connecting clusters of visitor economy based businesses and attractions within the Forest of Bowland area. Quality, sustainability and accessibility are key priorities for the visitor economy in this locality and this example of sustainable tourism activity complements the area's high quality environment and protected area status.

Case study : **Buckshaw Village**

When the Royal Ordnance Factory site was originally remediated there was a lack of landscape features. Remediation of this brownfield site included the use of SUDs and swales across the site. Within the Village there is a series of linear open spaces based on cycleways and footpaths, and Green Corridors which form the Village routes. These footpaths and cycleways link the housing and business areas to various facilities in the Village such as the Village core, the station, the school, play areas, the village park and the countryside beyond.

references

1 *The present RSS (2008) will form part of the Regional Integrated Strategy (RS2010)*
2 *Co-ordinated Actions for Rural Lancashire (June 2006)*
3 *Lancashire Green Infrastructure Strategic Objectives*
4 *Lancashire Green Infrastructure Action Plan*
5 *http://www.ginw.co.uk/resources/Critical_GI_23rd_March_lores.pdf*
6 *Regional Parks are the embodiment of Green Infrastructure on a smaller scale; they can bring about positive regeneration benefits.*
7 *Leighton Moss RSPB Nature Reserve and the Local Economy, Barrie Cooper & Matthew Rayment, January 2000*
8 *Recreation – public, Recreation – private, Green travel route, Aesthetic, Water storage, Water interception, Water infiltration / natural drainage, Storm protection – coastal, Shading from sun, Evaporative cooling, Trapping pollutants, Noise absorption, Habitat for wildlife, Corridor for wildlife, Soil stabilisation, Heritage, Cultural asset, Carbon storage, Food production, Timber production, Biofuels production, Water supply, Wind shelter and Learning. Source NW Green Infrastructure Unit*
9 *The Economic Value of Green Infrastructure (July 2008) – www.ginw.co.uk*
10 *East Lancashire Regional Park SRB6 Programme: Final Evaluation and Consideration of Future Role (April 2008)*
11 *Pennine Lancashire MAA (approved) Fylde Coast MAA (approved), Mid Lancashire MAA (proposed), Lancashire LAA led by LCC, Blackburn with Darwen LAA and Blackpool LAA.*

Case study : **Pennine Lancashire Forest Park**

Partners in Lancashire have been developing a project to create a new 120 hectare Forest Park centred on the former Rowley landfill site which occupies an elevated site close to the centre of Burnley. The proposed Forest Park adjoins the major Heasandford Industrial Estate and 5 of the 320 most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK are within 2 km. The site has been identified as a potential Newlands Project together with areas of neglected and under used land on the Heasandford Industrial Estate. This project will have a pivotal impact on the sustainable development and renewal of Burnley and become a 'tourist destination' for visitors from outside the North West region, sub-region of Lancashire, Pennine Lancashire and residents of Burnley. This project has been selected as one of the eight North West Green Infrastructure demonstration projects.

We would like to thank the following partners who contributed in the production of this strategy

Created by www.concept4creative.com (ref 0928-11/09), an ISO9001 Quality and ISO14001 Environmental accredited company.
Printed on paper manufactured from a sustainable source using vegetable based inks

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