

# **Establishment of the Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership**

## **Summary Evaluation Report** April 2008

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## Further Information

- If you require any information about the Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership, please contact the Partnership Secretariat:
  - Ingo Schüder, Natural England: [ingo.schuder@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:ingo.schuder@naturalengland.org.uk)
- The full set of reports of the three-stage process and the evaluation of the establishment of the Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership can be obtained from The Environment Council at [www.the-environment-council.org.uk](http://www.the-environment-council.org.uk):
  - First Workshop Transcript Report, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008
  - First Workshop Summary Report, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008
  - Second Workshop Transcript Report, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008
  - Second Workshop Summary Report, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008
  - Establishment Evaluation Report, April 2008
  - Establishment Summary Evaluation Report, April 2008

## 1. Background

A Feasibility Study<sup>1</sup> was commissioned in 2007 by the County Durham Environment Partnership and Natural England to determine whether a long-term landscape scale partnership working across the Magnesian Limestone Natural Area was possible. The Feasibility Study indicated that such a scheme was not only feasible but would carry interest and support within the area. An Interim Steering Group that included representatives from Durham County Council, Natural England and a range of organisations from other sectors was formed to take this project forward. Please refer to appendix 1 for a list of participants in the Interim Steering Group.

The Partnership was envisaged as:

- Long-lasting and sustainable, building on a common purpose and shared vision delivering social, economic and environmental benefits.
- An umbrella for environment-led regeneration projects and programmes. It will link different sector's resources, expertise and objectives, achieving additional benefits on a landscape-scale.
- Supporting and enhancing existing partnerships, projects and programmes and the capacity of organisations to deliver

The conference and its report also signalled the importance of the engagement and involvement of all interested parties in the process to set up the Partnership. The Environment Council was invited to facilitate the establishment of the Magnesian Limestone Partnership on behalf of all partners and to evaluate the process to capture learning for the development of future partnerships.

## 2. Three-Stage Engagement Process

In order to set up the Partnership, The Environment Council proposed a three-stage process that involved a series of developmental, interactive events to which interested organisations in the area would be invited. Three consecutive stakeholder workshops were planned and facilitated by The Environment Council. The main purpose of each is set out below:

- **First Workshop, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008**  
The objective for Participants at the first workshop was to scope the opportunities for environmental improvements, identify the key components of a vision for the area and identify how its members would like to work together.
- **Task and Finish Group, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008**  
A small representative group of volunteers from the First Workshop would use outputs from the First Workshop to develop a draft vision and partnership model and outline a draft action plan to present to the Second Workshop.
- **Second Workshop, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008**  
Finally, stakeholders would review and agree the vision, the partnership model, prioritise the action plan and identify next steps.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Natural Area Partnerships Feasibility Study Final Report*; April 2007; Capita Symonds can be obtained from Sue Mullinger, Durham County Council (sue.mullinger@durham.gov.uk).

An invitation covering the three events to set up the Partnership was sent to all of the interested organisations in the area, including all the participants in the Feasibility Conference. A list of organisations invited can be found at appendix 2. The invitees are all assumed to be members of the Partnership; provided they wish to be involved.

## **2.1 First Workshop**

The purpose of the First Workshop, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008, was to generate the material that would subsequently be used by the Task and Finish Group to develop a Vision, Action Plan and Model for the Partnership. The outcome of the Workshop was that it was successful in delivering a wealth of material for the Task and Finish Group to work with, including a number of project ideas. The workshop was also successful in establishing a set of volunteers to form the Task and Finish Group to take these ideas forward. The Task and Finish Group was mandated by the workshop participants to develop a Vision and Action Plan; to consider what Criteria could be used for the prioritisation of projects; and to present either a proposal, or options for a model, for how the partners could work together.

The First Workshop was attended by a range of local organisations and sectors, though was better represented by those with an environmental focus than sectors relating to business, community and cultural interests. For a list of attendees please refer to appendix 3. Throughout the Partnership set up process participants were given an opportunity to highlight any partners who had not yet been identified so that these could be involved in the Partnership in future.

The meeting was evaluated in order to allow participants views to feed into the set up process as well as measure its success and an evaluation questionnaire was accordingly circulated to attendees.

The full details of the First Workshop including the evaluation responses are available in the Transcript Report of the First Workshop, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008, which was produced by The Environment Council.

## **2.2 Task and Finish Group**

The Task and Finish Group volunteers met on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008. For a list of those involved please refer to appendix 4. A Transcript Report was produced as the record of the First Workshop, which provided the reference material for the Task and Finish Group. The Environment Council presented a summary of the key themes emerging from this report as it related to each element of the Partnership. This was done to enable its volunteers to more readily review the ideas and feedback generated at the First Workshop. The key themes on the elements were identified as follows:

- Vision: Key themes included cooperation; improvements and benefits across the sectors; involvement and inclusion of local people; local pride and esteem; Partnership profile; quality and sustainability. Other feedback from the First Workshop was that it would be helpful to craft aims and objectives.

- Action Plan: A wealth of project ideas had been generated. However some participants also noted that there were gaps in these ideas and that the range of sectoral interests was not well reflected within them. Some participants also suggested that baseline data should be gathered and a gap analysis carried out as the first steps of Partnership activity, prior to embarking upon project work. Prioritisation of projects was seen as a complex task and that a road map might be more appropriate than doing the job itself.
- Model: A number of themes had emerged which displayed a close affinity to principles of Partnership working rather than many specific types or examples of model.

One of the reflections from the First Workshop evaluation was the need for the range of sectoral interests to be represented and taken account of within the Partnership. Two other major themes emerged, with some divergence of viewpoint indicated between them:

- There was an indication from participant feedback of the need for something more tangible to have been presented in the Partnership, to be able to see clearly what the Partnership is about and what benefits it will bring. This expressed the risk of the Partnership being unproductive or being nothing more than a talking shop.
- A need was reflected by participant feedback for proper analysis and engagement to be undertaken before moving forward with projects. This also expressed the risk of the potential for alienation or exclusion and not addressing real needs.

Taking account of the above First Workshop outputs in their deliberations, the Task and Finish Group volunteers were able to generate draft proposals for each of the elements for the Partnership as mandated. In addition to the Vision (into which the Task and Finish Group incorporated Aims and Objectives) the Action Plan and Model, the Group also drafted proposals for Criteria and Principles for the Partnership.

### **2.3 Second Workshop**

The Second Workshop was convened on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The Environment Council provided a reminder of the input from the First Workshop on the various Partnership elements to set the context of the proposals. The Task and Finish Group then presented each of the draft proposals to the workshop and document copies of these were also circulated for review. Participants had the opportunity to feedback on each of the five Partnership elements: Vision, Action Plan, Criteria, Principles and Model and the facilitation team recorded their comments. Further information on the proposals and a summary of the comments made are set out in the next chapter.

At the conclusion of each presentation and discussion the facilitation team asked the participants whether they could support the proposal for the Partnership and all the five elements were confirmed as accepted.

Attendance was reduced at the Second Workshop and accordingly the diversity of sectors was also reduced. For a full list of attendees please refer to appendix 5.

A second evaluation questionnaire was also conducted to measure the success of the establishment of the Partnership and to consider the practicality of the application of its structure and learning points for other future Partnerships of different scale and in different areas.

### **3. Components of the Partnership**

#### **3.1 Vision**

The draft proposal for the Vision that was presented at the Second Workshop is set out in appendix 6. This proposal also encompassed a set of Aims and Objectives for the Partnership. A summary of comments made on the proposal by the participants includes the following:

- The relationship between the environment and all other aspects within the Vision needs to be highlighted.
- A 'bottom up' (rather than 'top down') approach to taking forward the Vision is preferred.
- Health and Social aspects need to be added into the Vision.
- The definitions of sustainability and environment within the Vision need to be improved.

The attendees at the meeting confirmed that they could support the draft proposal for the Partnership Vision.

#### **3.2 Action Plan**

The Action Plan proposal was composed of two sets of actions: a set of *Project Actions*, which covered an initial phase of work that would prepare the ground for future project activities; and *Process Actions*, which involved a parallel stream of work that would deal with Partnership matters such as its communication strategy. This is set out in full in appendix 7. A summary of comments made on the proposal by the participants includes the following:

- The participants questioned whether to structure the Action Plan around the Partnership's objectives would be 'putting the cart before the horse'.
- The Action Plan's *Project Actions* focused on a preparatory phase of work, which would cover an audit, analysis and identification process. This would set the basis from which projects could be subsequently identified. However, some participants reflected the view that the Partnership needed to move towards projects faster in order to retain partners' interest and to provide definition to the Partnership.
- The participants also noted the importance of representing the Partnership in the wider world as a known and active entity.

There were also suggestions that it would be helpful to show links to regional strategies as part of the preparatory audit and analysis work and that a monitoring and evaluation framework should be added to the Process Actions.

The attendees at the meeting confirmed that they could support the draft proposal for the Partnership Action Plan.

#### **3.3 Criteria**

The Criteria were intended to enable the Partnership to have a consistent and transparent method for prioritising the projects that it could become involved with. To view the draft proposal for Criteria please refer to appendix 8.

The key message from the discussion was that the Criteria should be reviewed in future, beyond the initial phase of the Partnership. In its initial phase, the Partnership was not in a position where it could make funding available for projects. Consequently the Criteria in their present form would act as guidelines rather than a strictly applied set of rules. However, should the context change in future as was anticipated, then it would necessary for the Partnership to review these Criteria.

The attendees at the meeting confirmed that they could support the draft proposal for the Partnership Criteria.

### **3.4 Principles**

A number of ideas had emerged from the discussion at the First Workshop on a possible model for the Partnership. These had a closer affinity to principles of working rather than being examples of a particular type of model. The Task and Finish Group had therefore encapsulated these ideas as a set of Principles for the Partnership. Please refer to appendix 9 to review the draft proposal for Principles.

The attendees at the meeting confirmed that they could support the draft proposal for the Partnership Principles.

### **3.5 Model**

The Model proposed by the Task and Finish Group was that of an informal loose Partnership. This was felt to be more appropriate than a formal model, given the emergent nature of the Partnership at the present point in time. It was also thought that this would facilitate the Partnership's establishment since a loose Partnership was less complicated to accomplish. The Group also recommended that the loose model then be reviewed once the Partnership had moved through its initial phase, to determine whether it was appropriate to move to a more formal arrangement. Please refer to appendix 10 of this summary report to view a copy of the full details of the draft Partnership Model.

As part of the model proposed, a Task Group, composed of volunteers from the Partnership, would be established to undertake the preparatory *Project Actions* and the *Process Actions* in the Action Plan. A number of partners volunteered for the Task Group at the Second workshop and a list of these can be found at appendix 11. Draft Terms of Reference, and draft Role and Responsibility for the Task Group, were suggested by the facilitation team and these are also set out in appendix 11. The Task Group would report back to the wider Partnership to maintain broad involvement.

It was suggested that the wider partnership should meet quarterly and have an annual general meeting. It was also proposed that partners could provide the meeting venues and share the hosting of these meetings between them. It was also proposed that targets and a review mechanism should be set up to measure the success of the initial phase of the Partnership. One of the main points of discussion was around funding and whether there was a need for the Partnership to pursue funding for a major project to raise the Partnership's profile and sustain momentum and interest of partners.

The attendees at the meeting confirmed that they could support the draft proposal for the Partnership Model, including the role of the Task Group.

## 4. Evaluation and Conclusions

The establishment of the Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership has highlighted the following learning points, both for the Magnesian Limestone Partnership itself and the application of the set up process to other Partnerships, whether in a different area or of a different scale. These observations have been based on information from the evaluation questionnaire participants' responses and from the workshop transcript records.

### 4.1 Learning Points: Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership

- **Feasibility Study:** This forerunner to the set up process was valuable. It provided a solid and transparent rationale for initiating the process to set up the Partnership. The interval of a year between the feasibility study and the establishment of the Partnership meant that some of its value was reduced since this resulted in loss of continuity of understanding and involvement of partners. This may also have reduced the potential benefits of wider communication and advocacy of the Partnership by partners.
- **Timescale:** The short timescale for the three-stage set up process meant that it had some momentum and partners could more easily recall the content and spirit of previous events. The disadvantages were that there was less time to develop contacts within the less well-represented sectors in the Partnership and encourage their involvement and that the level of commitment over the timescale meant that some partners were unavailable for the set up events.
- **Partner Involvement:** Organisations such as those from the business, health and cultural sectors were less well represented, despite the efforts of the Interim Steering Group. The benefits of the Partnership, particularly in its emergent stage are less explicit for such sectors. A series of one-to-one meetings with key organisations in the less well-represented sectors to enhance the advocacy process may have been beneficial to raise the profile of the imperative for involvement and gaining their commitment to participate. This underlines the importance of the role of advocacy and the development of the Partnership's communication strategy which is one of the *Process Actions* within its Action Plan
- **Interim Steering Group:** This group played a key role in carrying the initiative forward and bridging the gap between the Feasibility Study and the Partnership set up process. The group also put a considerable amount of work into researching and developing a database of interested organisations so that as large a number and as wider a range could be reached as possible for the set up process. This depended on key individuals being willing and able (through the resource of their time, committed by their organisation) to take the initiative and undertake the necessary actions.
- **Style of Working:** The open-ended nature of the set up process was intended to ensure that ownership and buy-in to the Partnership by partners was achieved. However, not all partners embraced the process. Some partners found the lack of certainty about the Partnership at that point unhelpful and did not wish to be involved in its emergent stages. More detail about the working style and its rationale, including further information about the various workshop sessions and the input required from participants, may have been helpful in offsetting such a reaction.

It should also be noted that this type of Partnership requires active participants. Setting the tone by encouraging partners to be pro-active at an early stage is important if this is going to be a feature of the Partnership once it is established.

- **Partner Aspirations:** The partnership will continually have to manage the tension between the Partnership moving too fast and not moving fast enough. There will be those *process* orientated stakeholders who will want to see projects based on effective research and a needs analysis, and *action* orientated stakeholders who want to see tangible results quickly. The early phase of the Partnership should be viewed as a creative process and if both types of stakeholders are represented in the decision-making process then robust and sustainable decisions should emerge. The development of a framework such as a high level Green Infrastructure Strategy would aid this process.
- **The Set Up Process:** Using the building blocks of the Vision, Action Plan, Criteria, Principles and Model have been a manageable way for people to become involved in building the Partnership into a working entity. Having a three-stage process enabled these building blocks to be developed directly from partners' own ideas and feedback, thereby facilitating ownership and delivering something appropriate for partners' needs. The amount of time and work the process has required has been quite considerable and should not be underestimated. Members of the Interim Steering Group expressed concerns about being perceived as too closely involved and with too much control of the Partnership: Using an independent facilitation team without any agenda or personal interest in the area has been helpful in enabling the Group members to take a step back.

#### 4.2 Learning Points: Portable and Scaleable Model

- **Structure:** Use a set of Partnership elements: Vision, Action Plan, Criteria, Principles and Model as 'blocks' from which the Partnership can be built. These are a manageable and accessible way of enabling partners to understand and input to the development and set up of the Partnership as a whole.
- **Progress:** The establishment of a Partnership should be approached with the expectation that it will evolve rather than operate to a pre-determined plan. The elements of the Partnership once created may be emergent or at an early stage of development. For example the Magnesian Limestone Action Plan was conceived as having an Action Plan, Criteria and Model that would be appropriate for the initial phase of the Partnership's existence but would need to be reviewed after an initial period of time.
- **Timescale:** As a guide, the minimum timescale for the set up process would be around three months, in order to allow sufficient time for partners to schedule in set up events along with their other commitments. A longer timeframe may be needed depending on circumstances. There is also some value in the momentum of action and interest gained through having of a relatively compact timescale.
- **Focus:** The Partnership may benefit from taking up a tangible project in order to highlight the existence of the Partnership and to generate some enthusiasm and interest in its early phase. There may be a raft of preparatory actions in the Partnership's early stages. While these may be important and necessary they are likely to be less eye-catching and outward facing. Different partners will be motivated in different ways about the Partnership.
- **Interaction of Partners:** Face to face interaction in the set up process is important to make it meaningful and to enable partners to better understand and take account of the range of needs and aspirations of everyone involved. Personal interaction is needed to help develop the working relationships that will be needed once the Partnership is active.

- **Facilitating Involvement:** Opportunities for partners to meet may best be arranged on a half day rather than whole day basis. The shorter window of time required may give more change for partners to attend, particularly those who have to balance the Partnership with a range of other priorities and responsibilities.
- **Range of Partners:** If the Partnership is landscape or environment led then the benefits for non-landscape organisations and sectors may not seem immediately obvious. Business, health, education and heritage need to be signposted explicitly in any Partnership communication material so that the attention of these sectors is gained. The initiative, preparatory to the set up process, of a series of one-to-one meetings to raise awareness and to gain a commitment to involvement with these sectors may be necessary. Advocacy is a key factor in ensuring involvement is achieved.
- **Engagement:** In order to develop a Partnership that is appropriate, useful and meaningful to an area, it is essential to engage with partners so that they can inform its development. Stakeholder input will not only make the Partnership more robust and functional, but also engender ownership and buy-in. The benefits of inputting to a developing Partnership, which is not pre-planned or pre-determined but an open-ended opportunity, should be carefully and fully communicated. Some partners may feel uncomfortable with the lack of immediate certainty around a Partnership that comes with an open-ended process. However, it is worth persevering with engagement from the earliest possible stage of partnership development, in order to achieve the benefits of robustness and ownership that stakeholder involvement will bring.
- **Core Group:** It is important to have a group of committed partner volunteers to become involved to drive the Partnership forward through its critical early stages and beyond. There may be a number of tasks required to achieve this without there necessarily being funding to take them forward. Volunteering also enables partners to become involved and working collaboratively from an early stage. It is also important that this group remains engaged with the wider group of partners and have a responsibility to keep them informed and involved with the work it is undertaking on their behalf. The examples of this working in practice are the Interim Steering Group and the new Task Group for the Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership.
- **Feasibility Study:** A consideration for the future would be to initiate the development of a partnership with a stakeholder workshop, looking for this group to collectively express the need for a partnership, identify what needs to be known to proceed and to mandate the feasibility study. This could then be followed up by another workshop that received and discussed the final feasibility report. In essence starting the 'participative approach' earlier in the partnership development process. This would also enable the process to be holistic, providing a smooth and cohesive transition from feasibility study to the establishment process and retaining the benefits of interest, buy-in and understanding gained in the earlier stage.
- **Ongoing Participation:** If a partnership is established through a participative and open process there should be a commitment to work in this way in the future (or if not to communicate this change to the stakeholders). In addition, the ability to communicate openly, design effective engagement processes and facilitate what at times might be difficult conversations are key skills in partnership development. A training-needs analysis and investment in meeting those needs is another key component of a partnership action plan.

## 4.3 Conclusions

- Once initiated Partnerships evolve based on the needs and aspirations of those involved. This is a creative process that should lead to a more sustainable outcome. However, some stakeholders find the inherent uncertainty in this unsettling. It is worth persisting as the involvement of stakeholders in resolving these uncertainties helps create a sense of ownership
- Partnerships are fundamentally about people and people are effectively engaged through good process. It is therefore worth investing in process design and facilitation and ensuring these skills are present within the partnership.
- The other thing to invest in is getting the right people. A lot of assumptions were made as to how people would react to what many saw as a 'good idea' and these were not necessarily born out in reality. There is a real danger that the partnership is made up of the 'same old suspects'. This will still have a valid purpose but will not deliver the Vision.
- Therefore a key component of the process moving forward will be the 'outreach and communication strategy'. At the outset, there was an aspiration to involve the wider stakeholder group. This wider group now needs to be convinced that the Partnership is the 'best thing since sliced bread'
- The Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership has been established through a participative process. It will be important to continue this approach as it helps build the relationships that are the glue in effective partnership working. It should be recognised however, that this type of process can be time and resource intensive and does not always lend itself to funding and organisational requirements. The partnership needs the courage of its convictions because the participative approach is, in our opinion, the way to achieving a truly sustainable partnership.

## 5. Agreed Way Forward and Actions

### 5.1 Agreed Way Forward

- The Partnership has been established through the three-stage set up process and is founded on the elements of: Vision, Action Plan, Criteria, Principles and Model presented to partners by the Task and Finish Group. The draft proposals for these five components have been confirmed as supported by partners at the Second Workshop, with some minor amendments proposed.
- The Action Plan, Criteria and Model for the Partnership have been conceived and confirmed as being appropriate for the Partnership in its early stages of operation. These will need to be reviewed in time and updated as appropriate.
- The Action Plan, both project and process actions, will be taken forward by a Task Group. This group is composed of partner volunteers. Recruitment of further partners for the Task Group, including any missing sectors, is also required. Organisations such as the Tourism Partnership were not able to volunteer for the Task Group but highlighted that they were willing to be called upon for help as required.

- The Partnership Task Group will meet together with the Interim Steering Group on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2008 to conduct a hand over. The meeting will also establish a Chair for the Task Group and develop a draft agenda for the Task Group's first meeting. A further date will be arranged towards the latter part of April for the Task Group's first meeting to identify a way forward on the Action Plan. The Task Group will report back to the wider Partnership following this subsequent meeting.
- The administration for the Partnership is supported by a Secretariat. Natural England have volunteered and been accepted by partners for this role. The role of the Secretariat should be clarified and communicated.
- Resources have been offered by partners towards the partnership: These include the Partnership's involvement in a current Woodland Trust project, as an early trial project to demonstrate what the Partnership is about; GIS facilities; venues for the Task Group; staffing time to both support the Partnership and to input to the Task Group; support for survey activities and a £5K funding input to resource the Partnership.

## 5.2 Actions

- **Next Steps Meetings:** A hand over meeting will be arranged by the Secretariat between the new Task Group and the Interim Steering Group for 4<sup>th</sup> April 2008. The meeting will compose an agenda for the first Task Group meeting and establish a Chair for the Group. The participants will also review The Environment Council's draft evaluation report. Finally the meeting will establish how the Task Group will report back to the wider Partnership. A first meeting for the Task Group will take place in the latter part of April, which will be arranged by the Secretariat.
- **Task Group Volunteers:** Specific volunteers need to be identified for some organisations listed. Recruitment of further partners for the Task Group including any missing sectors is also required. Organisations such as the Tourism Partnership were not able to volunteer for the Task Group but highlighted that they were willing to be called upon for help as required.
- **Funding:** An action to explore funding opportunities should be undertaken by the Task Group so the Partnership has an understanding of what is available. This would act as an opportunity for the benefits of the Partnership to be promoted and for it to become known to potential funding bodies.
- **Progress:** Actions were proposed by partners at the Second Workshop relating to the discussion of the Action Plan and Model, that there should be monitoring and evaluation, including the setting of targets to measure success of the initial phase of the Partnership.
- **Involvement:** The Partnership's Secretariat has now taken on the responsibility for contacting any organisations highlighted by other partners, which have not been made aware of the Partnership to date. In addition the Secretariat will contact organisations or sectors that are not strongly represented in current activities to encourage them to become involved. The Task Group also has an advocacy role in encouraging wider sector involvement. Every partner in the Partnership can also individually act as an ambassador and advocate for the Partnership, drawing the attention of people in the area to the Partnership and advising the Secretariat when they become aware of a partner who is not currently engaged.

- **Updates and Feedback:** The Task Group will report back to the wider Partnership following its first meeting in the latter part of April (to be arranged) and should develop a mechanism to enable regular updates and feedback between the Task Group and wider Partnership.
- **Wider Partnership:** It was suggested by partners at the Second Workshop that the wider partnership should meet quarterly and have an annual general meeting. It was also proposed that partners could provide the venues and share the hosting of these meetings between them. Arrangements for the convening of the wider Partnership that meet the needs of partners should be confirmed by the Secretariat.

**The Environment Council  
April 2008**

## Appendix 1: Interim Steering Group Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Louise Sams	County Durham Tourism Partnership
Ged Lawson	Durham County Council
David Mason	Durham County Council
Sue Mullinger	Durham County Council
Tom Whellans	Durham County Council
Liz Charles	Durham Rural Community Council
Russell Hayward	Durham Rural Community Council
Peter Richards	Groundwork East Durham
David Park	Lafarge
Tony Devos	Natural England
Ingo Schüder	Natural England
Brad Tooze	Natural England

## Appendix 2: Organisations Invited to Participate in the Set-Up Process

Acumen Community Enterprise Development Trust  
Age Concern  
Association of North East Councils  
Banks development  
Barclays Agricultural Banking Centre  
Black & Ethnic Minority Communities (BECON) -  
Chair  
Black and Ethnic Community Organisations' Network  
British Energy  
British Trust for Conservation and Volunteering  
(BTCV)  
Business in the Community (BITC)  
Business Link - County Durham  
Campaign for the Protection of Rural England  
Cassop Primary School  
CBI North East  
Church Commissioners/Chapter & Dean  
City of Durham Council  
CLA  
Coalfield Forum  
Coalfields Regeneration Trust  
Community Foundation  
Countryside Volunteers - South Tyneside  
County Durham Association of Local Councils  
County Durham Economic Partnership  
County Durham Environment Partnership  
County Durham Foundation  
County Durham Primary Care Trust  
County Durham Tourism Partnership  
Culture, Tourism & Sport  
Darlington Borough Council  
Darlington Partnership  
Disability North  
Durham Biodiversity Partnership  
Durham County Council  
Durham County Local History Society  
Durham Heritage Coast  
Durham LAF  
Durham LEA  
Durham PCT  
Durham Rural Community Council  
Durham Strategic Partnership  
Durham Wildlife Trust  
Easington (East Durham) LSP  
Easington Colliery Regeneration Partnership  
Easington District Council  
East Durham & Houghall Community College  
East Durham Community Network  
East Durham Trust  
EDF Energy  
English Heritage  
Environment Agency  
Environmental Industries Federation  
Esh Winning Eco Centre  
Federation of Small Businesses  
Forestry Commission  
Freelance  
Government Office for the North East  
Groundwork  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Hartlepool LSP  
Heritage Lottery Fund  
Highways Agency  
Horden Parish Council  
Huntsman Tioxide  
Ignite  
Kelso Grain  
Lafarge  
Learning and Skills Council  
Learning through landscapes  
Lloyds TSB  
Lord Crewe Charity  
Monk Hesleden Parish Council  
National Farmers Union (NFU)  
National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence  
(NICE)  
Natural England  
NERAF  
Newcastle University  
Nexus  
North East Biodiversity Forum  
North East Chamber of Commerce  
North East Civic Trust  
North East Community Forests  
North East Museums Libraries & Archives Council  
North East Regional Assembly  
North East Social Enterprise Partnership  
North East Sport  
North of England Civic Trust  
North of England Co-operative Council  
Northern Rock Foundation  
Northern Way  
Northumbrian Water  
One North East  
Peterlee Town Council  
Ptyxis Ecology  
Seaham Town Council  
Sedgefield Borough Council  
Sherburn Stone  
Smiths Gore  
Social Enterprise Sunderland  
South Tyneside Council  
Sport England  
Sunderland City Council  
Sunderland LSP  
Sunderland Wildspace Volunteers  
SureStart County Durham  
The Architectural and Archaeological Society of  
Durham & Northumberland  
The National Trust  
The Princes Trust  
The Scarman Trust  
Tyne Tees FWAG  
Voluntary Organisations' Network North East  
Wheatley Hill Community Association  
Woodland Trust  
Workers Educational Association (WEA)  
Young Farmers - National Federation

### Appendix 3: Attendees at the First Workshop

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Hilary Farrow	Acumen Community Enterprise Development Trust
Mark Knowles	Aone
Chris Wiltsher	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
Jonathan Elmer	City of Durham Council
Angus Collingwood-Cameron	Country Land & Business Association
Louise Sams	County Durham Tourism Partnership
Victoria Catesby	Durham County Council
Terry Coult	Durham County Council
Josephine Ellis	Durham County Council
Claire Fairclough	Durham County Council
Ged Lawson	Durham County Council
Victoria Lloyd	Durham County Council
Sue Mullinger	Durham County Council
John Banks	Durham County Council
Niall Benson	Durham Heritage Coast Initiative
Brian Oram	Durham Heritage Coast Initiative
Mike Ogden	Durham Local Access Forum
Liz Charles	Durham Rural Community Council
Sue Charlton	Durham Wildlife Trust
Mark Richardson	Durham Wildlife Trust
John Murphy	Easington District Council
Gary Shears	Easington District Council
Barbara Hind	East Durham Trust
Lee Dudley	Forestry Commission
Richard Waldmeyer	Hartlepool Borough Council
June Clark	Horden Parish Council
Tony Devos	Natural England
Amanda Hunter	Natural England
Tiffany Inglis	Natural England
Jacqui McHugh	Natural England
Christine Pope	Natural England
Lorraine Rasmussen	Natural England
Ingo Schüder	Natural England
Nick Brodin	North East Biodiversity Forum
Claire Thorn	North East Regional Assembly
Ian Gardner	NovasCarman
Michael Patterson	One North East
Tammy Morris-Hale	Sedgefield Borough Council
Michelle Appleby	Sunderland City Council
Jim Daly	Sunderland City Council
Michael Young	Tarmac Ltd
Belinda Burke	The Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham & Northumberland
Rebekah Watson	The North East Chamber of Commerce
Gary Haley	Woodland Trust
Nigel Todd	Workers' Educational Association

#### **Appendix 4: Task and Finish Group Volunteers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Niall Hammond	Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham & Northumberland
Louise Sams	County Durham Tourism Partnership
Ged Lawson	Durham County Council
Brian Oram	Durham County Council (Durham Heritage Coast)
Liz Charles	Durham Rural Community Council
Terry Coult	Durham Biodiversity Partnership
Niall Benson	Heritage Coast
Ingo Schuder	Natural England

## Appendix 5: Attendees at the Second Workshop

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Niall Hammond	Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland
Angus Collingwood-Cameron	Country Land & Business Association
Louise Sams	County Durham Tourist Partnership
Terry Coult	Durham County Council
Claire Fairclough	Durham County Council
Ged Lawson	Durham County Council
Sue Mullinger	Durham County Council
Mike Ogden	Durham County Council
Niall Benson	Durham Heritage Coast Initiative
Russell Hayward	Durham Rural Community Council
Lee Dudley	Forestry Commission
Rachel Sparks	Forestry Commission
Stephen Armstrong	Groundwork East Durham
Steve Cooper	Hartlepool Borough Council
Tony Devos	Mineral Valleys Project
Jacqui McHugh	Mineral Valleys Project
Amanda Hunter	Natural England
Lorraine Rasmussen	Natural England
Ingo Schüder	Natural England
Brad Tooze	Natural England
Christine Venus	Natural England
Claire Thorn	North East Assembly
Nick Brodin	North East Biodiversity Forum
Guy Nokes	Novas Scarman
Matt Hawking	South Tyneside Council
Jim Daly	Sunderland City Council
Rebekah Watson	The North East Chamber of Commerce
Gary Haley	Woodland Trust

## Appendix 6: Draft Proposed VISION

### Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership

#### Draft VISION, Aims and Objectives

Draft Proposal to Partners, Second Workshop 18 March 2008

#### **Vision**

Working together in a long lasting Partnership to make a positive difference to the lives of the communities of the Magnesian Limestone area through environment led regeneration.

#### **Aims**

- A1. Champion and co-ordinate informed, participative and integrated action on the environment across a broad range of sectors.
- A2. Deliver the Vision in a way that achieves social, economic and environmental goals and secures benefits for the long-term future.
- A3. Help the communities of the natural area become more sustainable and to help shape an environment that reflects their needs.

#### **Objectives** (Note: These are not listed in order of priority.)

- O1. Conserve and enhance the unique biodiversity, geo-diversity, landscape, heritage and cultural assets of the partnership area and strengthen local character and distinctiveness.
- O2. Improve, promote and use the environment as a stimulus for economic regeneration and sustainable growth.
- O3. Improve access to countryside and natural green-space.
- O4. Increase opportunities for healthy 'green exercise', improving mental and physical well-being.
- O5. Raise awareness of the environment of the partnership area as an educational resource and a source of local pride.
- O6. Support and promote activities that help to mitigate, or adapt to, the impacts of climate change.
- O7. Involve local people in activities and decision-making on the environment.
- O8. Support and complement the work of partners.
- O9. Secure resources for action on the environment.

## Appendix 7: Draft Proposed ACTION PLAN

### Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership

### Draft ACTION PLAN

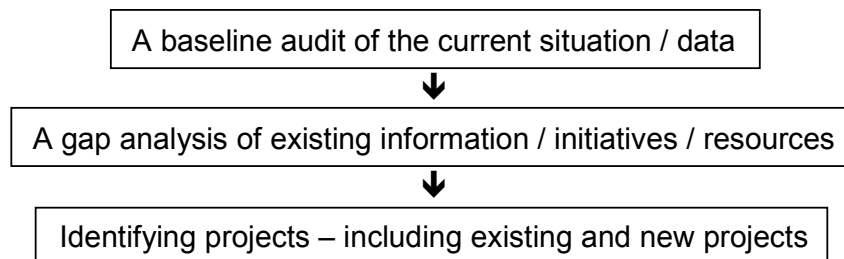
Draft Proposal to Partners, Second Workshop 18 March 2008

#### Project Actions

AP1. The Action Plan would be structured around the Partnership's 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 healthy 'green exercise'
- Involving communities in activities and decision making on the environment
- Improve the environment to stimulate economic regeneration and growth
- Raise awareness of the local environment as an educational resource
- Support and complement work of partners
- Secure resources for action on the environment

AP2. Each of these objectives would be the subject of a work-stream, 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. Gaps in data requiring further work beyond Phase 1 would be identified.

AP3. The project ideas generated at the Partnership's First Workshop (20<sup>th</sup> 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.)

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 initiate or take forward itself based on agreed criteria.

**Continued overleaf.**

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.

## **Appendix 8: Draft Proposed CRITERIA**

### **Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership**

#### **Draft CRITERIA** **(for the Partnership's involvement with projects)**

**Draft Proposal to Partners, Second Workshop 18 March 2008**

### **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. As the Partnership is in its early stages, these Criteria might have to be reviewed in the future and should therefore be treated at this stage as indicative or provisional.

### **Criteria**

- C4. The Project has the potential to meet multiple Partnership Objectives.
- C5. The project does not conflict with the Partnership's other Objectives.
- C6. The Project is robust and viable and has a good prospect of securing the resources it needs.
- C7. The Project lies within, or involves the Magnesian Limestone Natural Area.
- C8. The Project will benefit from the involvement of the Partnership.
- C9. The project will benefit a number of people in the Partnership area, whether directly or indirectly (e.g. potential visitors, users).
- C10. The Project will raise the profile of the Partnership.

## **Appendix 9: Draft Proposed PRINCIPLES**

### **Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership**

### **Draft PRINCIPLES**

**Draft Proposal to Partners, Second Workshop 18 March 2008**

#### **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. Have a strong identity and everyone should know about it
- P4. Promote cooperation rather than competition; resources should be pooled; duplication of effort should be avoided
- P5. Change people's attitudes.

#### **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. Everyone should be free to contribute to the Partnership.
- P9. There needs to be a balance between having inclusive 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 and is not fixed – individual or organisation.
- P18. The Partnership makes sure it has a wide suite of advice from a range of Partners.
- P19. The Partnership actively encourages recruitment and participation of a wide range of partners.

**Continued overleaf.**

## **Funding**

- P20. Two types of funding are needed: core funding and project funding.
- P21. The Partnership should have an independent constitution with its own bank account and financial arrangements.
- P22. The Partnership should have independence (legal incorporation) to protect it from financial risk.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- P23. The Partnership should have an effective monitoring and evaluating programme and resources should be set aside to do so.

## **Appendix 10: Draft Proposed MODEL**

### **Magnesian Limestone Natural Area Partnership**

#### **Draft MODEL**

**Draft Proposal to Partners, Second Workshop 18 March 2008**

#### **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 single Task Group could be set up to undertake both the Project Actions and Process Actions identified in the draft Phase 1 Action Plan.
- M3. Volunteer partners from the Partnership would make up this Task Group. This would help to engender a sense of community and get as many different partners involved as possible, as soon as possible.
- 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.
- 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. 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.

## Appendix 11: Partnership Task Group

### Volunteers to Date

Name	Organisation	Sector
Mike Ogden	Durham County Council	Access
Implementation Officer (or sub)	Durham Biodiversity Partnership	Biodiversity
Brad Tooze/ Tony Devos	Natural England	Environmental
Lee Dudley	Forestry Commission	Green Infrastructure
TBC	Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland	Heritage
Ged Lawson	Durham County Council	Landscape
Sue Mullinger	Durham County Council	Landscape Partnerships
Gary Haley	Woodland Trust	Natural Environment/ Conservation
Niall Benson	Durham Heritage Coast	Partnerships
TBC	Durham Rural Community Council	Voluntary and Community Sector

### Suggested Draft Terms of Reference

The group is mandated to carry out the following tasks:

- **Project** Actions as identified in the draft Phase 1 Action Plan (and as amended at the Second Workshop, 18<sup>th</sup> March 08)
- **Process** Actions as identified in the draft Phase 1 Action Plan (and as amended at the Second Workshop, 18<sup>th</sup> March 08)

### Suggested Role and Responsibility

- Works on behalf of all partners
- Has a committed voluntary membership drawn from Partnership that covers the range of sectors
- Works as a single entity to avoid silo working
- Members feed in when and where there are needs and requirements
- Utilises Action Plan as its work programme (as amended at the Second Workshop, 18<sup>th</sup> March 08)
- Reports back to wider Partnership on progress at next full partners' meeting.
- Has support from coordination resource offered by Durham County Council.