

leeds city region

intelligence driving growth



Green Infrastructure Strategy

FINAL
AUGUST 2010

Prepared by LDA Design on behalf of the Leeds City Region Partnership

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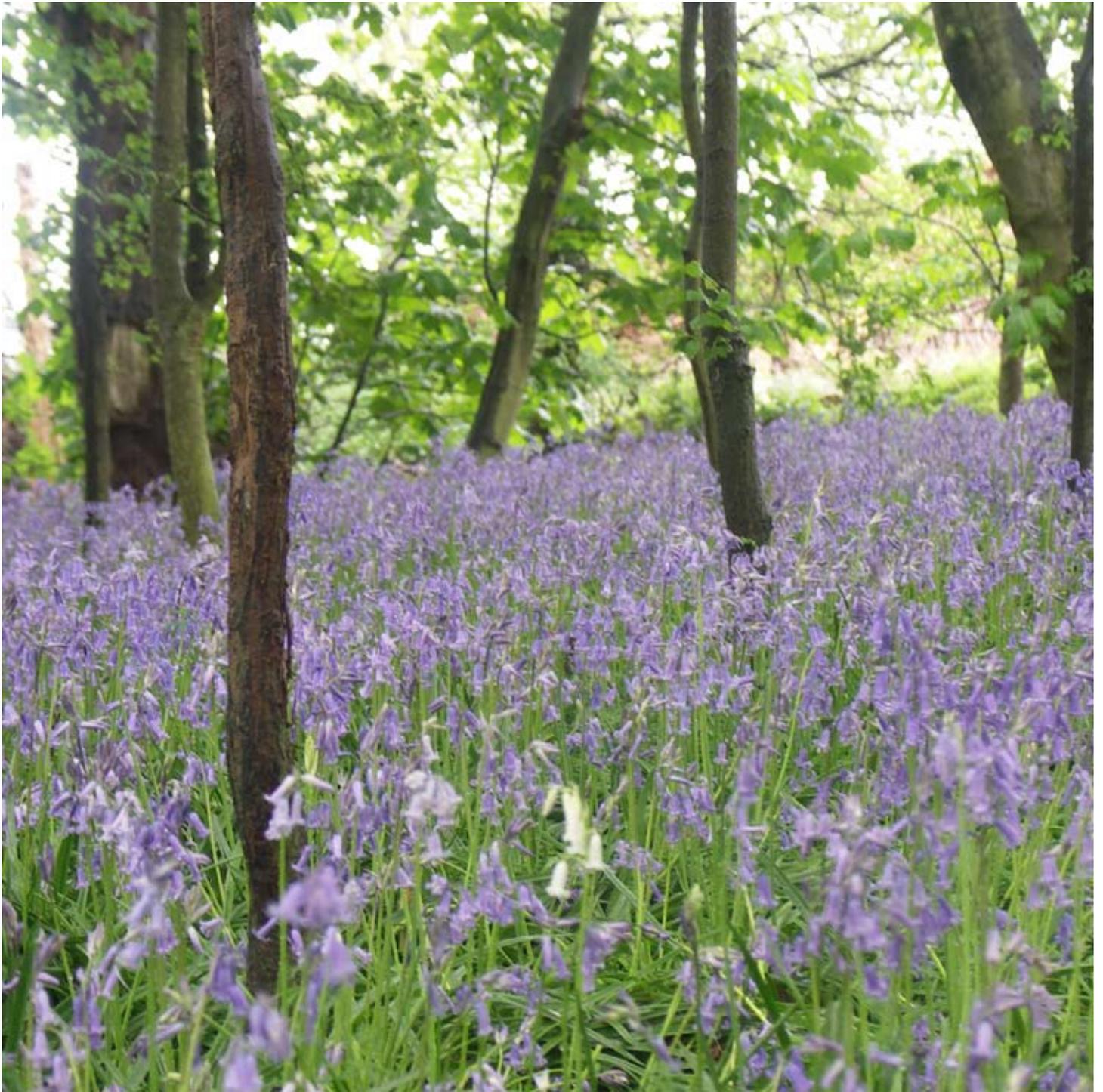
FOREWORD

“The future ain’t what it used to be” concludes the Environmental Defence Fund’s recent report Green, Clean and Dollar Smart. Both in the States and the UK there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the multiple benefits that can flow from restored, enhanced and integrated natural systems. But to secure these benefits, you have to make ambitious choices on how best to prioritise investment to shape the health, wealth and identity of our future communities.

This Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Leeds City Region offers clear blueprint to guide environmental investment to underpin economic vitality and environmental health. The region is blessed with a magnificent asset base including the majestic river corridors of the Aire and Calder and the natural splendour of Malham Cove. The historic canal networks, including those that link Bradford to Shipley, are an integral part of the region’s heritage and identity. Built to fuel industrial expansion they now provide an attractive low-carbon transport network for tourism and commerce.

Today we face challenging choices on how best to invest for current and future generations. We have better techniques to quantify the short and long term return with financial efficiency and environmental health as two sides of the same coin. Green infrastructure is increasingly seen as a smarter alternative to simply upgrading aging grey infrastructure. But it requires a deliberate re-planning of our urban landscape.

Take water for example. With more erratic patterns of rainfall and greater urbanisation, surface run-off is set to increase exponentially. Our aging sewer networks will simply be unable to cope in a generation or two. Many cities in the States are starting to implement coordinated urban greening programmes to gradually replace grey with green. Such measures include re-establishing tree cover, increasing the permeability of surfaces, restoring riparian corridors and reinstating natural flood plains to dramatically alter storm water flows. If Philadelphia, Washington and Chicago can do it, why not Leeds, Bradford and Halifax?



ASKHAM LANE WOOD, IMAGE COURTESY OF YORK CITY COUNCIL

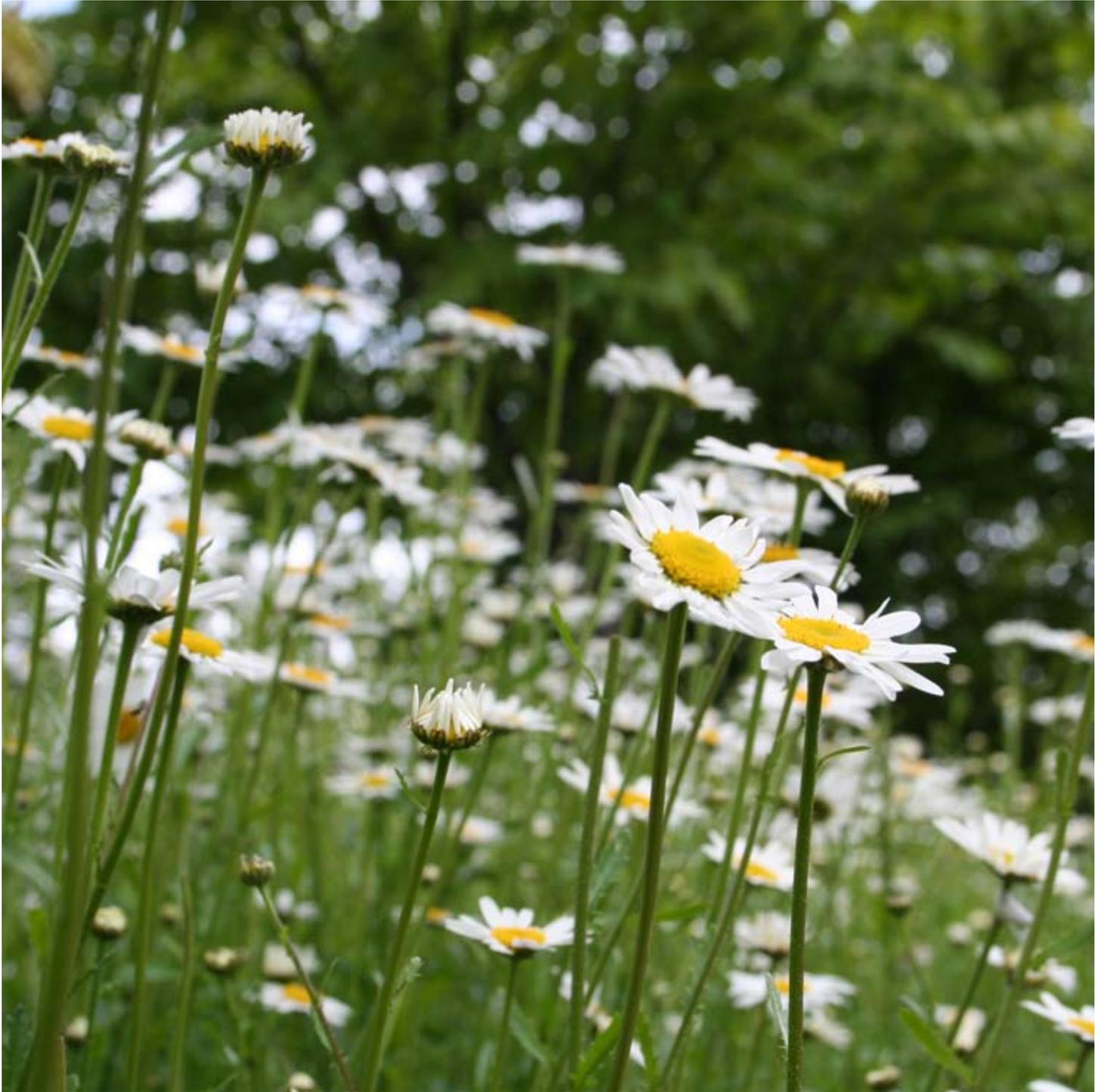
Add to this the biodiversity dividends that can flow, more localised sources of renewable energy, greater scope for local food production and more attractive greenways for zero-carbon transport and you start to build a compelling argument for such investment.

But this is not just about improving the environmental performance. It is also about changing the perception and identity of a place to increase competitiveness. Those who study the dynamics of the knowledge base industries, including financial services and information technology, understand that quality places count. They provide both a setting for investment and are central to attracting and retaining a skilled workforce.

Whilst such greening programmes can be delivered incrementally in line with the resources at hand, you do need a plan to join up projects and fulfil the vision. That is why this strategy is so important. For it is only at the scale of the city region you can start to coordinate political ambition, pool necessary capital and connect fragmented landscapes to realise the multiple benefits that can flow from an attractive and fully functioning green infrastructure.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Neal'.

Peter Neal
Head of public space, strategy and design
CABE



OX EYE DAISY, IMAGE COURTESY OF GORDON SCAIFE



A MESSAGE FROM THE ECONOMIC DRIVERS AND INNOVATION PANEL AND NATURAL ENGLAND

This Strategy, developed in partnership between Leeds City Region and Natural England, represents a step-change in the way we think about the success and resilience of our economy and places. It recognises that the economy not only benefits from a high quality natural environment – it is dependent upon it.

As we move towards a future where considering the environmental limits and opportunities of the natural environment is ever more critical, green infrastructure has demonstrated it can provide a wide range of benefits. With advance planning, these benefits can be enhanced so that our environment is working to its full potential.

It is therefore crucial that we establish ambitious and innovative green infrastructure planning at the core of decision making to deliver multiple benefits for local communities across the city region. The aspirations and objectives put forward in this document represent a long term commitment to the ongoing improvement of green infrastructure assets across the Leeds City Region.

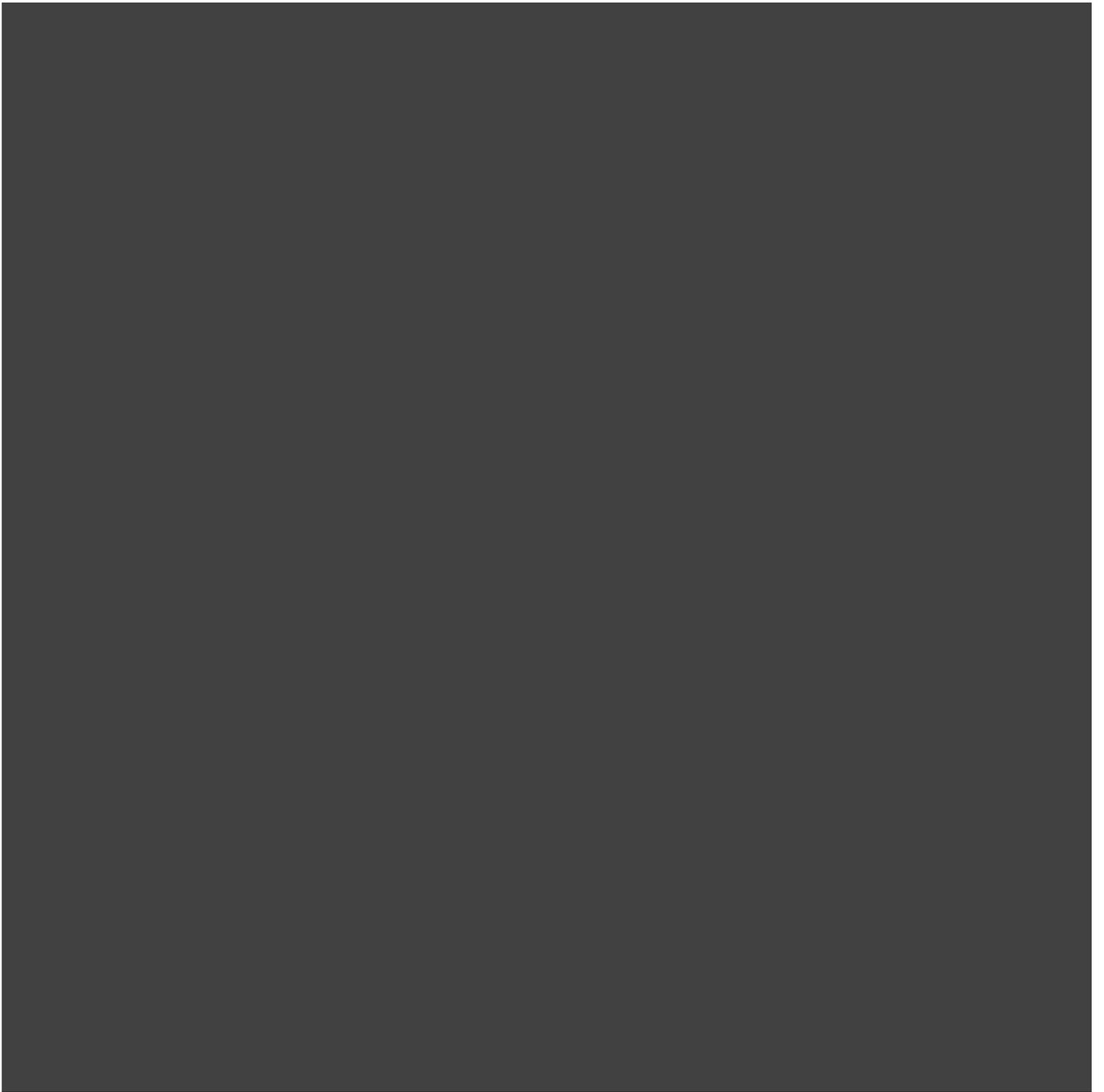
In an era of tightening public finances it is imperative that we now focus on how we deliver these bold ambitions. Building on the strong relationships that have been formed through the development of the strategy itself, we look forward to continuing to work with partners to realise our vision of a green city region.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Nottage".

Peter Nottage
Regional Director
Natural England, Yorkshire & Humber

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Gardner".

Cllr Mike Gardner
Chair of the EDI Panel



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SECTION 1.0
INTRODUCTION

Green infrastructure will shape the future economic, social and environmental success of the Leeds City Region by harnessing the potential of existing environmental resources to promote sustainable economic growth and to tackle climate change.

1.1 A VISION OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE LEEDS CITY REGION

The Leeds City Region, illustrated on Figure S1: Reference Map, covers over 5,000 km² and is home to nearly 3m people, over 100,000 businesses and a workforce of 1.5m people in an economy worth £51bn¹. It comprises the cities and districts of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield, Barnsley, York, Craven, Harrogate and Selby and includes part of North Yorkshire.

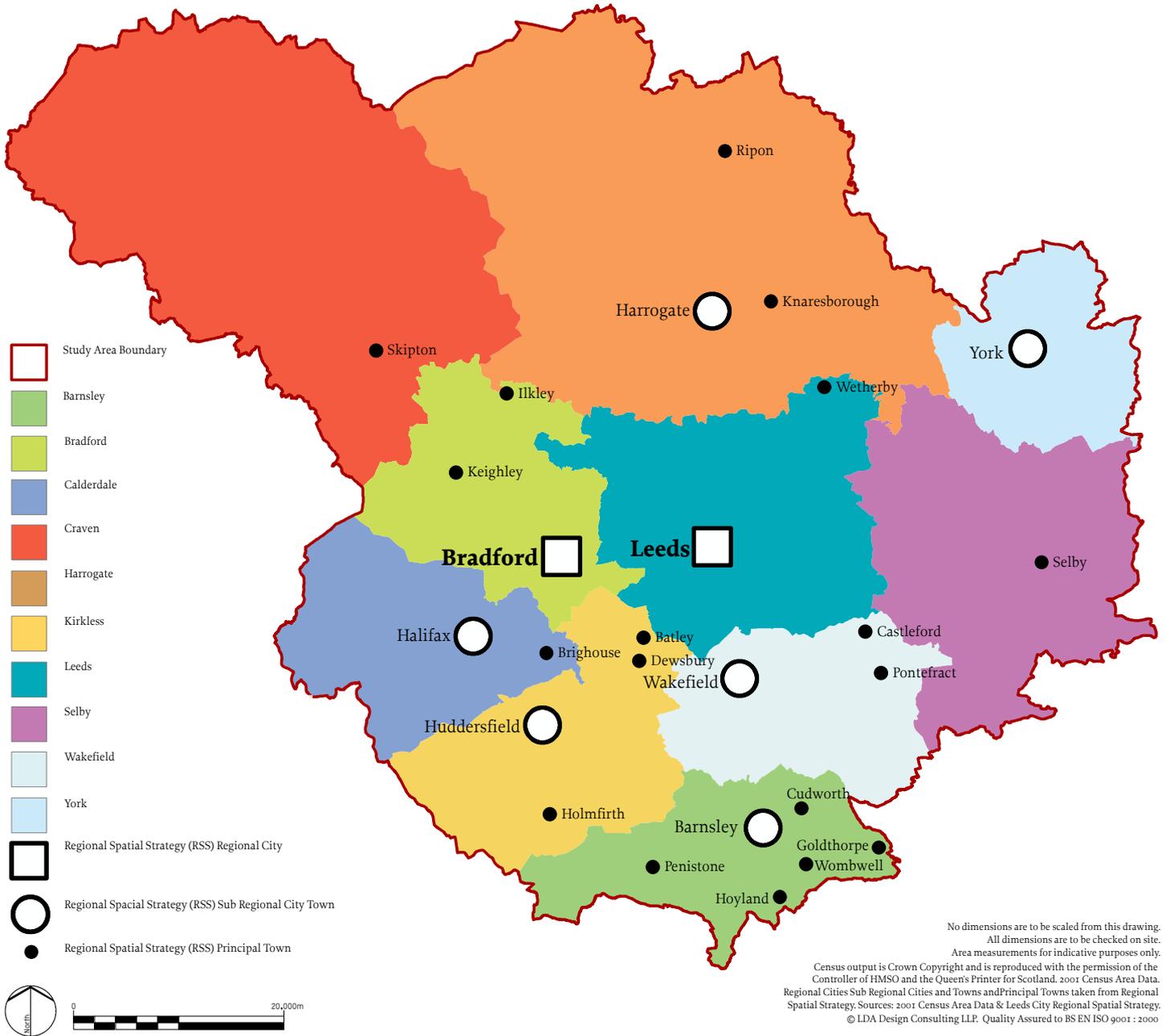
The city region therefore has one of the most significant and powerful economies in the UK. At the same time, the area covers some of the UK's grandest areas of natural beauty and landscape, which has created a strong regional identity and provides a natural resource around which to plan and deliver sustainable growth for future generations.

These natural assets, our green infrastructure, represent a key economic driver for the city region. Our high quality environment attracts businesses and private sector investment, together with skilled workers. Indeed, green infrastructure has shaped the functional economic geography of the city region itself. The urban areas of the city region are surrounded by a diverse rural hinterland that offers a unique quality of life for its residents

and a strong incentive for businesses to locate and invest in the area. This mutual bond between our urban and rural areas must be reinforced.

The Leeds City Region Partnership is now at the forefront of economic development planning and delivery in the UK. Our mission is “*to develop an internationally recognised city-region; to raise our economic performance; to spread prosperity across the whole of our city region, and to promote a better quality of life for all of those who live and work here.*”² In order to deliver this mission, we cannot afford not to invest in and plan for green infrastructure. Our natural environment is not a helpful by-product of economic growth but a fundamental driver and shaper of that growth. Without it, the city region's ambitious plans for investing in new homes, jobs, skills and transport will struggle to deliver quality or be able to address the growing challenges of climate change. Hence, this strategy focuses on how green infrastructure will deliver our sustainable urban growth agenda.

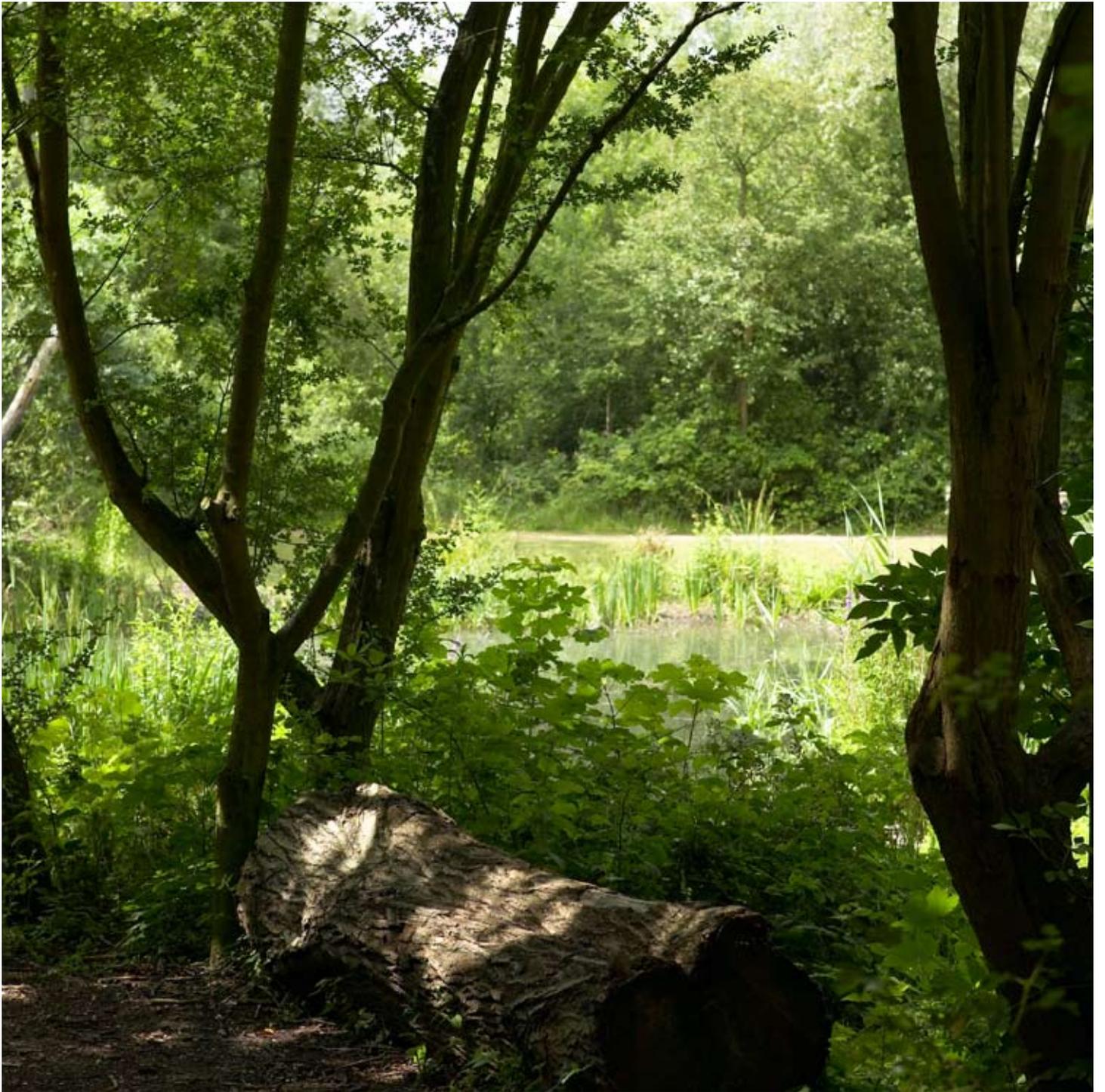
FIGURE S1: REFERENCE MAP



No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing.
 All dimensions are to be checked on site.
 Area measurements for indicative purposes only.
 Census output is Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland, 2001 Census Area Data.
 Regional Cities Sub Regional Cities and Towns and Principal Towns taken from Regional Spatial Strategy. Sources: 2001 Census Area Data & Leeds City Regional Spatial Strategy.
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In the midst of an economic recovery, competition for public sector funds as well as the short-term viability of regeneration schemes could pose a risk to investment in a high quality natural environment. However, we know that green infrastructure is a value generator, not a costly add-on. Investing in green infrastructure will not only help the city region out of the recession in the short term; it will also support our ambitions to become a low carbon, sustainable economy and continue to attract quality businesses and create jobs for many years to come.

The Leeds City Region has commissioned the Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure that future growth is underpinned and supported by high quality green infrastructure. As such, the strategy will sit alongside the other core city region initiatives such as Housing & Regeneration, Employment & Skills, Transport and Economic Drivers and Innovation, to drive sustainable economic growth.



1.2 WHAT IS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

Green infrastructure is a combination of environmental assets and man-made features that have a semi-natural component. Useful and usable green infrastructure exists as much in our densely built up towns and cities as it does in rural areas, and includes high quality, designated or intensively managed assets as well as areas that are neglected or degraded as a result of current or past land use. Indeed, areas of waste ground on former industrial sites can often be seen to perform a great many green infrastructure functions and are highly valued by the people that live in close proximity to them, not least because of the wildlife they attract and the opportunities they present for recreation.

As such, what constitutes green infrastructure is wide ranging. In broad terms it includes semi-natural habitats such as woodlands, moorlands and river corridors; nature reserves and other outdoor destinations; cultural and historic sites such parks and gardens, historic buildings and ancient monuments; as well as features of the wider rural landscape such as footpaths, hedgerows and game coverts. In urban areas, green infrastructure assets include open spaces such as allotments, public parks, cemeteries and previously developed land; features that provide

public access such as canals, towpaths, and cycleways; as well as man-made features such as swales and green roofs on buildings. Areas of public realm also constitute green infrastructure where these contain natural elements such as street trees.

It is the functionality of these wide ranging assets that shapes the places we live, work and enjoy recreational activities, and they will play an increasingly important role in securing future prosperity and quality of life. Indeed, even some of the city region's most damaged and degraded areas have potential to deliver green infrastructure benefits; their value to local people being in the services they provide as well as the cultural or personal associations they have with them.

Traditionally, environmental planning has looked at the functions of these assets in isolation, such as biodiversity, open space provision or public realm design. Whilst we should not devalue the benefits of looking at these issues separately, a green infrastructure approach considers how together these assets form an overall 'system'. In particular, green infrastructure planning embraces the full range of social, economic and environmental benefits



that green infrastructure assets can provide when considered together. Although green infrastructure assets do not necessarily need to be connected to one another to realise their value, networks of green infrastructure can bring with them additional benefits. For example, at the local level, using green corridors to link new settlements with existing green infrastructure assets has the potential to transform the prosperity and health of a community. Similarly, linking isolated habitats can help maintain populations of rare or threatened species by increasing their resilience to change.

Green infrastructure planning can be seen to operate at a range of spatial scales. At the very local scale, action by individuals, perhaps through accommodating areas of semi-natural habitat in their gardens or growing vegetables, can make a significant contribution to their quality of life and the environment more generally. At the neighbourhood scale, local planning authorities, community groups and voluntary organisations are transforming sizable areas of land in and around where people live and work for the benefit of large numbers of local people. Actions might include clearing up a stretch of canal or improving a piece of waste ground and creating a new park with space for nature and play. When considered together, small scale interventions can make a significant difference to people's lives and address a range of important agendas.

This strategy operates at the city regional scale of green infrastructure planning. Whilst acknowledging and celebrating the actions of a wide range of groups and individuals that are already taking place at the local scale, it sets out the interventions required to make a difference for the benefit of the whole city region. It focuses on the big issues, and identifies the need for significant investment. It is not a replacement for the work already underway; rather it is a commitment at the highest levels of planning to deliver strategic green infrastructure initiatives for the benefit of all.



1.3 WHY INVEST IN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

Many recent reports, from the internationally acclaimed Stern Review on Climate Change³ to national guidance by the Department for Communities and Local Government⁴, the Commission for the Built Environment (CABE)⁵, Natural England⁶ and Landscape Institute⁷ have researched and set out the many benefits of investing in green infrastructure and the evidence will continue to develop in the coming years.

In particular, work commissioned by the Northern Way⁸ has identified how planning for green infrastructure at a city region scale can support economic growth. This range of benefits has been embraced with great success by other city regions in the north and has provided the context for the highly successful Natural Economy North West programme⁹. The following section highlights the well established benefits of investing in green infrastructure:

- **Addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation** by using tree planting for natural air cooling and CO₂ absorption. Sound investment now will contribute to health and well-being of existing residents as well as lower the burden on future generations to address their economic and environmental problems.
- **Tackling flood alleviation and water management** by installing sustainable urban drainage systems, permeable surfaces and open spaces in urban areas and upstream water catchment management techniques in the wider countryside. Coordinated action in urban and rural areas will improve the resilience of cities, towns, villages and farmland to cope with the increased threat of flooding.
- **Improving quality of place** by using the natural environment to create high quality living and recreational environments and a setting for where we live and work. Investment now will create places in which people will take great pride and want to be part of for their whole lives.
- **Improving physical and mental health and social well-being** by creating good quality green space and opportunities for relaxation and healthy physical activity as well as providing the infrastructure necessary to encourage people to walk, run, cycle and play for health improvement. In addition creating safe and attractive walking and cycling routes to encourage active travel will also bring benefits.

- **Improving skills and educational attainment** by providing an ‘outdoor classroom’ to learn new skills or understand more about the way we live, how our culture has evolved and where our society is heading in the future. Investment in green infrastructure can provide the facilities and subject for learning across a wide range of agendas and academic disciplines as well as for the attainment of new skills.
- **Increasing land and property values** by creating attractive environments around new and existing residential, commercial and employment areas. Sustained investment in green infrastructure now will lower long term development costs, raise land values and stimulate further economic investment.
- **Sustaining economic growth and investment.** High quality environments also offer comparative location advantages to attract and retain business and a skilled labour pool.
- **Improving labour force productivity.** High quality environments around where people live and work can inspire higher productivity and lower absenteeism amongst workforces.
- **Increasing tourism** by improving the ‘tourism offer’ through widespread environmental improvements, and targeted activity to improve the setting, functionality and accessibility of key destinations. Environmental improvements can enhance the appearance of tourism destinations to attract visitors as well as create destinations close to where people live, reducing the need to travel or perhaps relieving pressure on sensitive destinations.
- **Enhancing recreational and leisure opportunities** by creating new or improving existing assets. Investment in green infrastructure can provide multifunctional open spaces and parks bringing benefit to people, wildlife and the environment more generally.
- **Protecting and enhancing landscape character and biodiversity** by using land improvements and management to deliver biodiversity gain and overall landscape enhancement. Continuing to invest in semi natural assets and the environment more generally will enable our wildlife and precious habitats and landscapes to thrive.
- **Obtaining products from the land** by using natural assets sourced locally in favour of imported goods. Promoting and investing in local biomass and food growing initiatives will create new economic value, reduce our dependency on imported goods and services and increase the symbiotic relationship between people and their environment.

Across the city region, green infrastructure projects, whilst not necessarily having been regarded as such, have formed a significant part of development and regeneration programmes over many years. For example many cities and towns have invested significant sums in urban renaissance programmes to create new, high quality public realm to lead the regeneration of their town centres, business parks and housing areas. In addition, there are several ongoing major woodland, countryside access and habitat restoration projects across the city region, funded and delivered by a wide range of public, private and independent agencies. And now, the Urban Eco-Settlement and Growth Point programmes in the city region are planning investment in green infrastructure on an unprecedented scale with the goal of creating high quality living and working environments that deliver excellent environmental performance.



1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The Leeds City Region local authorities, in partnership with Natural England and a wide range of consultees, have prepared this strategy to set out the vision for green infrastructure in the city region and to determine how future investment in green infrastructure will be secured and where investment should be targeted. It also highlights areas where further work is needed; perhaps to refine an area of search in which investment will take place for a particular purpose or to establish the feasibility of delivering particular green infrastructure projects and investment programmes in a given location. By way of summary the strategy:

- complements national and pan-regional efforts to make the most positive use of our current and potential green infrastructure;
- identifies the value of green infrastructure assets and reinforces and promotes the compelling case for investing in them;
- underpins, and is supported by, other city region strategies;
- ensures green infrastructure complements other city region investment priorities such as those set out in the City Region Housing Investment Plan¹⁰;
- identifies the existing green infrastructure assets and partnership strengths on which the strategy will build;
- establishes the current priorities for green infrastructure investment at the city region level;
- sets out existing and potential mechanisms to finance ambitious green infrastructure investment priorities; and
- impels planning and housing policy work, and other practical local work, to support widespread improvements in green infrastructure across the partner authorities' areas.

The strategy is not a statutory planning document. Rather it identifies where we can add value to existing and future green infrastructure investment and interventions at the city region scale. In respect of taking forward the actions identified in the strategy, a separate delivery plan will be developed, setting out responsibilities and a timetable for action.



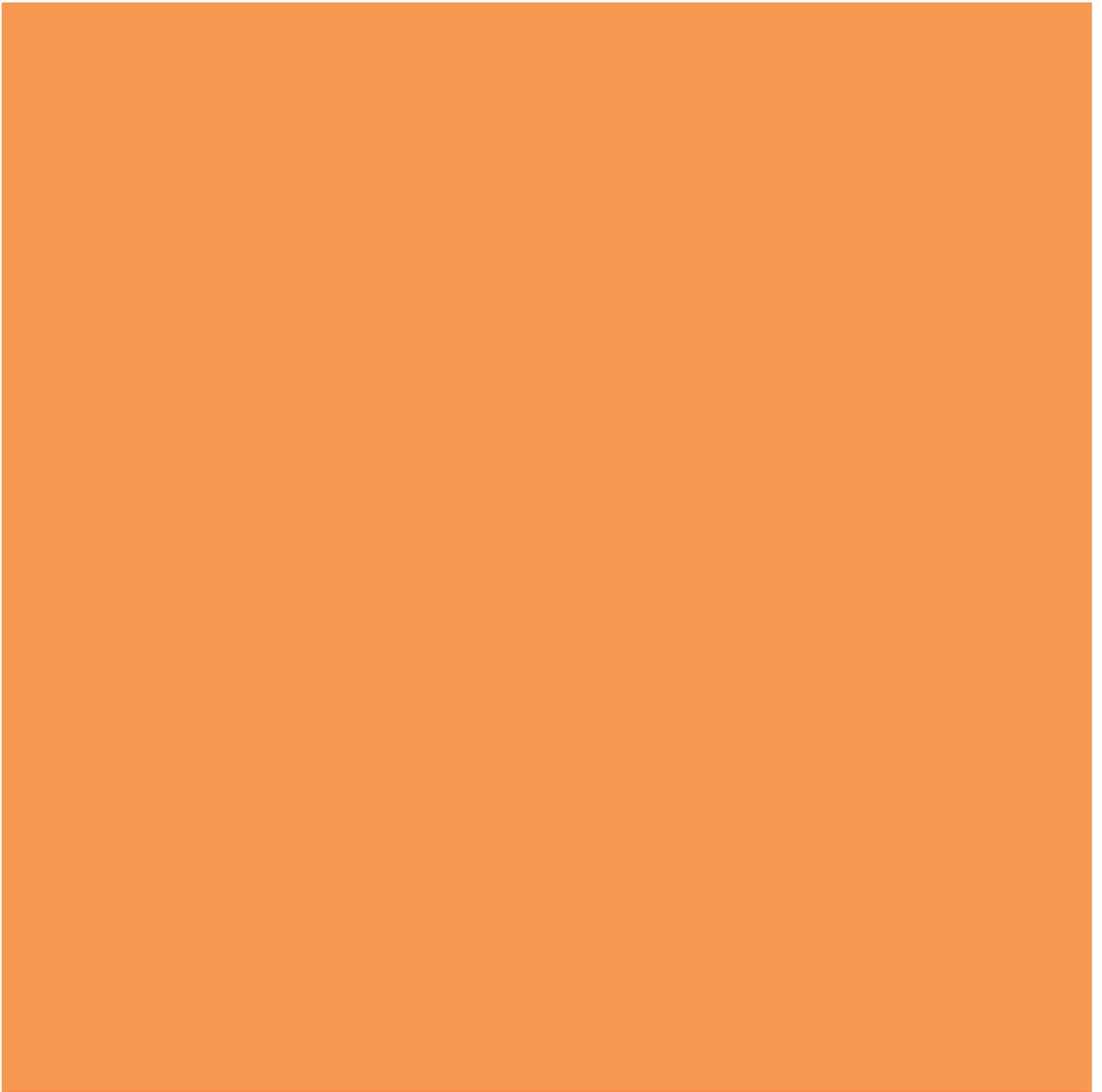
At the local level, local strategic partnerships work, local planning and housing work, and work on other local policy (such as recycling, reclamation, parks and open spaces, local sourcing, shared maintenance services, etc.) can explore and identify more precisely how the broad initiatives proposed in this strategy can be effectively pursued and realised on the ground. It will be especially important to factor in thinking about the strategic importance of green infrastructure into future local housing programmes, emerging regeneration schemes, urban fringe management and each authority's approach to managing and improving its network of green spaces. Such an approach will soon reveal many opportunities for low-cost, smaller-scale interventions which will cumulatively help to realise the full potential of the sub-region's green infrastructure, and help to create a more sustainable economy. In addition, local planners have a key role in encouraging all prospective developers to think about their contribution to building the green infrastructure of the future, area by area, site by site.

The methodology adopted in preparing the strategy follows the core principles of the city region partnership¹¹:

“We work as a city region because the day-to-day lives of people do not start and stop at local authority boundaries. The Leeds City Region Partnership is about councils working across the boundaries in which people choose to live, work and spend their leisure time.”

The strategy is a result of continuous engagement of local partners from September 2009 to May 2010 and has benefitted from the many insights, strategies and plans of these partners, and especially Natural England and the White Rose Forest partnership (with its current Growing with the Leeds City Region Partnership Strategy 2009-2012¹² and project insights).

The evidence base underpinning the strategy is set out in an accompanying document – the Technical Baseline Report¹³. Insights from this evidence base are included in the next section.



SECTION 2.0
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE LEEDS CITY REGION

The Leeds City Region has much to build its future green infrastructure investment on in terms of the diversity and quality of the existing semi-natural and man-made assets it possesses and the partnerships that are in place that have already begun to demonstrate the advantages of working across boundaries and agendas to deliver green infrastructure.

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE LEEDS CITY REGION

The city region has a diverse range of environmental assets adding significantly to its overall identity and national profile. Most of these assets are well known and cherished by local communities and visitors alike. Others are more subtle but their value is no less important.

Wide areas across the north and west of the city region have been recognised for their significant landscape and recreational value. Almost all of the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies within its boundary, along with a significant proportion of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The eastern extent of the Forest of Bowland AONB and northern limits of the Peak District National Park also lie within the city region.

Lowland agricultural areas, cities and towns, are equally regarded, albeit perhaps at a more local scale by the communities that live and work in them. It is important not to overlook the enormous contribution that unremarkable, everyday and degraded landscape makes to the city region's green infrastructure asset base. Indeed, some heavily damaged areas have the potential to sustain useful new developments, perhaps to counter the effects of climate change or to benefit wildlife.

Six millennia of changes in social organisation and in the concept of land ownership and control are etched into the landscape of the city region; visible in the patterns created by linear earthworks, field boundaries, drainage ditches and tracks. Indeed, the broad patterns of farmed land, grazing and woodland evident today were all probably in place by the medieval period, as were the principal settlements and communications routes across the uplands and along the river valleys. It is onto this ancient framework that three centuries of profound change in industry, agriculture and transportation have had an equally significant impact on the character of the rural landscape and the city region's principal towns, many of which owe their size and status to rapid expansion during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Remnants of industrial and mining heritage add further layers to the rich history of the city region and influences wider perceptions of landscape evolution, quality and sense of place.

The city region's watercourses have a notable impact on the character of the area, in the uplands as well as the lowlands. As transportation routes and sources of water and power, they have shaped the development of settlements, industries and agriculture. Today, rivers continue to exert a strong influence on the character of the city region, binding together the densely settled towns to the farmed rural areas across the lowlands and to the more remote moorland hills where many rivers and streams originate. The river corridors also often act as linear habitat and movement corridors, linking disparate and otherwise separate areas of the city region together.

The city region has a wealth of habitat types, and significant areas have been designated on account of their biodiversity value. These include nationally significant networks of Ancient Woodlands that follow the main river valleys. The most extensive areas afforded protection lie across the blanket bogs and heaths of the Yorkshire Dales, Nidderdale, South Pennines and Peak District. The Yorkshire Dales, the Peak District and the Pennine Dale Fringe also feature a high proportion of Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This Access Land is mainly located on the higher ground, as low-lying land tends to be cultivated or used as pasture.

2.2 CITY REGION PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Whilst the city region clearly demonstrates a wealth of green infrastructure assets, various pressures, such as securing sustainable economic growth and mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, will continue to drive investment and activity and necessitate the protection and enhancement of existing assets and the creation of new green infrastructure.

Collaborative working is already underway to tackle these issues, covering several of the areas highlighted as of importance in this strategy. Indeed it is clear from successes achieved to-date that the city region benefits from partnerships consisting of a wide range of organisations to deliver their desired outcomes. Examples of successful projects and interventions are identified throughout the strategy, and several city region scale multi-agency partnership examples are set out below:

WHITE ROSE FOREST PARTNERSHIP

The White Rose Forest (WRF) partnership, established in 2000, brings together local authorities, government and voluntary sector groups throughout West Yorkshire to “play its part in creating a healthy, prosperous and environmentally resilient place for the people, economy and wildlife of our city region.” The WRF Partnership was formalised in 2002 with the signing of a Joint Venture Agreement and has delivered numerous local projects and community initiatives. Successes have included the establishment of 100 hectares of community woodland in a £1million urban forestry programme and investing £200,000 in two acclaimed regeneration projects. Key milestones have included the establishment of the Green Infrastructure Group in 2005 and the Yorkshire Forward funded £2million West Yorkshire Green Infrastructure Programme 2008-2010



PENNINE PROSPECTS

In response to the strategic significance of the South Pennine Moors, the South Pennines Heritage Area was ‘self declared’ with a Heritage Strategy drawn up in 2001. This included the principles and key actions of the Integrated Management Strategy and Conservation Action Programme (IMSACAP) drawn up earlier to cover the specific South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area. Until recently large scale funding has not been available to deliver the key priorities of the IMSACAP and Heritage Strategy. In response Pennine Prospects (the Southern Pennines Regeneration Company) was set up in 2005 as a not-for-profit company to address this. Pennine Prospects is a partnership between the local authorities of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Lancashire, Rochdale and Oldham, plus representatives of Yorkshire Water and United Utilities, the NFU, Northern Rail, the National Trust, Pennine Heritage, the South Pennines Association, Natural England and the Environment Agency. It exists to raise the profile and develop a positive image for the Southern Pennines through partnership working, and is focused on delivering achievements to support sub-regional strategies as they are developed. An example of large scale intervention is the Watershed Landscape Project which received £2m of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and will deliver a suite of projects in the South Pennine uplands over the period to 2013.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR THE RIVER OUSE AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

In 2004 a Strategic Partnership for the River Ouse and its Tributaries was formed by the Environment Agency to progress the aim of improving the environmental assets of the River Ouse and its tributaries as set out in the York and North Yorkshire Sub Region Investment Plan. As a result, the Ouse Enhancement Project was established. The project area, covering 6,000 sq km of North Yorkshire includes the river catchments of the swale, Ure, Nidd, part of the Wharf, Ouse and Derwent. In 2007 the Enhancement of the River Ouse and Its Tributaries Opportunity Plan (the plan) was prepared on behalf of the Environment Agency to act as the catalyst for the renaissance of North Yorkshire’s rivers that flow into the Ouse to ensure that they are able to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In essence the project provides an environmental foundation for economic investment and growth over the next 25 years and beyond. The plan identifies a portfolio of projects, which itself forms the North Yorkshire Rivers Renaissance Programme. Six investment priorities are identified, each of which has a set of projects, making a total of thirty projects in all. The portfolio ranges from short term projects which may be implemented in the period to 2012, and longer term projects which may be implemented over a much longer period to 2025 and beyond.



STRATEGIC WATERWAYS GROUP

The Strategic Waterways Group have prepared a study¹⁴ that presents a strategic assessment of the work needed on the rivers of West Yorkshire within the area covered by the Ridings Office to support the development of funding bids, by identifying and prioritising biodiversity opportunities on West Yorkshire's rivers, according to their associated benefits, both for biodiversity and ecosystem-related services e.g. public access and recreation, flood defence and habitat network connectivity.

The study identifies a range of biodiversity opportunities in the various reaches and sub reaches of rivers and tributaries. Criteria were then applied to the opportunities to determine the benefits that the opportunities could achieve on a local, regional and national scale. The result was the identification of priority opportunities for 26 sub reaches of West Yorkshire's rivers, such as key areas for habitat creation and enhancement that will be used to inform the next stage of the study which is to determine which opportunities to focus on initially for delivery.

THE DEARNE VALLEY GREEN HEART PARTNERSHIP

The Dearne Valley Green Heart partnership (DVGH) is led by the Environment Agency, Natural England, and RSPB together with Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster Councils. Its objective is to bring about landscape-scale environmental improvements in the Dearne Valley. The three lead partners are working with a wide range of organisations including the three local authorities of the Valley and a range of environmental and community groups. DVGH is developing a programme of projects which will take several years to implement. This programme is needed to help regeneration and face the new challenge of climate change. The projects the partnership is working on can be divided into three main areas: Habitats and Places; Access; People and Communities.

The programme will build on the three principal existing 'green assets' of the Dearne Valley, RSPB nature spaces including Old Moor, the Trans Pennine Trail and the River Dearne itself. The work of the DVGH is centred on the river corridor and in particular the washlands. Whilst fully retaining their flood management function, DVGH is working to change land-use within the washlands to biodiversity and appropriate recreation.



RAWCLIFFE MEADOW, YORK - BEFORE. IMAGE COURTESY OF CITY OF YORK COUNCIL



RAWCLIFFE MEADOW, YORK - AFTER. IMAGE COURTESY OF CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

2.3 RELATIONSHIP OF THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY TO NATURAL ENGLAND'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDORS

Over recent years Natural England, working in collaboration with a range of partner organisations including local planning authorities, has developed a region-wide Strategic Green Infrastructure Map. The evidence base is a significant achievement and has necessitated collaboration across the entire Yorkshire and Humber region. The results of the process of evidence gathering and interpretation have been to create a GIS evidence base of green infrastructure assets using national, regional and local data and to provide mapped infrastructure placed in a hierarchy.

The aim is to give local authorities, statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations and the private sector the evidence necessary to protect strategic and local green infrastructure corridors and networks, focus enhancement in areas where gains will be maximised, increase awareness of which green infrastructure functions exist and where and how they complement each other and establish a baseline of information from which change can be measured.

This strategy identifies where strategic green infrastructure investment could be best targeted to address strategic objectives. Although it is not always necessary to link green infrastructure assets together in order to realise their value, additional benefits can be gained from providing these physical networks.

Many of the strategic initiatives in this strategy are located within the regional, sub-regional and local green corridors identified in Natural England's work. However, we recognise that to deliver our ambitions for the natural environment we must look at opportunities for investment in green infrastructure projects and initiatives in addition to the linking of assets through corridors. Where the initiatives proposed in this strategy coincide with one or more of these corridors then this is noted in the table 'Summary of Strategic Initiatives' presented at the end of section 3. More detailed information on the corridors is included in the accompanying Technical Baseline Report.

At the local level, these green infrastructure corridors will become even more relevant, especially in terms of protecting multi-functional green infrastructure assets but also in identifying the potential to link assets spatially.

The Forestry Commission and Natural England are undertaking an Integrated Habitat Network Study with the aim of improving our understanding about how semi-natural habitats are connected and allow species to move through the landscape. As climate changes, so wildlife will need to adapt and move. The Study will provide evidence for the future targeting of resources to enhance and extend habitat networks within the Leeds city region.



2.4 WHAT IS DRIVING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT?

A full overview of strategy and policy driving green infrastructure investment at the national, regional and local levels has been undertaken as part of the development of this strategy and is presented in the accompanying Technical Baseline Report.

At the national level, the inclusion of green infrastructure in government planning, climate change and health policy statements in recent years has raised its profile as an infrastructure of economic and social as well as environmental importance. For example, a variety of planning policy statements identify green infrastructure as an integral part of spatial policy formulation¹⁵. Most recently, draft statements on the natural and healthy environment and on climate change have established green infrastructure as a core principle in achieving sustainable development and tackling climate change. Similarly, policies on improving the nation's health now identify the importance of accessible green space and promoting walking and cycling.

In regional terms, a combination of regional spatial planning, economic, biodiversity, forestry and climate change strategies now promote the benefits of planning for green infrastructure as a vital element in the improvement of economic and environmental performance.

The Yorkshire & Humber Regional Spatial Strategy¹⁶ policy has been an important driver for the strategy. Its policy on green infrastructure (YH8) identifies that green infrastructure will play a key role in improving accessibility to a healthier local environment and to addressing climate change. Although the Regional Spatial Strategies are due to be abolished¹⁷, Leeds City Region Local Authorities will continue to integrate of green infrastructure policies into local plans, which this strategy will support.

At the City Region level we are working across agendas to deliver our ambitions to move to a low carbon economy. We are working closely with central government departments to ensure we have the right freedoms and flexibilities to lead the economic growth of our area. In particular, the City Region agenda addresses the four key pillars of growth that will make a substantial impact on economic growth:

- **Housing and Regeneration** - this agenda is aimed at accelerating strategic growth, promoting eco-living, delivering strategic urban renewal and supporting a rural economic renaissance. To support this agenda, we have recently developed the Leeds City Region Housing & Regeneration Strategy¹⁸. The aims of the Strategy will be delivered through the joint Leeds City Region and Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Board with funding secured through the City Region Housing Investment Plan¹⁹.
 - **Economic Drivers & Innovation** – this is aimed at identifying and supporting the drivers of our economy and innovation within our key growth sectors. This agenda is motivated by the need to understand our strengths, challenges and opportunities as an economy. The Innovation Capital Programme²⁰ — sets out a number of priorities and programmes aimed at putting the city region on the map as an Innovation Capital, world renowned for its innovation and competitive economy. The programme aims to better connect innovation actors with businesses, and specifically recognises the need to promote innovation in low carbon infrastructure and environmental assets.
 - **Transport** – the recent Leeds City Region Transport Strategy²¹ promotes strategic investments in our transport networks that will strengthen the city region’s economic competitiveness and contribute to achieving the nation’s carbon reduction targets.
 - **Skills and Worklessness** – the City Region’s Employment and Skills Strategy²², seeks increase employment and skills across the city region, to ensure that adult skills provision meets demand. The Strategy recognises that there will be increasing demand across the city region for skills relating to the introduction of low carbon infrastructure.
- Properly planned and integrated, green infrastructure will contribute to each of these agendas and have implications for the way they need to develop. Moving forward, the strategy will be used to underpin the forthcoming Leeds City Region Integrated Strategy, which will co-ordinate city region strategy and policy across agendas.

In order to realise these opportunities, we need to know what factors will be driving the demand for green infrastructure investment in coming years so that we can secure and target our resources to best effect. The drivers are mostly shaped by public policy, nationally and locally, which in turn influences investment by the private and independent sectors. The four key drivers of green infrastructure demand are:

- sustainable economic growth and regeneration;
- climate change;
- health and well-being; and
- biodiversity.

Each of these drivers presents increasing challenges that are stimulating the demand for green infrastructure solutions. In the case of economic growth for example, this demand is already being expressed in financial terms, with significant increases in public funds to meet that demand. In others, like climate change, the issue is relatively new, with investment only now beginning to fund green infrastructure actions.

A summary of the four key drivers is set out below.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGENERATION

The city region is expected to remain a significant economic driver of the economy in the North and will therefore accommodate a significant household and jobs growth over the next twenty years. This level of growth will place increasing pressure on the existing urban infrastructure, including green infrastructure assets, which will require upgrading and extending to serve new households and employees.

In places, especially those areas of regeneration, the advance delivery of new infrastructure will play a key role in promoting development opportunities. The role of green infrastructure in helping to attract greater levels of investment and improving the economic performance of local economies (in terms of workforce productivity, tourism development, and overall ‘place’ branding) is increasingly being recognised²³. In addition, as the city region places greater emphasis on achieving a step change in business and skills performance, so the need to create quality places, improve quality of life, and address environmental remediation increases.

The city region’s Growth Points, Urban Eco-Settlements and other major urban extensions will therefore create a new demand for green infrastructure investment, primarily made by



those promoting development proposals but also with likely public funding support. Each of the City Region Housing Investment Plan key themes - accelerating strategic growth, promoting eco-living, delivering strategic urban renewal, supporting rural economic renaissance – identify investing in green infrastructure as one of their critical success factors and this plan will become an important source of future growth-led green infrastructure funding.

Whilst the recent downturn in economic performance makes the city region's goals more challenging, moving to a low carbon economy will contribute to leading the area out of recession and sustaining long term economic growth. The City Region will seek to bring forward green and other infrastructure projects to unlock barriers to housing growth and regeneration, accelerate delivery of its Urban Eco Settlements and Growth Points and promote innovative, new city region models of finance and delivery for housing and regeneration. It will also focus new development to support priority economic growth locations and focus regeneration and new development to support strategic transport corridors and adopt high design and sustainability standards. The City Region Housing Investment Plan will set out how public funding will be made over the next three years to realise these investment opportunities.

Similarly, the city region's Transport Strategy provides a strategic framework for the development of the next round of Local Transport Plans in the city region. The key benefit of green infrastructure in this respect is in protecting, enhancing and creating attractive, safe and convenient walking and cycling routes linked to enhanced public transport nodes, especially in those parts of the city region with high population concentrations. This has clear benefits for reducing reliance on the car, and also more generally through promoting active lifestyles. Greening transport routes can also improve the visual appearance of towns and cities and the wider countryside and gateway sites that currently suffer from a degraded or neglected appearance.

Investment in green infrastructure will help shape the emerging city region employment and skills strategy and innovation prospectus. The green space and technology sectors will both demand more of the city region's businesses and workforce in terms of addressing local skills gaps and in finding new solutions to financing and delivering low carbon-based regeneration. The demand for new green infrastructure technology solutions and business models should provide a stimulus to new green business innovation.



CLIMATE CHANGE

As the full consequences of adapting to, and mitigating, climate change become clearer, so the benefits of green infrastructure are emerging as central to increasing the resilience of regional economies.

The Stern Report²⁴ makes clear the economic case for tackling climate change, both in terms of using solutions to generate new economic and social wealth and of avoiding the financial consequences of failure. Locally, the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Change Action Plan²⁵ contains a stark assessment of the impact of climate change on this region, with the Leeds City Region likely to be particularly vulnerable.

The Read Report²⁶ on the role of forests in combating climate change makes a strong scientific case for protecting and managing the trees we already have, and to plant more woodlands as a matter of urgency. The report advocates a national planting target of 25,000ha of new woodland a year for the next 40 years – this represents a 4% change in land use across the country as a whole. A significant proportion of this target needs to be located in and around our urban centres for the wider public benefits it would bring. The Leeds City Region needs to consider how it should respond to this challenging target.

The city region expects that future development will need to show how it will adapt to the inevitable changes in climate which are already underway - drier summers, wetter winters, and more extreme rainfall events. Green Infrastructure

has a particularly important role to play in helping to ameliorate climate extremes in urban areas, as demonstrated by the groundbreaking work by Gill and Handley in Manchester²⁷. Wherever suitable and feasible, development should also seek to mitigate the causes of climate change by minimising its carbon footprint, such as through reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas production. Outside of the planning of new development, the demand for green infrastructure projects to minimise greenhouse gas production, to lock up carbon as peat soil or biomass, and to provide alternative fuel sources to coal and oil and gas, for example will also increase.

The demand for green infrastructure investment to tackle climate change will also come from public agencies such as the Environment Agency using green infrastructure actions to address flooding problems for example²⁸. It is also emerging from companies seeking means of offsetting all or part of their carbon footprint by investing in green infrastructure projects in their local area, or more often in accredited international projects²⁹.

It is anticipated that these demands will each increase substantially in coming years as public policy instruments such as carbon trading, building regulations and planning policies become more stringent as the impacts of climate change become more damaging³⁰. It can therefore be assumed that green infrastructure interventions that offer direct and local climate change related benefits will be targeted for public and private sector investment.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Although life expectancy in the city region is improving, other local health indicators like obesity, diabetes and heart disease are significant and continuing problems in parts of the city region as they coincide with areas of low income households and poorer housing quality³¹. There is now considerable research that identifies the positive contribution that local green space and convenient and safe walking and cycling routes make to improving physical and mental health and social wellbeing, particularly in our cities and towns³².

Green infrastructure in the form of private gardens makes a valuable contribution to health and wellbeing. However, access is very much dependent on the socio-economic status of individuals and therefore limited in the benefits they can bring to all of our residents. As such the importance of publically accessible recreational parks and green areas have long been recognised as providing opportunities for people to walk, run, cycle and play for health improvement and stress relief. In addition various studies highlight the role that access to green areas can have to reducing sickness, and improving longevity, levels of physical activity and health among senior citizens.

Other health benefits are delivered through well planned and designed multi functional green infrastructure. Research indicates that increasing tree cover by 10% could reduce total heating and cooling energy use by 5 to 10% and also assist in adding humidity to uncomfortable dry city air and improving air quality.

It is likely that the demand for green infrastructure investment will increase to meet health and wellbeing objectives and that greater preventative public health funding will be made available for this purpose. The recent investment of the NHS in its 'NHS Forests' initiative³³ is one such example.



BIODIVERSITY

Despite the rise of environmental awareness and the popularity of nature conservation programmes over the past few decades, studies demonstrate the dramatic and worrying loss of biodiversity and deterioration of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the UK. In the city region, progress has been made to address habitat decline and in some areas biodiversity is improving³⁴. Elsewhere challenges such as development and climate change continue to threaten biodiversity directly or through the increasing fragmentation of habitats that is particularly damaging to populations of rare or vulnerable species.

There is a growing recognition that the traditional approach to protecting wildlife, through designating sites, is not enough to halt the loss of biodiversity or ensure that existing biodiversity remains viable into the future. Strategic documents, such as the Yorkshire and Humber Biodiversity Strategy³⁵, highlight the imperative to work at a landscape scale by improving functional habitat networks and enhancing the wider environment of rural and urban areas. An initial assessment of existing functional habitat networks was produced by English Nature in 2007, and the Forestry Commission is now planning to take this approach forward and produce a detailed analysis on habitat networks across the Leeds city region. Such an approach also offers the possibility of being able to monitor change over time in the ecological connectivity of the wider landscape.

Public policy at the international, national and regional levels has long regarded declining biodiversity as a major environmental challenge. Investment in green infrastructure to improve biodiversity specifically has generally been made by environmental organisations using members', charitable and public funds. Often, such opportunities will be realised on the back of projects designed to achieve another complementary objective, for example as part of new or enhanced public park.

The future demand for green infrastructure investment to secure biodiversity gain may increase in future if new habitat banking or biodiversity offsetting mechanisms are introduced into the UK. The Department for Energy & Climate Change and Natural England are currently considering how such mechanisms may operate³⁶. If introduced, they may create new sources of funds, and a demand for offsetting projects, especially in areas facing biodiversity losses as a result of economic growth.

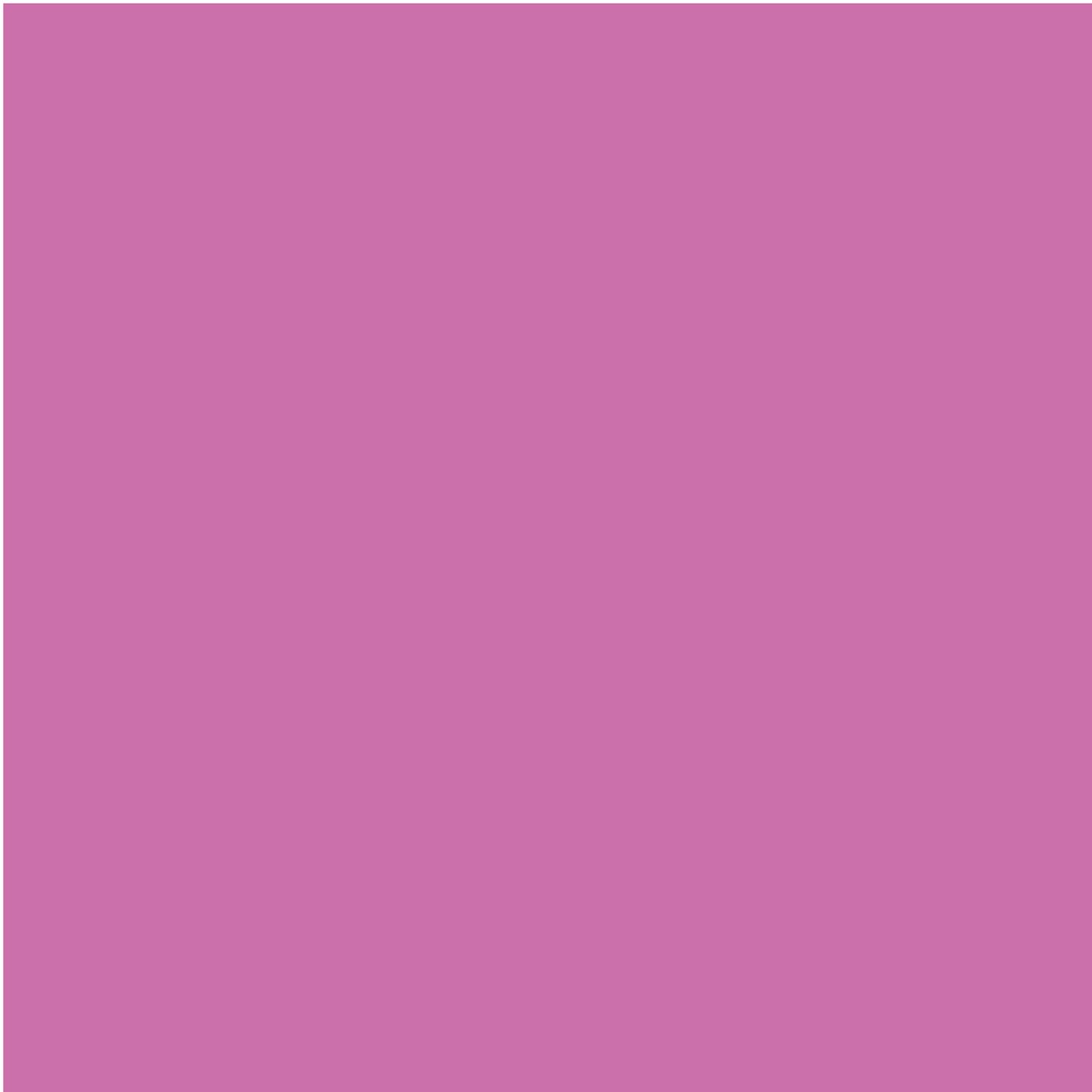
In addition, the opportunities to achieve biodiversity gain through green infrastructure investment made primarily to achieve other benefits, perhaps in response to health and well being or climate change drivers or to develop ecosystem services, will increase as the other three drivers described above become increasingly important. The concept of multi-functionality is critical, and it will be important to consider wider benefits to wildlife in all green infrastructure interventions and investments made in the future. A good example would be the



enhancement of woodland biodiversity through the development of a management regime that is primarily focussed on securing a sustainable crop of woodfuel.

Much of the activity required to protect and enhance biodiversity across the city region is delivered at the local or site scale. However, it is evident that landscape-scale or region wide initiatives are already in development and delivering success. Examples include the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes Project³⁷ and actions to secure the return of native fish populations, such as salmon, to the river systems of the city region.

The European Water Framework Directive presents the opportunity to plan and deliver a better water environment, focussing on ecology³⁸. Whilst water quality has improved substantially over the past few decades, green infrastructure interventions around river corridors, such as planting trees and woodlands³⁹ can have a significant impact on reducing pollutants entering our rivers as well as providing valuable wildlife habitat. More critically, areas of the rivers that have been heavily modified by weirs are acting as obstructions to the natural movement of fish through the city region⁴⁰. The addition of fish passes - interventions to allow fish to navigate man made obstructions - at specific pressure points along the river system will significantly contribute to the restoration of self-sustaining fisheries within our rivers and deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits.



SECTION 3.0
OBJECTIVES AND INITIATIVES

The goal of the strategy is to make the Leeds City Region vision for green infrastructure a reality by building and sustaining its contribution to the development of the city region in the coming years and by placing green infrastructure at the heart of spatial planning and economic development.

3.1 THE STRATEGY

The strategy builds on the strengths of the city region by taking account of existing green infrastructure assets, partnerships and projects and using these as the basis for future investment. It seeks to build on and maintain the momentum of existing projects and initiatives whilst identifying opportunities to expand their scope, to increase awareness of them and to win new investment.

To do so, it focuses on those investment opportunities where planning and designing green infrastructure will work best at the city region scale and acknowledges the challenges facing the resourcing of all types of infrastructures in the economic climate that may shape much of the forthcoming decade.

The strategy is both ambitious and innovative. It envisages a mutually beneficial relationship emerging between urban and rural areas of the city region in order to realise the full economic potential of the region whilst managing its response to climate change. It also anticipates green infrastructure playing a major role in reconciling historically conflicting aims.

The choice of strategic initiatives presented in the strategy has been guided by a clear focus on delivering green infrastructure investment that is able to promote sustainable growth and economic development and to adapt to and mitigate climate change. Every proposed action has a primary purpose of one or both of these objectives and as such there is a close correlation between the green infrastructure and the city region's investment plan⁴¹. But, whilst these are the focus of city region level interventions, all the proposed actions will also create significant opportunities to realise healthy living and biodiversity benefits.

The strategy will require a new way of thinking about green infrastructure. It will necessitate all parties to regard environmental improvement as essential rather than desirable, and in terms of value and not cost. Indeed, for the city region's core strategies to succeed into the long term, green infrastructure must be seen as an essential means of creating economic, social and environmental value. In doing so, it will add considerable substance to economic development and climate change plans that may otherwise remain disparate.

To be successful, the strategy will evolve over time as circumstances change. As such the choice of strategic initiatives proposed has been made to reflect the situation in 2010. As circumstances change and projects are delivered, so new projects and programmes will emerge. However, what is not likely to change is the role that green infrastructure will play in the success of the city region. As such the four strategic objectives set out in section 3.2 should continue to shape green infrastructure investment in the city region for many years to come.

3.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Four strategic objectives have been selected to directly address the key drivers of green infrastructure set out in section 2 and to ensure that the strategy delivers the city region's transformational vision for green infrastructure in the city region set out in section 1. They are complementary in respect of actions, in that interventions and investments will deliver multifunctional benefits across several objectives at once. However, it is recognised that in more general terms a balance will have to be made between overall city region goals. For example, it is not the place for this strategy or the various interventions described to reconcile the potential conflicts between economic growth and climate change objectives at the project planning and delivery stage.

The relative importance of the objectives set out below will change over time and between different parts of the city region. The strategy reflects these differences in its chosen green infrastructure initiatives and in defining the spatial and delivery frameworks within which investment will be secured in the future.

OBJECTIVE 1: TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY

- increasing the attractiveness of new and existing housing and employment land for investment;
- improving the quality of the local environment for local communities and businesses;
- enhancing the appearance of public transport hubs and services to promote use of the public transport network; and
- realising opportunities for new businesses, skills and jobs to meet the increasing demand generated by green infrastructure actions in the city region.

OBJECTIVE 2: TO ADAPT TO AND MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE BY

- enabling the city region to be more resilient to flooding and higher urban temperatures; and
- contributing to mitigating climate change by lowering the city region's carbon footprint.

OBJECTIVE 3: TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY AND WELLBEING LIVING BY

- increasing the quality and accessibility of natural green space;
- increasing the use of green infrastructure assets by local people;
- improving the quality and health of the urban and rural environment; and
- enhancing rights of way and cycling networks to encourage a modal shift to walking and cycling to enhance healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

OBJECTIVE 4: TO IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY BY

- increasing the area and quality of land regarded as being of high biodiversity value; and
- improving habitat connectivity to address issues of fragmentation and isolation of vulnerable species.

For each objective it is possible to identify more specific, measureable targets against which to monitor progress. As strategic initiatives are developed so such targets will be agreed to show the contribution each initiative is expected to make to deliver the strategy. Examples of targets that may be chosen are included in the Technical Baseline Report.

3.3 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

There are four types of initiative proposed in the strategy with the aim of maximising the impact of green infrastructure in the city region. A summary of the various types of initiatives is presented below. Where relevant the geographic extents of the initiatives have been plotted on accompanying plans.

INITIATIVE TYPE	INTERVENTIONS
<p>Investment Programmes create new investment opportunities for green infrastructure action across the city region with a focus on specific, common types of local intervention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Urban Green Adaptation – Greening our Economic Potential – Carbon Capture – Woodfuel – Rivers for Life
<p>Strategic Projects promote significant exemplar green infrastructure actions with a city region impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fresh Aire – Central Ure Landscape Project (CUre) – Live Moor/Learn Moor
<p>Green Infrastructure Growth Areas shape and secure high quality green infrastructure investment through the delivery of the City Region Housing Investment Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New Growth Points – Urban Eco-Settlements – Strategic Urban Renewal areas – Rural Economic Renaissance areas
<p>Supporting Projects exploit the success of green infrastructure actions by capturing and retaining economic benefits in the city region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Green Hub – Eco-Skills Audit – Water Cycle Study

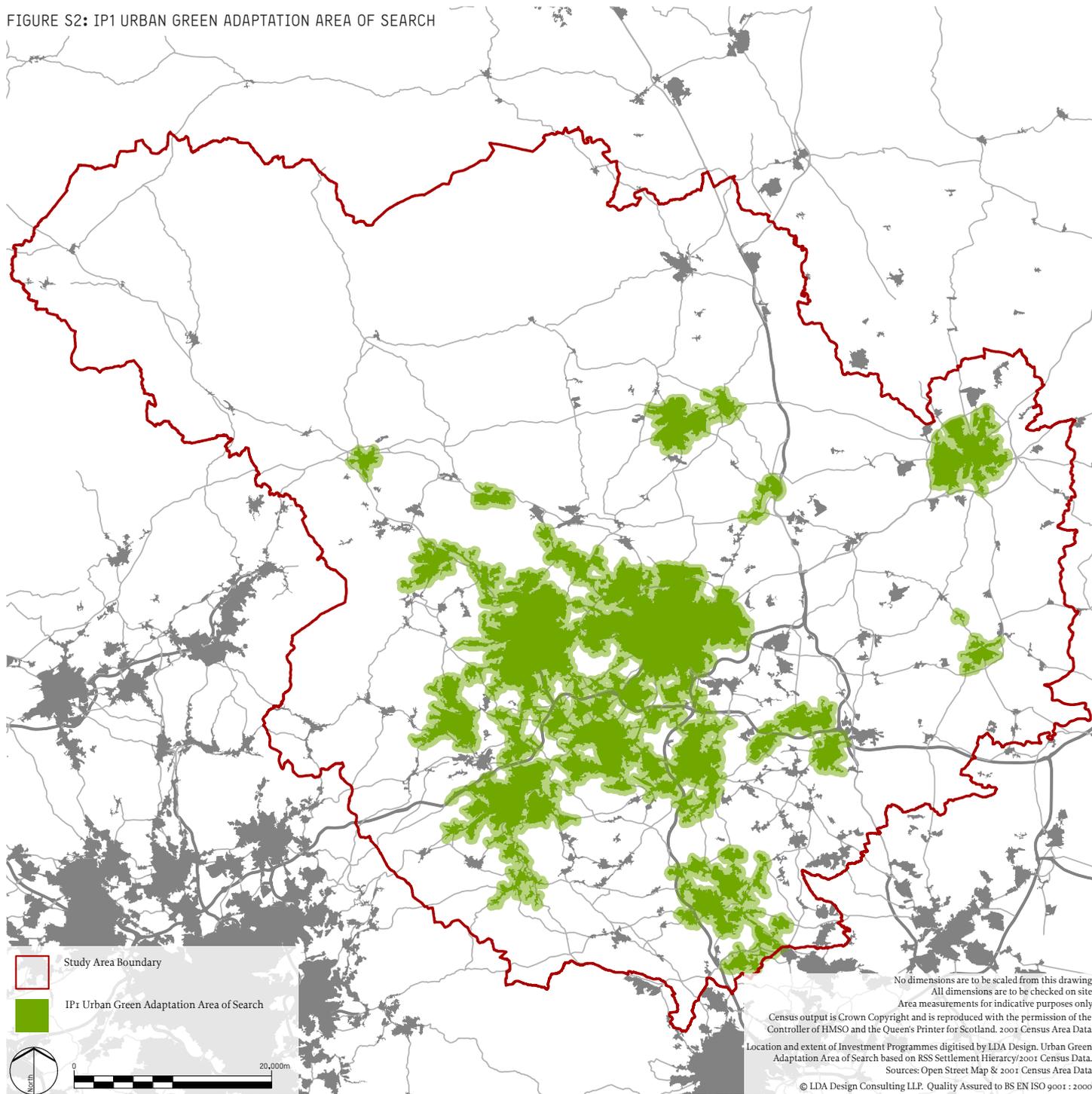


3.4 INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES

Investment Programmes are intended to create the context for new investment opportunities focusing on similar types of green infrastructure projects in particular policy areas. The projects that come forward for funding under each programme in due course will be of a local scale but their cumulative impact across the city region will be significant.

The programmes have been chosen and shaped to provide a strategic focus for investment and activity without seeking to predict exactly when, where and how project planning and delivery will happen. The local partners will determine priorities depending on the relative importance of the programme to their area.

FIGURE S2: IP1 URBAN GREEN ADAPTATION AREA OF SEARCH



IPI - URBAN GREEN ADAPTATION

Refer to Figure S2: Investment Programme 1 Urban Green Adaptation Area of Search

WHAT IS IT?

As a result of climate change, our urban areas will have to face increasing summer temperatures and higher levels of rainfall in future years; our city and town centres will be particularly vulnerable.

As temperatures rise, heavily developed areas will be at risk of becoming ‘urban heat islands’, in part a result of the altered surface cover of the urban area through the replacement of vegetated surfaces (which provide shading, evaporative cooling and rainwater interception, storage and infiltration) with impervious built surfaces. Other climatic variations such as high winds can also be mitigated through the expansion of woodland cover and other green infrastructure solutions⁴².

As such, the role of urban green spaces, parks, street trees, green building technologies and waterways will become increasingly important. They can provide not just respite from extreme weather conditions, but they can also become more productive, as well as attractive, assets.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

This programme will seek to secure invest for a wide range of green infrastructure actions to address these challenges. It will use tree planting to provide evaporative cooling and shading and use new surface water and greening to improve cold air drainage and air flows, especially along river and canal corridors which penetrate into the centre of our towns and cities. Properly designed tree planting can also form an important component of sustainable urban drainage schemes.

As these interventions will be focussed in places where the majority of people live and work, they will be designed as living urban environments to deliver a wide range of multifunctional benefits; offering existing and new residents with the facilities needed to grow food and access a diversity of leisure and environmental services.

The programme will also promote innovation in green technologies for adapting the existing and future built environment to accommodate green roofs and walls and ‘vertical allotments’ as well as large scale rainwater harvesting and storage for example.



WAKEFIELD, IMAGE COURTESY OF LEEDS CITY REGION

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

Although there is no current green infrastructure programme in the city region with these specific objectives, there are a number of initiatives that operate with similar intent that we can build on.

Through the Urban Eco Settlement Programme the Leeds City Region is already beginning to look at retrofitting existing developed areas to adapt and mitigate to climate change. In addition, each of the Local Authorities is undertaking work at the local level to address the impacts of climate change in their area.

Building on this work, and various complementary green infrastructure projects being planned across the city region, we will identify key pressure points across the city region where green infrastructure can make a significant impact.

Research will be required to develop the initiative further and identify a prospectus of sites for testing the effects of various interventions. This will parallel a PhD research project being taken forward

by the Forestry Commission in conjunction with Manchester University that will be undertaken over the coming two to three years. This regional initiative will seek to replicate and further develop research previously undertaken by Gill, Handley et al in Manchester and will focus on the cities of Leeds, Hull and Sheffield.

WHERE WILL WE DO IT?

The Investment Programme will focus on densely built up areas that can be demonstrated to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, perhaps as a result of current built form and relative lack of suitable green infrastructure.

Densely populated residential districts will be a priority, particularly in areas with vulnerable populations and limited green spaces, and employment districts where environmental enhancement will play an important role in attracting new investment.

The geographic extents of the area of search for the programme, illustrated on Figure S2, have been defined by the extent of the city region's larger towns and cities and their immediate rural and peri-urban hinterlands as these will be the main area of search for identifying locations for investment and project development.

LCR ACTIONS

- Joint procurement of research to identify how green infrastructure interventions can be used to respond to climate change pressures.
- Develop prospectus of sites to achieve short, medium and long term projects that can be used for funding bids.
- Pull together Steering Group, wider delivery partners and consultees
- Identify opportunities to unlock investment and lever funding sources

LEAD PARTNER

- Leeds City Region

KEY PARTNERS

- Local academic institutions (to examine the application of local research and with local green infrastructure projects)
- Natural England

- Forestry Commission
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency
- CABI Space

CORE OUTCOMES

The programme will make a significant contribution to the objective of adapting to climate change in the city region by:

- Significantly reducing flood risk in urban areas in the city region
- Reducing the 'urban heat island' effect in the major urban areas in the city region
- Offering opportunities to contribute to local biodiversity gain
- Offering new opportunities for community engagement with the natural environment



IP2 - GREENING OUR ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

WHAT IS IT?

Investment in green infrastructure has been proven, time and again, to lead to more inward investment, uplift land values, stimulate greener commuting and act as a mechanism for inspiring and motivating developers⁴³. To capture these benefits successfully, green infrastructure must be integrated with a series of co-ordinated actions and be focused in the locations where it can make a real difference.

The focus of this programme is on planning for green infrastructure to support the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites and the promotion of strategic employment sites where the costs of site preparation and the perception of local environmental quality will be a factor in commercial investment decisions. This will include a focus on improving key transport corridors to these sites, especially where they coincide with local communities (as opposed to motorways for example).

It will support the regeneration of existing employment areas and business parks to reduce environmental costs and attract new tenants. Focus will also aim be given to the improvement of the appearance of public transport hubs and routes in both rural and urban locations that act as gateways to business and manufacturing districts and that play an important part in their overall appearance and attractiveness. In parallel the programme will also encourage green infrastructure that promotes green journeys to work, especially where public transport services and facilities offer potential to change commuting patterns for large numbers of people, bringing the added health benefits of more active lifestyles.



WHAT WILL WE DO?

The key locations where the programme will have most impact are where there are concentrations of and/or major:

- brownfield sites allocated for commercial development – using green infrastructure to prepare and promote land for development through advance remediation, land forming for sustainable drainage systems, and structural landscaping within and adjoining the site;
- strategic employment sites – using green infrastructure to promote development through advance structural landscaping on the site and at gateway sites and along key transport corridors adjoining local communities to improve attractiveness;
- underperforming business parks and industrial estates – using green infrastructure (including its ongoing management) to shape the identity of the park/estate to attract higher quality businesses and to improve the appearance of the site perimeter and adjoining transport corridors⁴⁴; and
- public transport hubs & services – using green infrastructure to enhance the attractiveness and convenience of these facilities/services (e.g. the Leeds Next Generation Transport network) and the main access routes to them to encourage their use by commuters as well as helping reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality from roadside tree planting.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

We will seek to build upon Groundwork Yorkshire & The Humber's 'Green Business Park'⁴⁵ proposals to prepare an investment prospectus for the programme (aimed at supporting owners to improve the environmental performance of their estates).

In these locations, the local authorities will ensure that any emerging planning policy documents and regeneration/spatial strategies and masterplans that are prepared to promote development, and subsequent planning applications, properly take into account the green infrastructure potential to both lower development costs and raise local land values.

The programme will seek to secure investment in all these green infrastructure actions and provide local planning authorities with greater leverage to use planning conditions and S106 agreements to negotiate high standards of green infrastructure works and ongoing management. Where sites include or lie close to existing or planned local assets (e.g. local nature reserves), then the site action will seek to respond positively to these assets, especially where there are opportunities to encourage walking and cycling as local journeys to work from neighbouring communities.

Following the launch of the Leeds City Region Transport Strategy, further research has been conducted to identify a list of potential options for decarbonising transport infrastructure, which identifies the improvement and expansion of walking and cycling networks⁴⁶. A business case for this option will be developed as the next stage of the

work. We will build on the conclusions of this work by identifying how green infrastructure can bring additional benefits to the agreed options.

WHERE WILL WE DO IT?

The Investment Programme will focus on the target locations identified at an early stage of project development. Emphasis will be placed on identifying brownfield sites where remediation, redevelopment and promotion will be an important element in attracting new investment. Existing employment areas and business parks that will benefit from regeneration will also be identified as well as public transport hubs and routes that provide access to key business districts.

LCR ACTIONS

- Joint procurement of research to inform evidence base and identify most appropriate interventions.
- Develop prospectus of sites to achieve short, medium and long term projects that can be used for funding bids.
- Pull together Steering Group, wider delivery partners and consultees.
- Identify opportunities to unlock investment and lever funding sources.

LEAD PARTNER

- Leeds City Region

KEY PARTNERS

The location of the sites identified will have a bearing on partners at the local level. At the city region level, key partners to deliver this programme will be:

- Groundwork Yorkshire & the Humber.
- Metro.
- Natural England.
- Highways Agency.
- Network Rail.

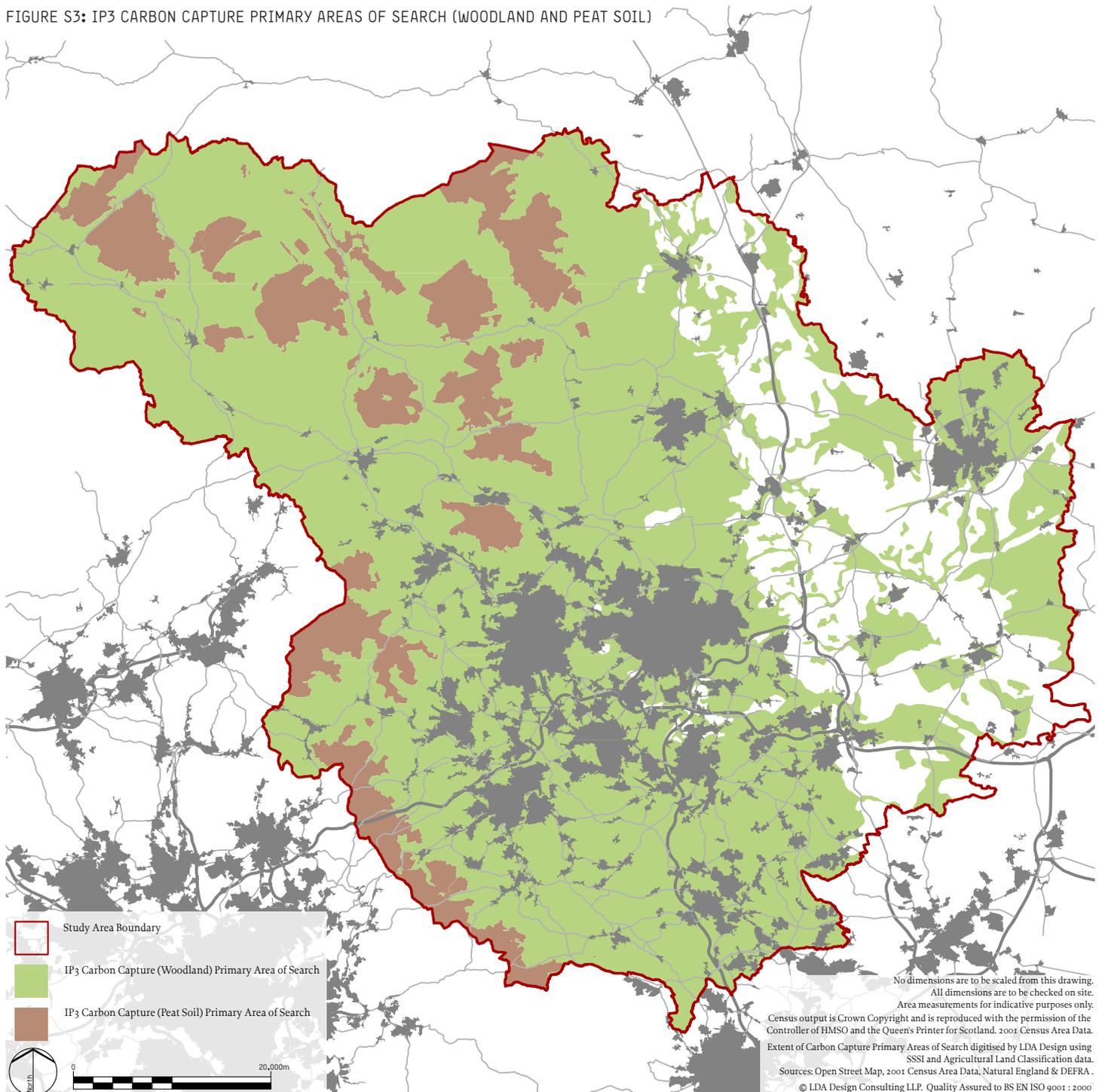
CORE OUTCOMES

The programme will make a significant contribution to the objective of promoting sustainable growth and economic development in the city region by:

- Increasing the attractiveness of brownfield and employment sites for commercial investment, either as new-build or as estate refurbishment.
- Increasing and sustaining a high quality employment offer with a series of on-site open spaces, water bodies, footpaths and landscaping as appropriate.
- Enhancing the appearance of the public transport hubs and services to promote walking and cycling as journeys to work and improving the appeal of using public transport.

- Offering opportunities to address other green infrastructure objectives, perhaps by contributing to local biodiversity gain and mitigating the effects of climate change by incorporating wetland habitat into sustainable drainage systems and to promoting healthy living by connecting employment sites to neighbouring communities to encourage walking and cycling.

FIGURE S3: IP3 CARBON CAPTURE PRIMARY AREAS OF SEARCH (WOODLAND AND PEAT SOIL)



IP3 - CARBON CAPTURE

Refer to Figure S3: Investment Programme 3 Carbon Capture Primary Areas of Search (Woodland and Peat Soils)

WHAT IS IT?

Over the last five years, carbon emissions in the city region have dropped by 5%. Although this is higher than the average regional or national rates in carbon reduction⁴⁷, there is still have a major challenge ahead in terms of reducing emissions to the level required.

Whilst cleaner energy options and more efficient energy use will be the critical factors in contributing to national carbon reduction targets, green infrastructure interventions can also help mitigate emissions damage through carbon sequestration.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The programme will seek to ensure that provision is made in new developments for retaining or creating carbon sinks – woodlands and peat restoration for example - and ensuring the long term management of assets is secured. It will also focus on green infrastructure projects outside of the development system that will create new significant carbon sinks.

The Yorkshire Peat Partnership for example is overseeing reseeded and managing drainage to protect large areas of upland peat from desiccation and loss and encourage new growth. This has been the subject of extensive recent research by

Leeds University and others as part of the Rural Economy & Land Use Programme (the ‘Sustainable Uplands Project’⁴⁸). It may be possible to encourage similar interventions in low lying areas such as the Humberhead Levels; however, the value of land to agriculture may preclude this.

As demonstrated in the Read Report, woodland creation offers a very cost effective means of carbon sequestration. This Investment Programme will examine what contribution the Leeds city region might make to the national target of 25,000ha a year of new woodland planting advocated in the Read report.

Elsewhere in the lowlands existing woodlands would be managed for carbon capture and storage, whilst being sensitive to other uses and functions of the woodland resource.

In addition to their primary carbon sequestration and storage function, accredited schemes will provide new or enhanced habitat resources and provide areas for countryside access and recreation. Their design and management will be closely linked to local natural geography and cultural heritage assets and as such offer opportunities for large scale landscape protection and enhancement.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

We will further develop our technical understanding of the science and practicalities of large scale carbon sequestration projects and refine the areas of search to identify key investment opportunities. The Live



IMAGE COURTESY OF PENNINE PROSPECTS

Moor/Learn Moor Strategic Project described later in the strategy is the flagship project for the peatland component of this programme.

The demand for investment to tackle large scale carbon sequestration and storage will be most obvious from developers and businesses seeking a means of meeting carbon reduction obligations. This programme is particularly well-suited to securing investment from the proposed Corporate Environmental Responsibility investment fund and Habitat Bank initiatives described later.

WHERE WILL WE DO IT?

Broad primary areas of search, illustrated on Figure S3, have been identified to focus the two types of intervention into areas where landscape character and prevailing environmental conditions would suggest that they are most appropriate.

The peatland component area of search is focussed on the moors and uplands of the Yorkshire Dales, South Pennines and Peak District. However, this does not preclude woodland planting opportunities, albeit there should be particular attention given to the impact of such interventions on landscape character, archaeology and biodiversity.

High quality agricultural land use and upland areas designated for their biodiversity importance will be largely excluded from the area of search for large scale new woodland planting. New woodland creation and the management of existing woodlands for carbon capture and storage will also need to be sensitive to other objectives and priorities. The Forestry Commission has created a national Woodland Carbon Taskforce that will examine the feasibility of delivering the Read Report recommendations. The Leeds city region will need to consider the issue and feed its recommendations into the work of the Taskforce as it develops.



IMAGE COURTESY OF GUY THOMPSON

These provide only basic areas of search at present in order to illustrate the potential spatial scope of the programme across the city region. Further research will be commissioned in due course by Forestry Commission in these areas to provide investors and project promoters with a more in-depth understanding of conditions that may affect carbon sequestration and storage and financial viability.

LCR ACTIONS

- Joint procurement of research to inform evidence base and identify most appropriate interventions.
- Develop prospectus of sites to achieve short, medium and long term projects that can be used for funding bids.
- Pull together Steering Group, wider delivery partners and consultees.
- Identify opportunities to unlock investment and lever funding sources.

LEAD PARTNERS

- Forestry Commission (woodland) and Pennine Prospects (peatland).

KEY PARTNERS

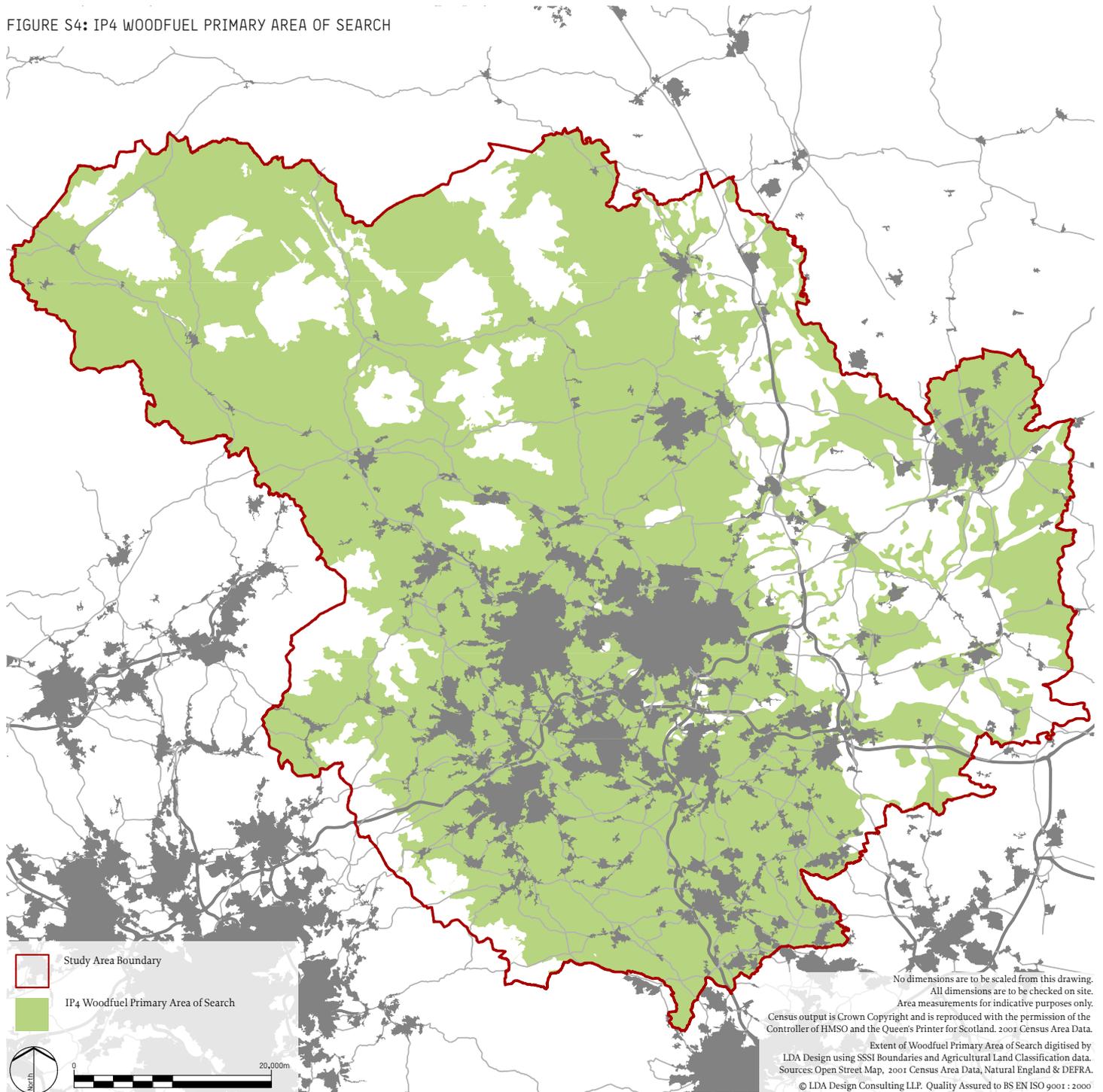
- Leeds City Region.
- Yorkshire Peat Partnership.
- Local academic institutions (notably Leeds University).

CORE OUTCOMES

The programme will make a significant contribution to the objective of mitigating climate change in the city region by:

- Significantly increasing the volume of carbon captured and stored to reduce the carbon emissions of the city region.
- Offering opportunities to contribute to local biodiversity gain.

FIGURE S4: IP4 WOODFUEL PRIMARY AREA OF SEARCH



IP4 - WOODFUEL

Refer to Figure S4: Investment Programme 4
Woodfuel Primary Area of Search

WHAT IS IT?

Published estimates indicate significant CO₂ savings are associated with substituting woodfuel for fossil fuels along with financial benefits of using wood derived fuels when compared to oil and gas. The Forestry Commission has set out a series of recommended interventions in their Woodfuel Strategy for England⁴⁹, that if implemented, could realise widespread benefits, including utilising an extra 2 million tonnes of woodfuel nationally, saving 400,000 tonnes of carbon, supplying the equivalent of 250,000 homes with energy. Additional benefits include conserving the woodland resource; reversing the decline in woodland diversity by increasing the number of sustainably managed woods; and creating economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas by developing a viable biomass industry and supply chain. This in turn supports businesses in the supply, installation and maintenance of woodfuel boilers.

The Regional Energy Infrastructure Strategy⁵⁰ highlights the important role that biomass heating systems, which are now becoming economic alternatives to fossil fuels, will have in the future. It also states that demand is developing an infrastructure that will need to be supported during its establishment. Likewise, the Yorkshire and Humber Vision for Biomass⁵¹ includes an aim to

“support initiatives that will encourage owners of under managed woods to maximise their economic potential and social benefits, while enhancing their biodiversity value through sustainable woodland management. This should include appropriate support for biomass supply chains and the parallel development of generation technology for biomass, in line with the Forestry Commission’s Wood Fuel Strategy”.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The Woodfuel investment programme will encourage the sustainable management of all of new and future woodland assets within the city region, whether in public or private ownership, to increase the amount of woodfuel available. It will promote the advantages of woodfuel as an alternative to oil, gas and coal and encourage the integration of woodfuel technology into new commercial and residential development. The programme will also further develop the market for all forms of woodfuel, thereby improving consumer confidence in fuel availability and in doing so stimulate a widespread increase in uptake.

The programme will focus on bringing existing woodlands into management and encouraging the creation of new woodlands in order to secure a long-term supply of woodfuel. Management will focus on thinning and forest residues for woodfuel and encourage management regimes that maximise woodfuel product whilst also being sensitive to other uses and functions of the woodland. For example, management for biodiversity will involve

felling of trees to increase light levels reaching the woodland floor, improve the structural diversity of the canopy, and favour native over non-native species of trees.

The programme will not include energy crops such as short rotation coppice and miscanthus as these are considered to be of limited benefit to meeting wider green infrastructure objectives. It is anticipated that such interventions, whilst forming a significant component of the total woodfuel available, will be of limited benefit to meeting wider green infrastructure objectives such as enhancing biodiversity and access provision and should be considered as part of evolving agricultural practices in the city region.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

The programme will build on and extend current initiatives operating in the city region such as:

- the West Yorkshire Working Woodlands Project⁵², operated by the Yorwoods Project, which aims to achieve the sustainable multi-purpose management of woodlands in the White Rose Forest area, with the primary objective being the production of woodfuel;
- CO₂Sense Yorkshire's Woodfuel Infrastructure Programme⁵³ which assists woodfuel projects in the region and includes a number of grant schemes for businesses in the biomass supply chain including support for both suppliers and users; and

- the Forestry Commission's Under-Managed Woodland initiative which aims to bring woodlands into active management while also delivering other benefits such as improving biodiversity value.

The CO₂Sense Yorkshire woodfuel programme is delivered with the support of partners in the Forestry Commission, Yorwoods, White Rose Forest and South Yorkshire Forest partnerships. The programme also seeks synergies with other delivery organisations such as the Carbon Trust, Natural England and DECC. Proposals for pilot woodfuel projects planned in the city region's Urban Eco-Settlements will also offer opportunities to demonstrate the benefits of woodfuel as part of planning new development.

WHERE WILL WE DO IT?

Further research will be commissioned to identify project areas based on a more in-depth understanding of the conditions that may affect woodland management and planting for woodfuel, as well as the financial viability of schemes, taking into consideration market conditions, transport costs and available markets.

Broad primary areas of search, illustrated on Figure S4, have been identified to focus interventions into areas where landscape character and prevailing environmental conditions would suggest that they are most appropriate. The area of search focuses on low lying rural and urban fringe landscapes. However, these areas provide only basic areas of

search at present in order to illustrate the potential spatial scope of the programme across the city region. Further research will be commissioned in due course by the Forestry Commission in these areas to provide investors and project promoters with a more in-depth understanding of conditions that may affect woodfuel production and markets.

LCR ACTIONS

- Promote woodfuel as a viable energy source.
- Joint procurement of research to identify potential of woodfuel in the city region and the infrastructure necessary to secure sustainable woodfuel industry.
- Develop prospectus of sites to achieve short, medium and long term projects that can be used for funding bids.
- Pull together Steering Group, wider delivery partners and consultees.
- Identify opportunities to unlock investment and lever funding sources.

LEAD PARTNER

- Forestry Commission.

KEY PARTNERS

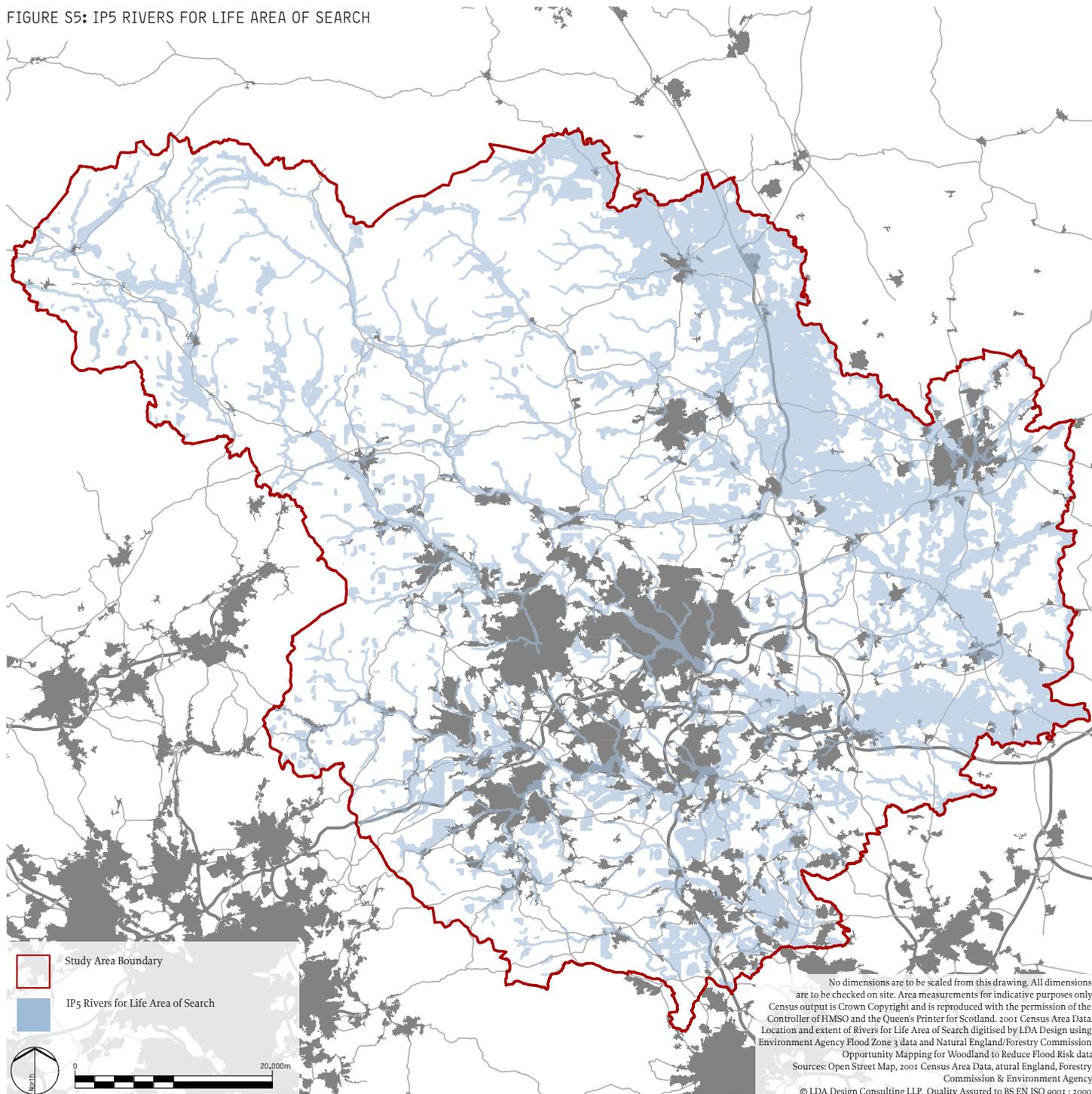
- Leeds City Region.
- CO2Sense Yorkshire.
- White Rose Forest, Yorwoods and South Yorkshire Forest partnerships.

CORE OUTCOMES

The programme will make a significant contribution to the objective of mitigating climate change in the city region by:

- Reduce carbon emissions of the city region by increasing use of woodfuel as a source of renewable energy.
- Developing the green technology sector in the city region to create new businesses and jobs.
- Offering opportunities to contribute to local biodiversity gain.

FIGURE S5: IP5 RIVERS FOR LIFE AREA OF SEARCH



IP5 - RIVERS FOR LIFE

Refer to Figure S5: Investment Programme 5 Rivers for Life Area of Search

WHAT IS IT?

It is anticipated that climate change will lead to increased winter and decreased summer rainfall in the years to come. In addition, rainfall events will be more intense which may increase flood risk from rivers and streams as drainage systems become overwhelmed⁵⁴.

The economic and social implications of flooding are significant, particularly when damage occurs to residential, industrial and commercial premises. There are also potential adverse impacts on the agricultural economy when the productivity of areas of land is affected by flooding and contamination⁵⁵.

It is clear that the effects of flooding will be felt across a large amount of the city region, in both built up areas and in rural locations⁵⁶. Indeed, this highlights the symbiotic relationship between cities, towns and villages and their rural hinterlands; intense rainfall in the uplands may overwhelm a multitude of streams and lead to flash flood events in settlements downstream. Equally canalised rivers in a town may efficiently transport flood waters through a built up area, but cause damage downstream across wide areas of low lying countryside, damaging crops and pasture. As such flood water management is considered in the Rivers for Life Programme at the city region scale, with

investment in both rural and urban areas, albeit employing different techniques and approaches that are appropriate to their local context.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The Rivers for Life programme will establish a coordinated approach to river catchment management and enhancement across the city region. Its main focus will be on the restoration of river channels to reduce flood risk but will also deliver widespread access, recreation and biodiversity benefits through planning and designing for multifunctional benefit.

In rural areas upstream from the main centres of population in the city region the programme will focus on opportunities for restoring natural features in water catchments, such as wetlands and establishing new areas of riparian and floodplain woodland and grasslands. Wetland features, which include fen, open water, watercourses and ditches, have an important role in flood water detention, groundwater recharge, groundwater discharge and sediment retention. Wetland habitats such as grasslands and woodlands can also help slow water flows; aid infiltration; and reduce soil erosion which in turn influences the potential for sediment to reach the watercourse from adjacent fields. In addition, wetlands can be important carbon sinks, locking carbon in living material, litter, organic soils and peat.



In urban areas we will seek to secure investment in widespread reconfiguration of surface cover through the replacement of impervious surfaces, which have a notable effect on hydrological processes and can result in an increase in the runoff of rainwater, with permeable and vegetated surfaces which provide shading, evaporative cooling and rainwater interception, storage and infiltration.

The programme will also promote widespread adoption of sustainable drainage systems and features such as swales, infiltration detention and retention ponds, particularly in new developments and major housing renewal programmes. The Forestry Commission in partnership with the Environment Agency, Natural England and others has recently commenced a two-year pilot project (Slowing the Flow) in the Pickering and Sinnington areas to demonstrate how land management will be delivered in rural areas where opportunities for new floodplain and riparian woodland planting will also be exploited alongside general river corridor enhancement.

Priority will be given to improving the capacity of brownfield sites to deliver flood management capabilities. This will be achieved by investing in the removal of hardstanding and creation of temporary open spaces prior to regeneration and development being undertaken.

In many places we expect that the interventions described above will coincide with watercourse weirs that are impeding the recovery of self sustaining fish populations. Projects in these areas will incorporate fish passes into their design, thereby significantly increasing the environmental, recreational and economic value of our rivers.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

The Forestry Commission has already completed opportunity mapping for woodland to reduce flood risk in the Yorkshire & Humber region⁵⁷. This highlights in particular the role that woodland can have in assisting flood risk management. The Rivers for Life Investment Programme will expand the scope of this initiative over the next four years, with an initial focus on using land in local authority ownership. In addition the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Environment Agency, in partnership with the Strategic Waterways Group, has completed opportunity mapping for woodland, wetland and grassland creation and enhancement for biodiversity gain and the provision of ecosystem service, for most of West Yorkshire's waterways. This will be key to developing the Rivers for Life Investment Programme and various other green infrastructure investments described in the strategy and should be considered alongside the Forestry Commission's Woodland Opportunity Mapping. Further to this, the Environment Agency has identified where fish passes are required across the city region and have done significant work in building a business case for these interventions⁵⁸.



KIRKTHORPE WIER, WAKEFIELD,
IMAGE COURTESY OF YORKSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

Various projects are already underway to address the issue of flood water management and go some way to demonstrating the benefits of the Rivers for Life Investment Programme. The Environment Agency has recently commenced a two-year pilot project ('slowing the flow') in the Pickering and Sinnington areas⁵⁹ (which lie to the east of the Leeds City Region) to show that land management and natural processes can help to reduce the risk and severity of flooding and bring other benefits such as improving water quality, biodiversity and protecting soils. A similar project, the Ripon Multi-Objective Project (MOP)⁶⁰, aims to determine how changes in land management can reduce the risk of flooding and bring other environmental benefits. The Long Preston Wet Grassland Project is also demonstrating the benefits of landscape scale interventions. This has set out a long term vision for Long Preston Deep's landscape which will bring widespread benefits for people and wildlife, but will also deliver wetland restoration and flood risk management.

In identifying opportunities, consideration will be given to the wider social and environmental implications of interventions and the viability of initiatives in terms of capital expenditure and operational requirements into the long term.

WHERE WILL WE DO IT?

The geographic extent of the area of search for programme, illustrated on Figure S5, focuses on the main river channels, tributary streams and areas identified as being prone to flooding by the Environment Agency. It is acknowledged that land beyond the main river valleys and floodplains will also be an important focus for activity and investment to help reduce flood risk and contribute to the other objectives of the programme. As such areas of land identified by Forestry Commission and its partners as part of its Opportunity Mapping for Woodland to Reduce Flood Risk have been included in the extents of the area of search. Further research will be commissioned to identify project areas based on a more in-depth understanding of the conditions that may affect water catchment management.

LCR ACTIONS

- Joint procurement of research to inform evidence base and identify most appropriate interventions.
- Review and refine area of search and develop prospectus of sites to achieve short, medium and long term projects that can be used for funding bids.
- Pull together Steering Group, wider delivery partners and consultees.
- Identify opportunities to unlock investment and lever funding sources.

LEAD PARTNERS

- Forestry Commission and Leeds City Region.

KEY PARTNERS

The programme will be led and developed jointly by the Forestry Commission and Environment Agency, in association with:

- Environment Agency.
- Natural England.
- White Rose Forest Partnership.
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.
- RSPB.

These agencies will establish the detailed programme criteria for prioritising local projects and will identify the potential sources of funds.

CORE OUTCOMES

The programme will make a significant contribution to the objective of adapting to climate change in the city region by:

- Significantly reducing flood risk in urban and rural areas in the city region.
- Offering opportunities to contribute to local biodiversity gain.
- Increasing access and recreation along river corridors.
- Improving river corridors as visitor attractions to promote local tourism business and jobs.



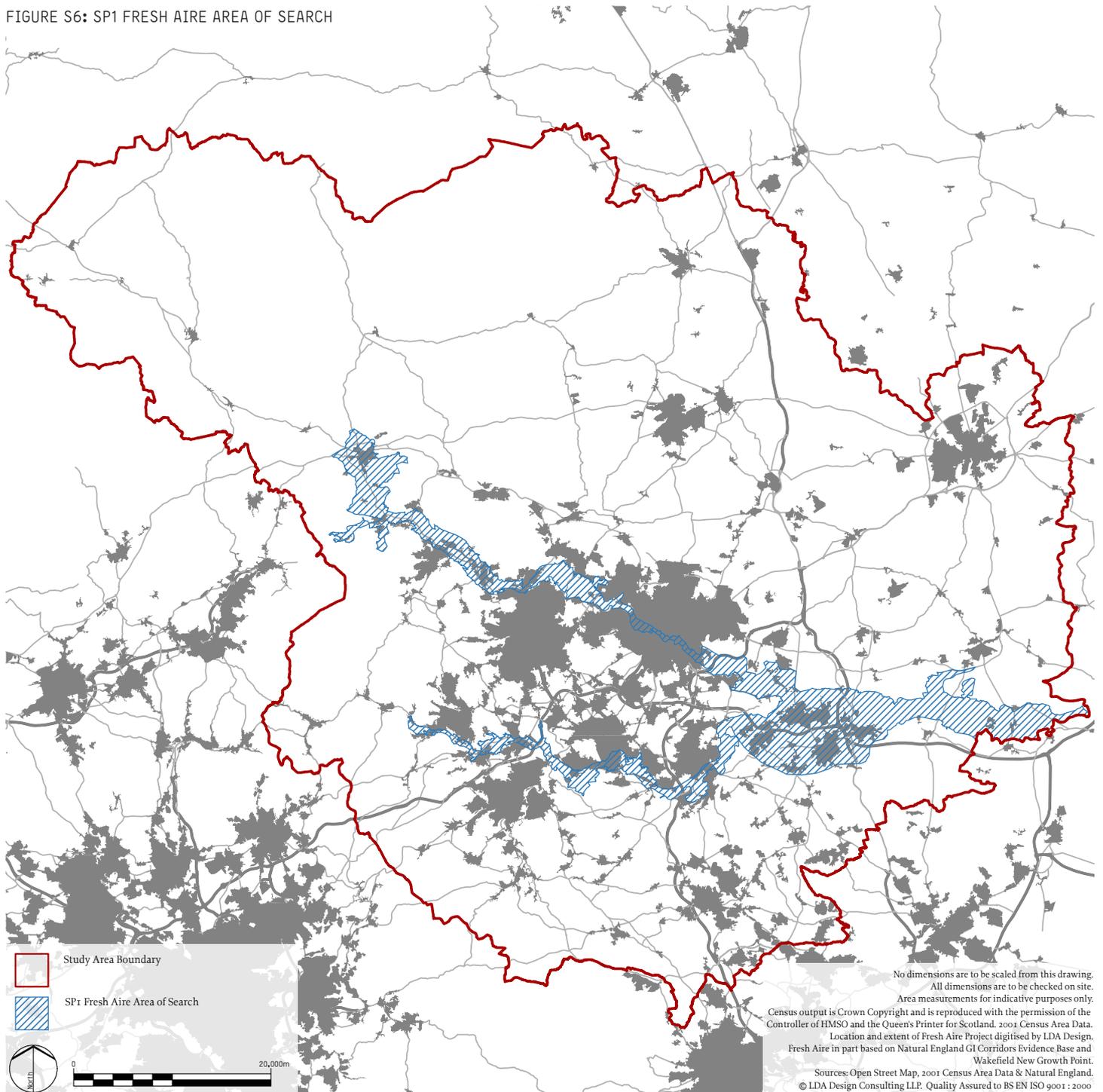
3.5 STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Strategic projects are site specific or clusters of green infrastructure actions that will create an impact at the city region scale. They have been identified as being of significant importance as they address particular needs that would be difficult to address through other mechanisms or because they will have a large impact, with significant benefits for people, wildlife or the environment more generally.

All three of the Strategic Projects identified are existing projects delivering green infrastructure benefits, or that have been in the planning stage for some time. They are considered in this strategy as they have the potential to significantly increase their impact across a wider range of functions if the investment is forthcoming. As such, there is confidence that the projects will have the delivery infrastructure in place to meet this challenge and become city region exemplars of green infrastructure action, which it is anticipated will stimulate other strategic or local projects to come forward.

The projects will be the focus for new city region scale investment secured from regional or national sources over and above local funding. Potential new funding streams are discussed in section 4 of this Strategy.

FIGURE S6: SP1 FRESH AIRE AREA OF SEARCH



SPI - FRESH AIRE

Refer to Figure S6: Strategic Project 1 Fresh Aire Area of Search

WHAT IS IT?

The Aire river valley system, rising near Malham Cove at Airehead Springs in Craven District, forms the focus of a bold and innovative flagship project that will place the city region at the forefront of post industrial city planning in Europe.

A significant stretch of the river valley and its major tributary, the Calder, lie at the heart of the city region. The landscape is dominated by built development, transport and energy infrastructure which are testimony to the area's success and growth since a period of rapid industrialisation in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the river and navigable waterways such as the Leeds and Liverpool Canal had an important role to play throughout the industrial revolution and continue to offer widespread benefits for recreation and access in the area, as well as linking together some of the areas most significant environmental and cultural assets; the 'pearls on a string'.

Whilst some post industrial areas have witnessed strong economic growth, the decline in manufacturing and mining has left a legacy of dereliction and deprivation along significant stretches of the Aire and Calder. It is in this complex

and often poor environment that a significant proportion of the city region's population live and major industrial and commercial interests are located. It is also where the change to a modern, environmental-led, post-industrial city region will be at its most prolonged and intense and where green infrastructure will have a crucial role in shaping a positive future and vibrant new sense of place and identity.

The area covers all or part of several of the Green Infrastructure Growth Areas identified later in the Strategy where large scale regeneration will provide numerous opportunities for innovate green infrastructure solutions. These include:

- Bradford-Shipley Canal Road Corridor Urban Eco Settlement
- Leeds Bradford Urban Renewal Corridor
- Aire Valley Leeds Urban Eco Settlement
- Wakefield New Growth Point
- Calderdale New Growth Point
- A52 Strategic Urban Renewal Corridor
- North Kirklees/South Dewsbury Urban Eco Settlement
- Calder Valley Rural Economic Renaissance



THWAITE MILLS VOLUNTEER ACTION WEEK,
IMAGE COURTESY OF AIRE ACTION LEEDS

In addition to these areas, a wide range of existing and proposed projects will address a multitude of green infrastructure objectives including the creation and enhancement of new natural green spaces, flood mitigation and attracting economic investment. Projects and initiatives that come forward will add to or enhance existing assets. Of equal importance will be the linking of these assets together to make a cohesive, accessible network of green infrastructure assets. Project examples include:

- The Mid Aire Project is engaging with communities from Leeds and Bradford districts, to deliver biodiversity, access and interpretation benefits to a series of green spaces along the River Aire, encouraging local interest and use of the river corridor. The project delivers practical work on the ground, alongside community groups and local volunteers, creating a chain of safe and secure habitats for wildlife that will improve and strengthen the ecological network along the river and canal corridor for a variety of regionally important species. There is scope
- to extend the project upstream to include the Upper Aire and deliver on Yorkshire Wildlife Trust’s Living Landscape Vision for the area.
- The St Aidan’s Project, is a Vision to create a vibrant and sustainable landscape where people live, work and play. A place where wildlife will thrive on the restored land once dominated by the mining industry. This bold and innovative vision for the Lower Aire Valley, being driven by the RSPB in partnership with Leeds City Council, will see people and wildlife benefit from the restoration and enhancement of thousands of acres of land linking the M1 on the outskirts of Leeds to the A1 outside Castleford. This exciting new network of green spaces, transformed brownfield sites, floodplains and washlands will be regionally important for wildlife. It will provide a natural environment with exciting opportunities for recreation and healthy lifestyles, so improving the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of people (250,000 new visitors).



ST AIDAN'S SITE, LOWER AIRE VALLEY,
IMAGE COURTESY OF RSPB

- The River Calder Project is active in promoting the uniqueness of the River Calder's natural and post-industrial heritage. Improvements to access and interpretation will be achieved through the creation of significant disabled access, self-guided wetland trails, way-marked circular walks and walks leaflets, which provide information on the sites of man-made history, their biodiversity interest, and their context in the local area. Such interventions will encourage use of the area and provide exciting opportunities for recreation and healthy living, so improving quality of life of many people. The project is also delivering biodiversity benefits through habitat creation and restoration works along the Calder between Brighouse and Wakefield, using volunteers and community groups, encouraging local use of sites by providing opportunities to learn practical habitat management and species identification skills. The project is key to establishing and strengthening a vital ecological network that delivers significant ecosystem services, and will expand to engage the local community in the Southern Washlands Nature Corridor and the wider Lower Calder Valley.

These actions will touch the lives of many thousands of local people and enhance the prospects of this area being the city region's economic and environmental hub.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The Fresh Aire Project will be a major partnership initiative that will shape and help coordinate all activity within the Aire and Calder river valley system. It will bring together issues of environmental conservation, enhancement and land management and to make this compatible with enhancing the wider city region's growth and economic development.

In doing so, it will create a truly special place, centred on a resilient and successful post-industrial way of living. It will emphasise the mutual dependence that needs to exist between built up areas and environmental assets, set new standards for future growth and development in the city region and elsewhere in the UK, and provide opportunities to test new ideas and technologies as well as pilot and demonstrate several investment programmes.

The Fresh Aire Project will become a flagship for environmentally conscious development and regeneration, acting as a demonstrator for high standards of design, construction and environmental management as well as an engine for local environmental research and innovation, particularly in climate change mitigation, adaptation and sustainable construction. It will also demonstrate the benefits of enhanced, cross boundary and multi disciplinary planning and investment.

Delivery of high standards, environmental improvements and other projects is a key consideration and that is why the project area is not only focused on its rivers but also on UES's and the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan area, which as a focus for new employment and 10,000 new homes offers a real opportunity to secure funding that will facilitate delivery of the project's objectives; via improving the quality of place and the place setting which will enhance land and property values.

On a broad scale, the project will lead to the celebration and promotion of green infrastructure in the city region by creating a sense of place and identity which can be used to brand the project area and its associated projects. The associated projects may be as large as an Urban Eco-Settlement or as small as a community food project. In each case, the project will benefit from the attention that the Fresh Aire project will generate amongst communities and investors that may generate new funding sources and that may enable greater co-ordination of effort.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

The project provides an excellent opportunity to further develop partnership working across local authority boundaries and with the private and independent sectors over the next four years. Strategic planning of the project will be informed by emerging spatial plans or influence later ones within the project area and add to the clarity of the proposals coming forward in the Green Infrastructure Growth Areas and, in due course, the other relevant Strategic Projects and Investment Programmes proposed in this strategy.

WHERE WILL WE DO IT?

The geographic extent of the area of search for the Fresh Aire project, illustrated on Figure S6, focuses on the river valleys of the Aire and Calder and their hinterlands as defined by Natural England and its partners as part of their work to identify and describe Green Infrastructure Corridors. The corridor boundaries capture the main environmental and cultural assets which will form the basis of project development and enhancement of the local environment. The area of search has also been drawn to capture the full extent of the Wakefield New Growth Point, in order to take advantage of all of the opportunities presented by this major initiative.

LCR ACTIONS

- Develop a bold and imaginative Project Vision.
- Pull together Steering Group, wider delivery partners and consultees.
- Identify opportunities to unlock investment and lever funding sources.

LEAD PARTNERS

- Leeds City Region

KEY PARTNERS

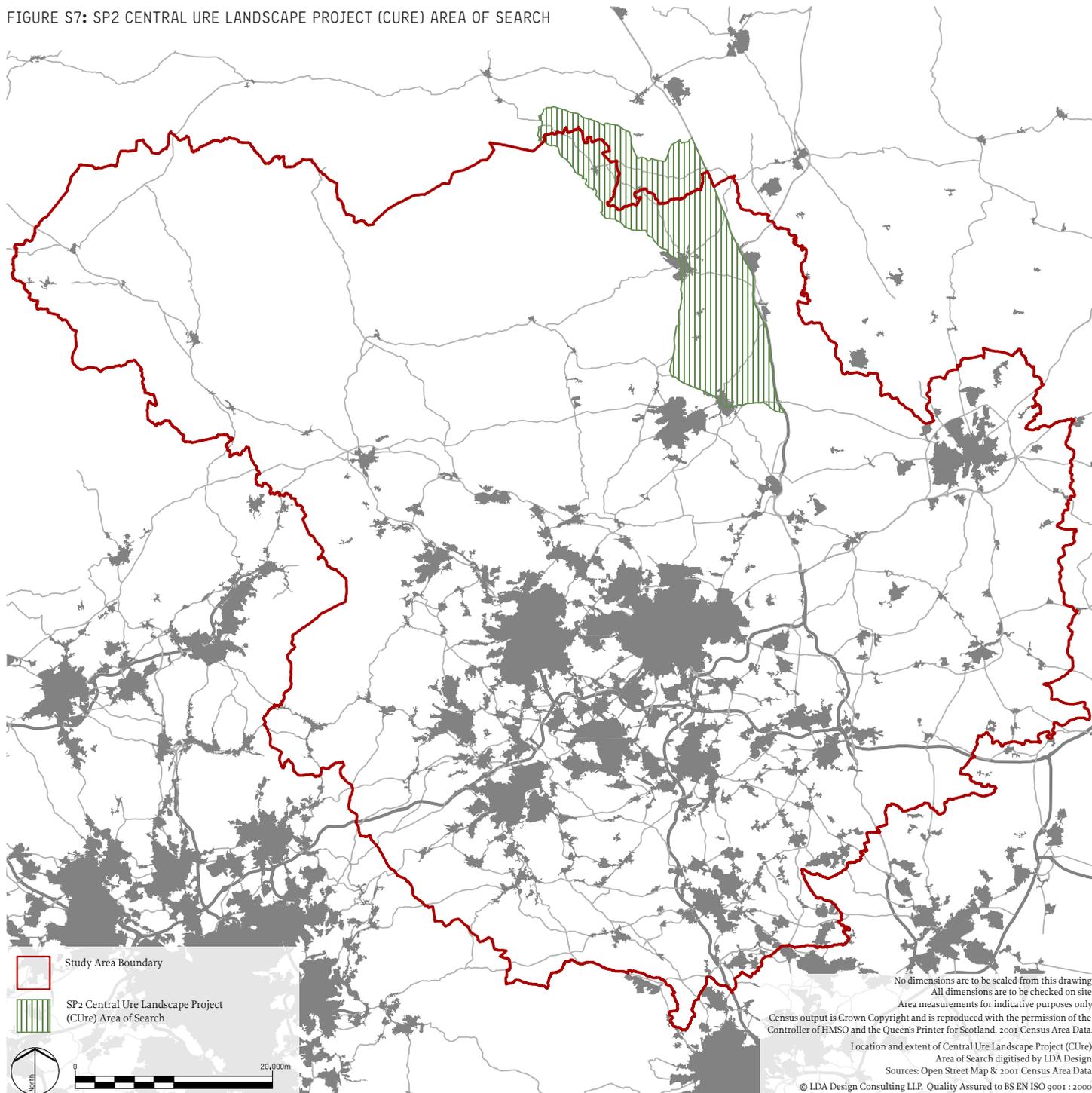
- Natural England.
- Forestry Commission.
- Environment Agency.
- British Waterways.
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

CORE OUTCOMES

The initiative will make a significant contribution to the objective of promoting sustainable growth and economic development in the city region by:

- Raising the awareness of developers, landowners and investors of the opportunities, benefits and added value that can be associated with a growth and enhancement of green infrastructure.
- Creating new publically accessible open spaces and recreational facilities that add to the health and well being of the people of the region.
- Creating opportunities to contribute to local biodiversity gain and to reducing flood risk in the Aire-Calder river valley system – that will give security to residents and allow further flexibility in implementing development safely.
- Encouraging local communities to plan and coordinate local green infrastructure projects that will increase their sense of ownership and value of the project.
- Adding to the local tourism offer and thereby adding to economic development initiatives.

FIGURE S7: SP2 CENTRAL URE LANDSCAPE PROJECT (CURE) AREA OF SEARCH



SP2 - CENTRAL URE LANDSCAPE PROJECT (CURE)

Refer to Figure S7: Strategic Project 2 Central Ure Landscape Project (CURE) Area of Search

WHAT IS IT?

The River Ure, which rises in the uplands of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Pennine Dales fringe, is a tributary of the River Ouse that ultimately flows into the Humber before entering the North Sea. Within the city region, the Ure meanders through alluvial floodplains and gently undulating countryside as it crosses a broad belt of glacial sand and gravel; a stark contrast to its upper reaches which are characterised by fast flowing streams in deeply incised moorland valleys.

The undulating topography, fertile - free draining, soils and lower lying wetlands bordering the Central Ure have long been the focus of settlement and activity. Indeed the Ure is at the centre of a landscape with evidence stretching back to the earliest periods of human occupation in the region. Of particular significance are the loose groupings of Neolithic henges and other prehistoric monuments between Thornborough and Ripon. At the heart of this ritual landscape is the important Thronborough Henges, sometimes referred to as 'the Stonehenge of the North'. Other features of the project area include ancient rural villages, several of North Yorkshires larger market towns and a notable concentration of

historic parks and gardens. The Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site, universally acclaimed as one of England's finest heritage assets and one of the city region's most popular destinations, is located a short distance outside the project area of search.

In recent decades, the fluvial sands and gravels of the rivers and the glacial deposits that fringe them have been extensively worked, leaving a legacy of open water and wetland habitats on restored sites. In some locations, the wetlands created have been designated for their wildlife value or form the central feature of widely valued nature reserves. Ongoing and potential future extraction of sand and gravel in this area is a notable force for change acting on the landscape and whilst extraction can be regarded as negative and harmful, it presents a significant opportunity to bring about widespread economic and environmental benefit through coordinated action and investment.

As such, the rich landscape of the Central Ure and the potential afforded by ongoing and future sand and gravel extraction offers significant potential for a multifunctional green infrastructure project that addresses a wide range of objectives; notably upper river catchment management and strategic landscape enhancement and restoration focusing on heritage and wildlife assets. Whilst the project focuses on landscape enhancement, investment will be directed to ensure activity brings benefit to the local economy through the creation of new jobs

associated with the tourism and recreation sectors and through increasing the attractiveness of the area to businesses wishing to relocate or invest.

The 'Strategic Partnership for the River Ouse and its Tributaries' has already been established by the Environment Agency to progress the aim of improving the environmental assets of the River Ouse and its tributaries, one of which is the Ure. A significant project being taken forward by the Partnership is the 'Enhancement of the River Ouse and Its Tributaries Opportunity Plan', which provides an environmental foundation for economic investment and growth over the next 25 years and beyond, and will transform how the rivers will look, how they are managed and how they are understood and used by people. The plan identifies a portfolio of projects, which itself forms the North Yorkshire Rivers Renaissance Programme. The CUre Landscape Project Area, captures three portfolio project clusters; Middle River Nidd, Lower River Swale, Swale & Ure Confluence & River Laver, and River Swale and River Whiske.

One initiative that has already been taken forward from the Opportunity Plan is the Ripon MOP (Multi Objective Partnership) which has been set up in order to help reduce the risk of flooding in Ripon by slowing down water run-off from the land through land management projects. It will also help prevent soil and nutrient loss and create new habitats to improve biodiversity. The Ripon Mop project area falls mainly within the Nidderdale AONB and covers an area of 140km^{v.1,3} to the west of Ripon and the

CUre project area. In addition, funding from the Environment Agency has been secured to provide a grant scheme for capital works on the rivers Skell, Laver and Kex Beck and their tributaries.

In addition, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has established a Living Landscape Project on the Ure, focusing in particular on the river and its adjacent floodplain. The River Ure Corridor Living Landscape Project was established in recognition that the Ure is one of the few near natural rivers in the region, having changed little over the past 150 years and widely valued for its otter populations. The project will be the focus of wet woodland and grassland restoration, notably through engagement with minerals companies to secure appropriate after-use of extraction sites. Other partnership work in the area is the Swale & Ure Washlands Project which is managed by the Lower Ure Conservation Trust whose pioneering work led to an innovative strategy for minerals after use in the former North Yorkshire Minerals Local Plan.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The CUre Landscape Project will extend the scope of the 'River Ouse and Its Tributaries Opportunity Plan' portfolio projects that coincide with the project area and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust River Ure Corridor Living landscape Project.

The project will direct green infrastructure investment into the creation of a major new regional landscape asset. It will focus on existing and proposed sand and gravel extraction sites to create

a series of linked recreational and wildlife assets of city region importance; the Cotswolds Water Park, Lee Valley Regional Park and River Nene Regional Park are examples in England where a focus has brought widespread benefit to biodiversity and local communities. These sites will form the ‘pearls on the string’, linked together by an enhanced river valley landscape and rural hinterland, extending across the study area to capture sites of significance. In the wider rural landscape particular emphasis will be given to areas that provide a setting to historic sites and where restoration would aid or improve their understanding. Elsewhere, focus will be given to landscape improvements within and fringing Ripon, Boroughbridge and Knaresborough, where an enhanced landscape setting will help to attract people and businesses to the area and also strengthen local property values. Knaresborough and Boroughbridge have been identified as Rural Capitals by Yorkshire forward and the CURE Landscape Project will add value to initiatives being taken forward as part of this programme.

Public access to key sites and the river will be improved, building on the already popular Ripon Rowel Walk, Sustrans and National Byway cycle routes that run through the project area. A large scale recreational landscape asset, perhaps including new sites for quiet water based recreation that is sensitive to the landscape character of the area, will be of particular value to the thousands of residents that live within the project area and in North Yorkshires larger market towns, a number of which are within 10km of the project area. It will also

significantly improve the tourism offer, with the potential to attract many more visitors to the area, as well as cater for the needs of the local population, and reduce the need or desire to drive to destinations further afield.

The project also has the potential to test various wetland and habitat restoration techniques and monitor their effectiveness, benefitting the delivery of the Rivers for Life investment programme. By establishing a Wetland Research Outpost (The Wetland Station) linked to the Green Hub supporting project, it will also be possible to build on the work being carried out by the Ripon MOP which largely covers upland landscape by testing various sustainable drainage systems and new techniques and technologies for natural flood water management and habitat creation in a lowland context. Given the important role that waterways play, the Wetland Station will also offer additional space for school groups and other parties to benefit from a programme of learning and skills events. Particular emphasis will be given to interpreting the historic significance and ecological value of the river valleys and the local landscape. A further research/ education strand will be focussed on cultural heritage, using the opportunities afforded by mineral extraction to collate a wealth of information on landscape evolution, both for the benefit of the academic community and visitors to/residents of the project area.



HOW WILL WE DO IT?

In order to achieve its goals, the project will coordinate post extraction restoration at sand and gravel sites as part of a long term strategy to deliver landscape enhancement across the project area.

Over the next four years, the project will extend current initiatives being led by the Strategic Partnership for the River Ouse and its Tributaries and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and build on the earlier initiatives of the Swale and Ure Washlands Project. In the first instance, North Yorkshire County Council and Harrogate Borough Council, as joint lead partners, will liaise with the Wildlife Trust and Ouse Partnership and bring together local partners and other stakeholders to discuss an appropriate way forward.

North Yorkshire County Council and Harrogate Borough Council, as the responsible planning authorities for the area, are best placed to determine which approach would best inform their local development frameworks and guide future development proposals. Any programmes developed as part of the CURE Landscape Project will aim to coordinate the activities of stakeholders, including landowners, to manage positively landscape change through a wide range of funding mechanisms and incentives, including Environmental Stewardship.

WHERE WILL WE DO IT?

The geographic extent of the area of search for the CURE Landscape Project, illustrated on Figure S7, focuses on the river valleys of the Ure and its major tributaries in a lowland agricultural context where past, present and future minerals workings offer potential for project delivery. It captures a significant portion of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Ure Living landscape Project, albeit extending beyond the main river valleys to include some of the area's most significant access, cultural and biodiversity assets located in the wider countryside. Further research will be commissioned to identify project areas based on a more in-depth understanding of the conditions that may affect water catchment management and future minerals workings.

LCR ACTIONS

- Development of a project vision
- Joint procurement of research to inform evidence base.
- Prospectus of sites to achieve short, medium and long term projects.
- Pull together wider delivery partners and consultees.
- Identify opportunities to unlock investment and lever funding sources.



LEAD PARTNERS

- North Yorkshire County Council and Harrogate Borough Council.

KEY PARTNERS

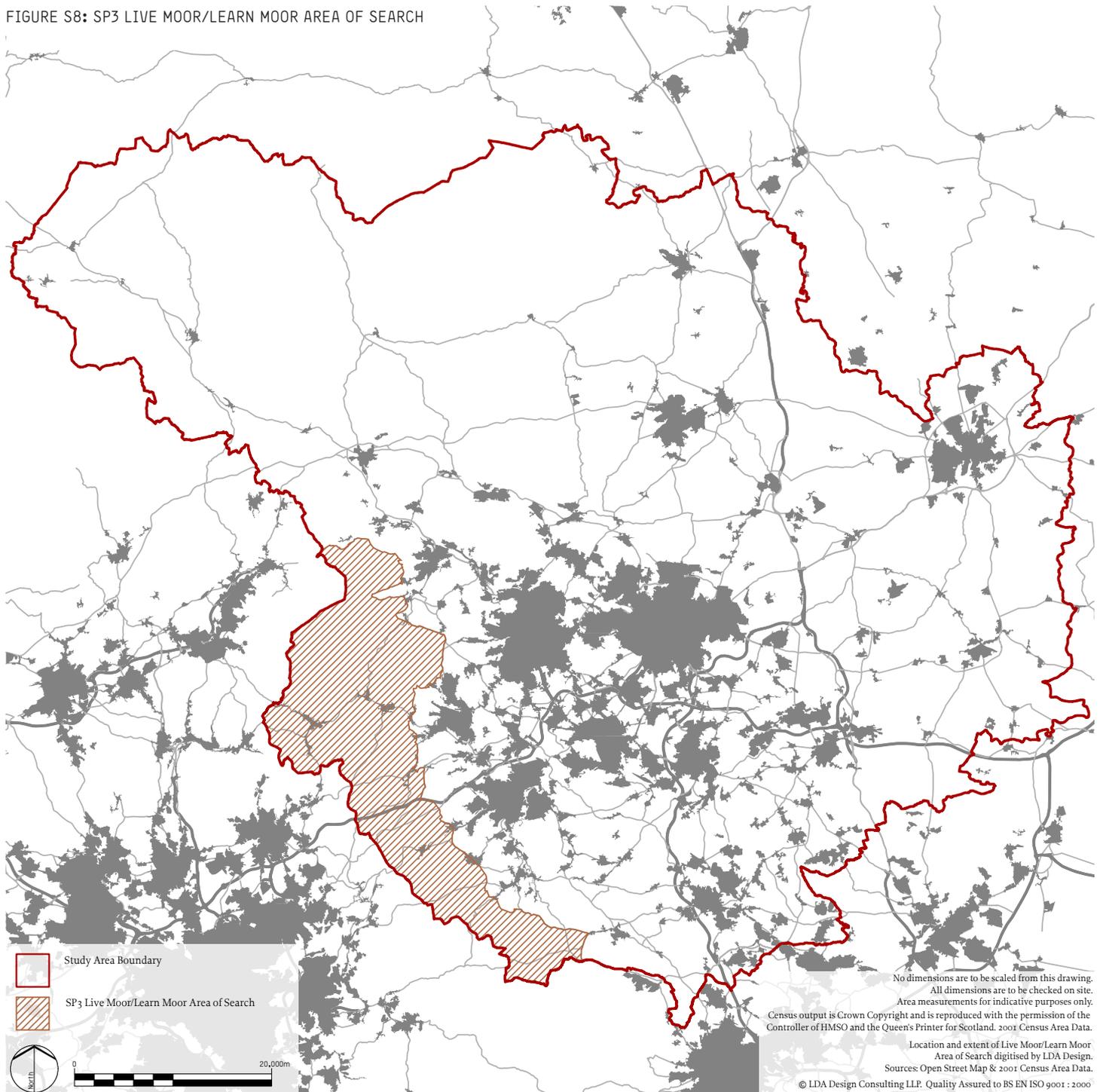
- English Heritage.
- Natural England.
- Environment Agency.
- Forestry Commission.
- Strategic Partnership for the Ouse and its Tributaries.
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

CORE OUTCOMES

The initiative will make a significant contribution to the objectives of promoting health and well-being, promoting economic development, adapting to climate change and improving biodiversity by:

- Co-ordinating landscape enhancement across the project area and enabling the successful extraction and restoration of minerals workings to create a major recreational, wildlife and landscape asset for the city region and beyond.
- Creating new businesses and jobs in the leisure and recreation sector, as well as improving the attractiveness of market towns to inward investment.
- Reducing downstream flood risk through restoring hydrological integrity and flood storage capacity of floodplains and neighbouring agricultural land.
- Providing a national research facility and living laboratory for testing new techniques and technologies for lowland river management and understanding the historic environment of the project area.

FIGURE S8: SP3 LIVE MOOR/LEARN MOOR AREA OF SEARCH



SP3 - LIVE MOOR/ LEARN MOOR

Refer to Figure S8: Strategic Project 3 Live Moor/ Learn Moor Area of Search

WHAT IS IT?

The South Pennine Moors is an area of upland landscape located between the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale AONB in the north and the Peak District National Park in the south. The area defines the western fringes of the Leeds City Region and extends into the neighbouring Manchester City Region. Large areas of upland heath and blanket bog, noted for their remote and expansive character and high biodiversity value are of strategic importance and offer enormous potential to address a wide range of green infrastructure objectives, notably carbon capture and upper river catchment management, which will be of direct benefit to residents and businesses in the adjacent conurbations of West Yorkshire, Manchester and Central/East Lancashire.

In recognition of the significance of the South Pennines in delivering a range of physical, social and cultural services the area has been awarded pilot status by Natural England in order to identify the key services, quantify the public benefits and explore possible future payment mechanisms.

The South Pennine Moors Project is being successfully led by Pennine Prospects (the Southern Pennines Regeneration Company), a not-for-profit company established to deliver the key priorities of the Integrated Management Strategy and

Conservation Action Programme (IMSACAP) and Heritage Strategy that had been drawn up for the self declared South Pennines Heritage Area.

Current work includes the Watershed Landscape Project; a suite of projects that will deliver landscape restoration, improvements to access, interpretation and a range of community engagement and training initiatives. The MoorLIFE project is due to begin in April 2010 and will see £2m being spent on peat restoration and associated works which will have benefits in a number of areas, notably in carbon storage, flood risk management, water quality improvements and the enhancement of biodiversity. The project focuses on the Dark Peak and South Pennines Rishworth and Turley Holes Moor. However, the rest of the South Pennines will benefit from similar works funded by High Level Stewardship grants (RDPE Axis 2) under the management of the Yorkshire Peat Partnership (YPP).

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The Live Moor/Learn Moor project will extend the scope of the South Pennine Moors Project by directing green infrastructure investment into a new large scale landscape restoration scheme that offers multiple green infrastructure benefits. Upper river catchment water management and carbon sequestration and storage through re-seeding peat will be a particular focus for the project. Project design will place significant emphasis on restoring unique moorland habitats and enhancing the legibility and interpretation of historic features in the landscape.



The project has the potential to test various restoration techniques and monitor their effectiveness, benefiting the delivery of the Carbon Capture investment programme. We will investigate the possibility of a research outpost linked to the Green Hub Project, offering additional space for school groups and other parties to benefit from a programme of learning and skills events. In addition to being a living laboratory, we will seek to deliver opportunities for all ages and abilities to experience the upland moors such as a network of visitor centres and information points comprising existing and new locations.

Use of public transport will be encouraged, and it may be possible to establish a dedicated Moor Shuttle servicing the main towns of the Leeds City Region. Open access across the project area will be possible, but a dedicated trail will be designed to access key points on the site. This will provide access to all, regardless of age and mobility. Establishing a ‘honey-pot’ site of this nature will help limit damage to other sites where access is more difficult to control.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

The geographic extent of the area of search for the Live Moor/Learn Moor Project, illustrated on Figure S8, focuses on uplands of the South Pennine Moors. It captures a significant portion of the moorland habitats designated for their wildlife value and the self declared South Pennines Heritage Area. Further research will be commissioned to identify sub-project areas based on a more in-depth understanding of the conditions that may affect water catchment management and peat restoration. The project will build on and extend current initiatives operating in the South Pennines being led by Pennine Prospects and Yorkshire Peat Partnership. In the first instance, Pennine Prospects will bring together local partners to determine the full scope and potential for the project, identify appropriate sites and develop the business plan.



IMAGE COURTESY OF PENNINE PROSPECTS

LCR ACTIONS

- Joint procurement of research to inform evidence base
- Prospectus of sites to achieve short, medium and long term projects
- Pull together wider delivery partners and consultees
- Identify opportunities to unlock investment and lever funding sources

LEAD PARTNERS

- Pennine Prospects and Yorkshire Peat partnership/Moors for the Future

KEY PARTNERS

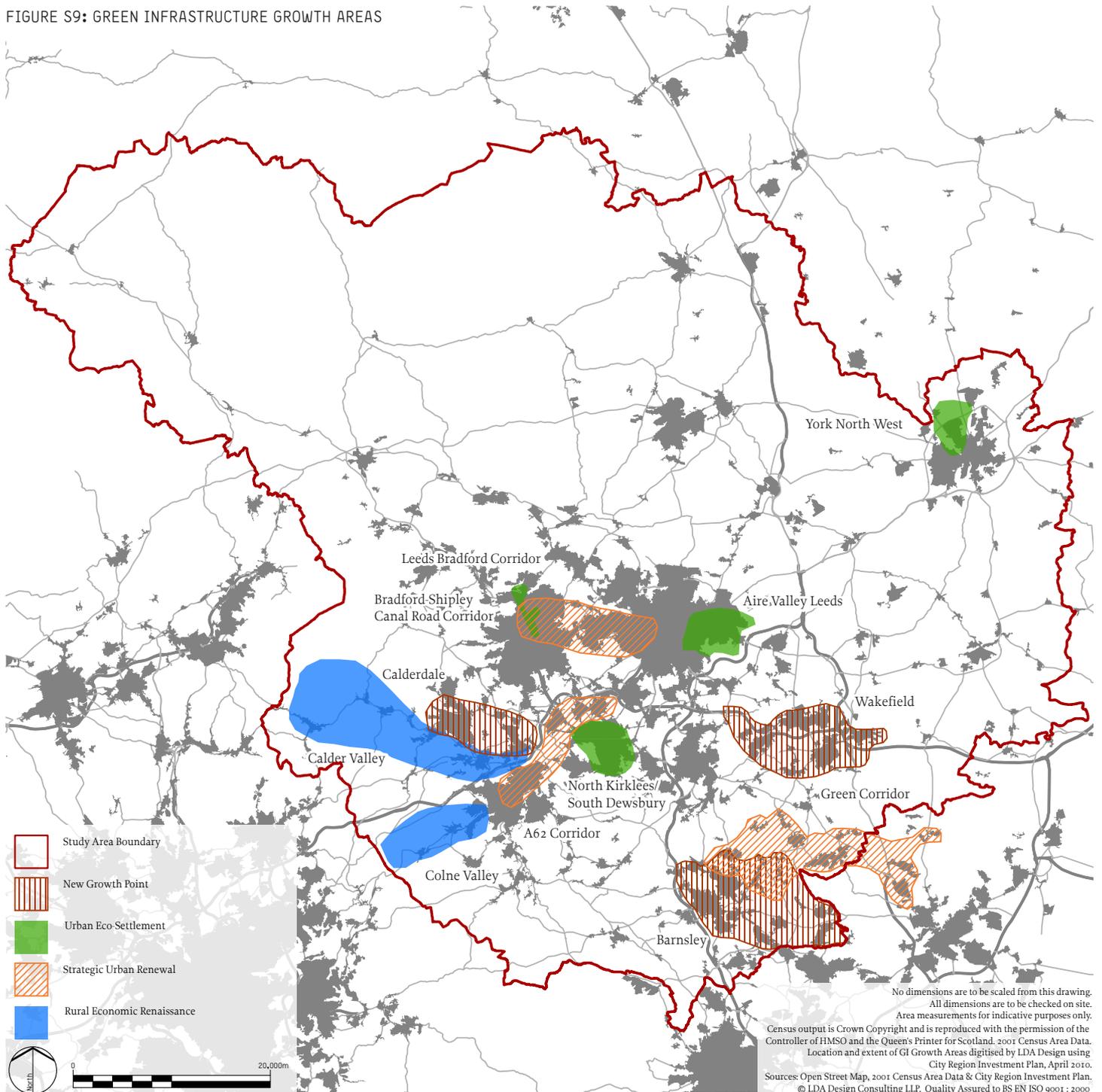
- Environment Agency
- Local academic institutions (notably Leeds University)
- Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
- English Heritage
- Natural England

CORE OUTCOMES

The initiative will make a significant contribution to the objective of mitigating and adapting to climate change by:

- Increasing the carbon storage capacity of large areas of the upland landscape.
- Reducing the frequency and severity of downstream flooding through restoring hydrological integrity through the stabilisation of bare and eroding peat.
- Providing a research facility and living laboratory for testing new techniques and technologies for carbon sequestration and storage on upland peat.
- Raising awareness of the importance of peat moors and the role the landscape has in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

FIGURE S9: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GROWTH AREAS



3.6 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GROWTH AREAS

Refer to Figure S9: Green Infrastructure Growth Areas

WHAT ARE THEY?

Green Infrastructure Growth Areas are intended to complement Investment Programmes and Strategic Projects by identifying locations within the city region where an intensity of change is planned (primarily as a result of housing and economic development) and for which there is a timely opportunity for green infrastructure to shape that change through positive masterplanning and development management.

In all the locations chosen, green infrastructure has a significant role to play in shaping the character of the growth plans and all have been identified in the City Region Housing Investment Plan as ‘spatial priorities for investment’. As such, these locations will deliver a large proportion of the planned housing and economic growth in the city region over the next 20 years and, although the precise blend of actions will differ on each site to address its opportunities and constraints, all the locations share an objective of raising the quality of green infrastructure. Further, the Investment Plan will become a key source of funding for green infrastructure as it complements growth plans.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

In each location green infrastructure planning will be undertaken to inform the masterplans and other spatial planning policy documents that will be prepared to guide development. This planning will identify the opportunities and constraints for action and play an important part in establishing the visions and objectives for each growth area.

The Green Infrastructure Growth Areas are:

NEW GROWTH POINTS

Barnsley, Wakefield and Calderdale are the three local authorities with Growth Point status in the city region and aim to deliver 20% growth in addition to RSS targets as housing led regeneration is seen as a means of increasing standards of housing and the quality of place. Most of the early deliverables sites have been identified in Barnsley and Wakefield.

The role of green infrastructure will be to strengthen the conditions and the setting in which housing will be developed. This can be a preliminary measure to attract investment as well as long term to increase the quality of life for the local community. It will help to integrate large areas of housing into the landscape setting and provide developments with a structure and legibility that will strengthen their sense of place and their relations to the wider environment. The review of existing green spaces and their functions will enable new green infrastructure assets to address gaps that new developments will create in terms of accessibility and functionality.

Barnsley Growth Point

The majority of the planned growth will take place in the east of the borough within Barnsley Town Centre, Urban Barnsley and the principal towns with investment focusing on housing growth in locations where investments in community, transport and green infrastructure will provide the prerequisite for future housing.

Barnsley is currently developing a local Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure that Green Infrastructure underpins development taken forward both through the growth point and across the area. The Investment Plan also makes provision for increasing the capacity of key green infrastructure assets in the borough by 2014.

Wakefield Growth Point

In Wakefield Growth Points will support the concept of Urban Renaissance and other regeneration activities. The city of Wakefield and the Five Towns, Castleford and Pontefract in particular, are the areas where growth in housing, jobs and services will be implemented.

Wakefield is currently developing a local Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure that Green Infrastructure underpins development taken forward both through the growth point and across the area. The Investment Plan also makes provision for increasing the capacity of key green infrastructure assets in the district by 2014.

Calderdale Growth Point

Housing growth in Calderdale will mainly take place close to Halifax with potential development sites including Hipperholme, Copley as well as Elland and Brighouse in the east of the district. Many of the projects that will be taken forward will be located on brownfield sites, some of them with declining industries still in place. The focus is mainly to create sustainable mixed use developments where sustainable housing will be located in close proximity to employment sites that will enable a balanced and sustainable lifestyle for its residents.

The project is at an early stage of its development so a Green Infrastructure Masterplan or equivalent will be timely to help translate these ambitions for green infrastructure into tangible outcomes, funding for which may come from the Investment Plan allocation.

URBAN ECO-SETTLEMENTS

Urban Eco-Settlements are planned as new eco communities within an urban setting in the city region that will create a new residential offer. They will reduce carbon emissions and move towards a low-carbon economy and help develop the region as a Centre of Excellence for eco-design and innovation; improving housing design, delivery, retrofitting and funding.

In respect of green infrastructure, the Urban Eco-Settlements are aiming to:

- Create high quality places for people to live, work and invest
- Maximise accessibility to social infrastructure and the integration of communities
- Support job creation and the creation of a sustainable economy

The landscape setting and on-site natural assets of each settlement will influence the sustainability of buildings, with orientation and shelter planting supporting the eco-friendliness of houses. Green infrastructure will help to coordinate the wider landscape setting and can support the use of local materials and to create a more attractive and sustainable setting for development. Green infrastructure planning in each location will also help co-ordinate the provision and management of new open spaces and other green infrastructure features and the Investment Plan makes provision for developing green infrastructure studies in each location by 2011 and for capital funding of early projects to 2014.

Bradford Shipley Canal Road Corridor Urban Eco-Settlement

This settlement will deliver 5,000 homes, 1,500 retro-fitted homes and create 5,900 jobs. The goal is to create a “series of vibrant and diverse new sustainable settlements ... linking the existing urban and economic centres of Bradford and Shipley”. It envisages “the landscape between the settlements will be important, and that is likely to not just include the corridor itself: uses, vegetation, access in parts” and includes ambitions for new walking and cycle routes, new open spaces, enhanced biodiversity and remediation of brownfield land.

Further masterplanning work is expected in 2010 so a Green Infrastructure Masterplan in this location will be timely in shaping the briefs for that work.

North Kirklees/South Dewsbury Urban Eco-Settlement

This settlement will deliver 4,000 homes and 2,000 retro-fitted homes. The eco-settlement will work with the natural landscape by integrating innovative water compatible homes on previously underdeveloped floodplains. There is also the opportunity to focus on water recycling, green roofs and permeable paving and to develop an integrated catchment management approach to dealing with flood risk issues by making space for water and using green infrastructure to incorporate these spaces into the design of the settlement.

Significant green infrastructure investment has already begun in the area, including enhancement of waterways, green walking routes and new parklands and further opportunities such as wetland creation on former landfill sites are being identified. Looking forwards, specific green infrastructure planning will be undertaken for the UES that will maximise the benefits the infrastructure can bring to the settlement.

York North West Urban Eco-Settlement

York Northwest (YNW) will be a significant brownfield area of regeneration within the city of York. Comprising the former British Sugar and York Central sites, YNW is anticipated to deliver 4,300 homes and 5,800 jobs over the next 20 years.

Work to date has built on open space auditing of the area, considering parks and gardens, amenity open space, natural and semi-natural open space and allotments, amongst others. Moving forward, the provision of multifunctional green infrastructure will be integral to the emerging masterplanning for York North West, and will maximise integration and synergies with existing green infrastructure network.

Aire Valley Leeds Urban Eco-Settlement

This largest settlement proposed in the city region will deliver 15,000 new homes, 7,000 retro-fitted homes and 27,000 jobs. The goal is to create a new eco-district connected to Leeds city centre to “showcase ecological living for the ecological age” and to use the new Hunslet Riverside as “trailblazer” site in the city region.

Proposals include the creation of a new park at the centre and the reinvention of urban living with family-oriented residential offer. The park will complement the existing offer and there are proposals to link this part of the city centre with

proposals for the edge of the city, with permeability, travel and links seen as important features of the proposals (the scheme will promote sustainable transport links with the Trans Pennine Trail for example).

A Green Travel Plan is planned for the development – pedestrian and cycle routes (tow path) will play an important role with green infrastructure providing the opportunity to embed them and raise the quality. Other issues that effective green infrastructure planning will address are resolving contamination and land remediation issues; managing the relationship of the scheme with adjacent industrial uses that have an adverse impact on the site; and connecting the scheme to neighbouring communities.

An Area Action Plan has been prepared for the settlement, so many of the most important decisions affecting the planning and delivery of green infrastructure have already been made. However, a Green Infrastructure Masterplan will enable the proposals to be further tested and related to the green infrastructure proposals made in this strategy.

STRATEGIC URBAN RENEWAL AREAS

The following three growth areas fall within the City Region Housing Investment Plan's theme of 'strategic urban renewal'. The focus of this theme is "to facilitate cross-boundary collaboration to accelerate the regeneration ... across the city region". The Plan recognises the importance of aligning investment in transport, worklessness, skills and green infrastructure to stimulate economic development, improve connectivity and enhance the environment.

Leeds Bradford Corridor

The Leeds Bradford Corridor covers a nine-mile area joining Bradford and Leeds city centres. The project aims to revitalise the neighbourhoods, employment opportunities, environment and transport links in the corridor, connecting people living there to the growing economies in the two cities.

The Corridor's objectives include "improving the appearance of the area and the quality of life in neighbourhoods and gateways" and "enhancing the value of green space, making it easier for people to use".

The projects within its programme include a series of redevelopment sites delivering many hundreds of new and refurbished homes. Each site will offer the opportunity to invest in improving the quality of the local environment and accessibility to complement other regeneration initiatives. A Green Infrastructure Masterplan in this corridor will enable these proposals to be co-ordinated and phased alongside the renewal works and the Investment Plan makes provision for masterplanning work by 2011 and for improvements to the West Leeds Country Park, the Airedale Greenway project and local neighbourhoods in East Bradford for example.

The Green Corridor (Barnsley and Wakefield)

The Green Corridor is a joint cross boundary initiative between the local authorities of Wakefield, Barnsley and Doncaster, in the area around the East Coast rail line. The area shares a coalfield heritage in a green and rural environment and although it is a rural area, it has many of the challenges associated with urban areas: high levels of deprivation, poor quality housing and environments and an underperforming economy

A strategic framework and spatial plan was developed by the cross boundary partnership in 2005 and this has provided the broad principles to regenerate the area. Although it is housing led regeneration project, the partnership has sought to influence wider local and regional partnerships to deliver the overall agenda. The strategy is currently being reviewed and an action plan is being developed for the completion of the 10 year programme.

Environmental improvements have been integral to the initiative. This has been both in areas that have been improved or remodelled and in clearance areas where new housing is being developed. New housing is being provided in the Barnsley and Wakefield areas of the Green Corridor with the Barnsley part being included in Barnsley's Growth Point.

A green infrastructure master plan in this area, together with master planning in the growth points and the green infrastructure strategies being

produced by Barnsley and Wakefield will provide a coherent plan to coordinate and promote future environmental improvements. Proposals for investment in green infrastructure as part of this action plan are included in the Investment Plan.

Kirklees A62 Corridor

This project is planning a series of interventions aimed at exploiting the geographical position of North Kirklees to create a new residential and economic development proposition in the city region. It includes the settlements of Batley, Birstall, Birkenshaw, Dewsbury, and Mirfield as key areas of growth.

Other areas of development include Huddersfield Gateway and the Leeds Road corridor, including the Kirklees Strategic Employment Zone, where more than 90 ha of brownfield land will become available for a variety of development in the next ten years. Proposals are accommodating economic growth while at the same time addressing the visual amenity of the area as well as transport issues and the environmental quality (including land reclamation, transport gateway enhancements, walking/cycling routes).

Masterplanning of various sites in the corridor will be commissioned shortly, funded by the Investment Plan. There is therefore a timely opportunity for a Green Infrastructure Masterplan to shape the briefs for those subsequent masterplans and emphasise from the outset the green infrastructure opportunities.

Rural Economic Renaissance Areas

The Investment Plan also contains a further spatial priority for investment with the intention of “supporting rural economic renaissance”. Here, the aim is to boost the principal towns as economic drivers by “building on assets and opportunities, including green infrastructure”.

Colne and Calder Valleys

There is limited scope for development due to the geography and rural nature of valleys so the focus of this project is on making better use of the existing urban fabric and housing stock. Its area includes Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and Sowerby Bridge, Marsden and Slaithwaite.

A key component of the project will be capitalising on outstanding landscape, town centres and waterways in the area. Green spaces are being restructured into individual amenity spaces and community gardens for the production of food and community space. A Green Infrastructure Masterplan or equivalent will enable these aims to be translated into a phased programme of actions alongside the other renaissance interventions.

HOW WE WILL DO IT?

The four Urban Eco-Settlements in particular are intended to make a step change in the way that low carbon settlements are planned and delivered in the city region in future. This challenge is to be met by integrating green infrastructure into the visioning of major new development schemes, requiring a thorough understanding of the way in which the multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure can facilitate and add value to the development.

Each Growth Area is currently at a different stage in the planning process. For some, the process of promoting development is well advanced, masterplanning has been undertaken and proposals have been submitted to secure significant public funding (e.g. Aire Valley Leeds UES). In most other cases, either the precise locations of housing growth have not yet been determined or masterplanning is at a relatively early stage.

Some will also include all or parts of the strategic projects and/or investment programmes set out in this strategy. Identifying these initiatives in the Growth Areas in greater detail at the local level will enable the local planning authorities to ensure they are given proper consideration in future development proposals.

Green infrastructure planning will therefore be undertaken for each Growth Area to influence the design process by:

- establishing aims and objectives for how green infrastructure should form part of the future development proposition;
- locating and describing all known existing green infrastructure features on site(s), including proposals for strategic green infrastructure projects and programmes contained in this strategy;
- identifying green infrastructure features within the site (s) and their context, using the district green infrastructure strategy where available;
- explaining how green infrastructure assets should relate to other infrastructures, e.g. SUDS and renewable energy;
- proposing and locating key green infrastructure functions on site or offsite, using the opportunity to co-ordinate actions across a range of sites to ensure all sites benefit;
- identifying areas of green infrastructure which should be created or enhanced and areas which may be lost and why; and
- set out the criteria of protection that may be afforded to each typology of green infrastructure

The same general green infrastructure planning principles will also apply in those more remote locations in the city region where the absolute scale of growth planned is smaller but the local impact will still be significant and green infrastructure offers the opportunity to manage those impacts (e.g. the urban extensions at Skipton, Harrogate and Selby).

LCR ACTIONS

- Facilitating joint working across LCR local authorities in the planning and design of Growth Areas

KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- Leeds City Region local authorities and partnerships.
- HCA.
- Developers and landowners.

CORE OUTCOMES

The initiative will make a significant contribution to the objective of promoting sustainable growth and economic development in the city region by:

- Raising the awareness of developers, landowners and investors of the opportunities for development and of the potential of green infrastructure to shape development proposals.
- Creating new publically accessible open spaces and recreational facilities and improving the quality and functionality of existing assets.
- Creating opportunities to contribute to local biodiversity gain.
- Reducing flood risk.
- Promoting walking and cycling as a preferable mode of transport.



3.7 SUPPORTING PROJECTS

The strategy has identified a series of additional investment opportunities that, although not physical green infrastructure actions in their own right, will make a significant contribution to its vision and meeting its objectives. The three supporting projects each have a distinctive role to play in maximising the economic, social and environmental value of investments in the city region.

GREEN HUB

WHAT IS IT?

Successful city region economies in the future will have exploited the demand for green infrastructure solutions to shape business innovation, technology development and skills growth. The Regional Economic Strategy⁶¹ recognises that the city region has some potential comparative strengths in its planned scale of development and in its academic sector to realise this potential sooner than its competitor economies.

There are a number of academic institutions in the city region with specialisms in green technology development and commercialisation. They include the University of Leeds, Science City York, Leeds Metropolitan University, the

University of Bradford/Bradford College and Barnsley College of Sustainable Construction. In addition, CO₂Sense Yorkshire delivers a green business support organisation (GBSO) which provides support and networking opportunities for consultants and services providers across the region.

However, translating this expertise and potential into real competitive advantage presents a challenge. Securing an edge in this field will require a more effective commercialisation of the research and development in this area, which in turn, will require a more effective connection network between the universities with the expertise in this area, and the businesses developing solutions to market demand in this area.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

It is proposed to formalise and expand the existing network of leading city region universities to include businesses and to create a Leeds City Region Green Hub with the aim of identifying specific opportunities arising out of this strategy to further the commercialisation of research and development in this field.

The Hub will begin by regularly bringing together all those in the city region green technology sector – entrepreneurs, academics, professionals, service providers – to understand the implications of increasing green infrastructure actions in the city region. Such actions may include bio-remediation, urban street tree planting, green building technologies, biomass/woodfuel production and sustainable drainage systems.

All these actions may require supply chain development in the city region and the provision of specialist skills if the city region is to benefit directly from this investment. The Green Hub will also seek to work closely with landowners and developers to provide effective green infrastructure technology solutions on problematic brownfield sites for example.

As the network develops, it may benefit from creating new green technology facilities to provide specialist accommodation for green business incubation, technology transfer and skills development and to provide a home of the network and knowledge base. This accommodation may either be in a single location in the city region or aligned with existing facilities at institutions across the city region. The network may also want to identify specific green infrastructure projects to develop green technology research.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

The project requires the preparation of an action plan, which will be developed by the University of Leeds on behalf of the network of partner institutions, under the guidance of the city region's Economic Drivers & Innovation Panel in 2010. The action plan will be included in the wider Leeds City Region Innovation Prospectus to be published in 2010 and will set out the detailed objectives of the new network and its modus operandi.

The project requires further exploration as to the potential for this activity, which will be overseen by the city region's Economic Drivers & Innovation Panel. Should the Green Hub be taken forward, an action plan will be prepared and facilitated through the panel's innovation workstream, in collaboration with partner institutions and authorities.

KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

The University of Leeds will lead the development of this programme, in partnership with:

- The Leeds City Region local authorities.
- CO₂Sense Yorkshire.
- Science City York.
- Leeds Metropolitan University.
- Bradford University.
- Barnsley College of Sustainable Construction and Centre for Renewable Energy.

CORE OUTCOMES

The initiative will make a significant contribution to the objective of promoting sustainable growth and economic development in the city region by:

- Facilitating the commercialisation of green technology research to create new businesses and jobs.
- Meeting the increasing demand for green infrastructure skills in the city region through effective skills programmes.
- Supporting the start-up and growth of new local green technology businesses and organisations to win future green infrastructure project contracts.

LEEDS CITY REGION ECO-SKILLS AUDIT

WHAT IS IT?

There is national recognition of a decline in the numbers of people entering professions necessary to deliver the initiatives in this Strategy, such as horticulture, land design, land remediation, forestry and green infrastructure management⁶². Further investment in a broad range of green sector skills, such as green building technologies and low carbon energy is also becoming a significant national priority⁶³.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

The potential for a new Eco-Skills Programme will be investigated as part of the ongoing development of the City Region's Employment and Skills Plan, which will seek to ensure that skills provision meets demand. Scoping work will evaluate skills provision in the green technology sector in the city region to identify where there are likely to be skills shortages in areas such as landscape design and sustainable construction and consider whether a city region coordinated approach to such skills provision could offer added value and benefits.

This initiative will complement the Green Hub initiative, which will focus on aligning agencies in the green technology sector in the city region to meet the demand for new skills generated by increasing green infrastructure action in the city region.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

Initial scoping work for the potential of an Eco-Skills programme will be undertaken as part of the development of the City Region Employment & Skills Plan⁶⁴, which will articulate skills needs for this sector amongst others in the city region. Initially, the city region will also work with the Yorkshire Cities policy network on a forthcoming research project that will identify the current strength of the low carbon economy and the numbers of jobs in ‘green’ industries and occupations, as well as assessing skills requirements up to 2020.

KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

The Leeds City Region Employment & Skills Board will lead this project, working with:

- C.A.B.E.
- HCA Skills & Knowledge.

CORE OUTCOMES

The initiative will make a significant contribution to the objective of promoting sustainable growth and economic development in the city region by meeting the increasing demand for green infrastructure skills in the city region through effective skills programmes.

WATER CYCLE STUDY (WCS)

WHAT IS IT?

This study will consider the entire water cycle – supply, quality, wastewater and flooding, in light of the significant growth planned for the city region. Its objective will be to identify where sustainable water infrastructure is required in order to protect this important asset.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy has been developed to capitalise on the opportunities that green infrastructure can bring to improving our watercourses, both in terms of water quality and biodiversity gain. The WCS will build on the proposals in this strategy to maximise the benefits of green infrastructure to this agenda.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

Using the Environment Agency's guidance on water cycle studies, we will seek to find innovative and sustainable ways to protect our water courses⁶⁵. Wherever possible, we will look to use multi-functional green infrastructure solutions to mitigate against any potential pressure points rather than single use grey infrastructure interventions.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

The Leeds City Region, together with other regional partners, is currently undertaking a high level water cycle scoping study that will identify key pressure areas that require more detailed attention. Subsequent studies and strategies will commence in 2010 on completion of this regional study.

KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- The Leeds City Region local authorities.
- Environment Agency.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE	LOCAL AUTHORITY(S)	KEY PARTNERS
IP1 Urban Green Adaptation	All LCR LAs	Acad, NE, FC, YWT, EA, CABE
IP2 Greening our Economic Potential	All LCR LAs	GHY, Met, NE, HA, NR
IP3 Carbon Capture	All LCR LAs	FC, PP, YPP, Acad
IP4 Woodfuel	All LCR LAs	FC, CO ₂ , WRF, YR, SYF
IP5 Rivers for Life	All LCR LAs	FC, EA, NE, WRF, YWT, RSPB
SP1 Fresh Aire	Br, C, Cr, K, L, W, S, NY	NE, FC, EA, BW, YWT
SP2 CUre Landscape Project	NY, H	EH, NE, EA, FC, OP, YWT
SP3 Live Moor/Learn Moor	Cr, Br, C, K, Ba, NY	PP, YPP, MF, EA, Acad, YWT, EH, NE
Barnsley GP	Ba	HCA, Dev
Wakefield GP	W	HCA, Dev
Calderdale GP	C	HCA, Dev
Bradford Shipley Canal UES	Br	HCA, Dev
North Kirklees/South Dewsbury UES	K	HCA, Dev
York North West UES	Y	HCA, Dev
Aire Valley Leeds UES	L	HCA, Dev
Leeds-Bradford Corridor SURA	L, Br	HCA, Dev
Green Corridor SURA	Ba, W	HCA, Dev
Kirklees A62 Corridor SURA	K	HCA, Dev
Colne & Calder Valleys RERA	C, K	HCA, Dev
Green Hub	All LCR LAs	LU, CO ₂ , SCY, LMU, BU, BC
LCR Eco-Skills Audit	All LCR LAs	ESB, CABE, HCA
Water Cycle Study	All LCR LAs	EA

START	NATURAL ENGLAND REGIONAL GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDORS AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AREAS
2014	
2014	
2011	
2010	
2014	
2014	R1 – Aire, R2 – Calder, Southern Pennine Uplands
2010	R16 – Ure, R8 – Nidd, Nidderdale AONB
2013	R1 – Aire, R2 – Calder, R6 – Don, South Pennine Uplands, Peak District National Park
2011	R4 - Dearne
2011	R1 – Aire, R2 – Calder
2011	R2 - Calder
2011	R1 - Aire
2011	R2 - Calder
2011	R9 - Ouse
2011	R1 - Aire
2011	R1 - Aire
2011	R4 - Dearne
2011	R2 - Calder
2011	R2 – Calder, South Pennine Uplands
2010	
2011	
2010	



KEY TO TABLE:

LCR LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

Ba - Barnsley

Br - Bradford

C - Calderdale

Cr - Craven

H - Harrogate

K - Kirklees

L - Leeds

S - Selby

W - Wakefield

Y - York

NY – North Yorkshire

KEY PARTNERS:

Acad - Academic institutions

BC – Barnsley College of Sustainable Construction
and Centre for Renewable Energy

BU – Bradford University

BW – British Waterways

CABE - Commission for the Built Environment

CO₂ – CO₂Sense Yorkshire

Dev - Developers/landowners

EA - Environment Agency

EH – English Heritage

ESB – Leeds City Region Employment and Skills
Board

FC - Forestry Commission

GHY - Groundwork Yorkshire & the Humber

HA – Highways Agency

HCA - Homes & Communities Agency

LCR – Leeds City Region

LMU – Leeds Metropolitan University

LU - Leeds University

Met – Metro

MF – Moors for the Future

NE - Natural England

NR – Network Rail

OP – Strategic Partnership for the Ouse and its
Tributaries

PP – Pennine Prospects

PTE - Passenger Transport Executives

SCY – Science City York

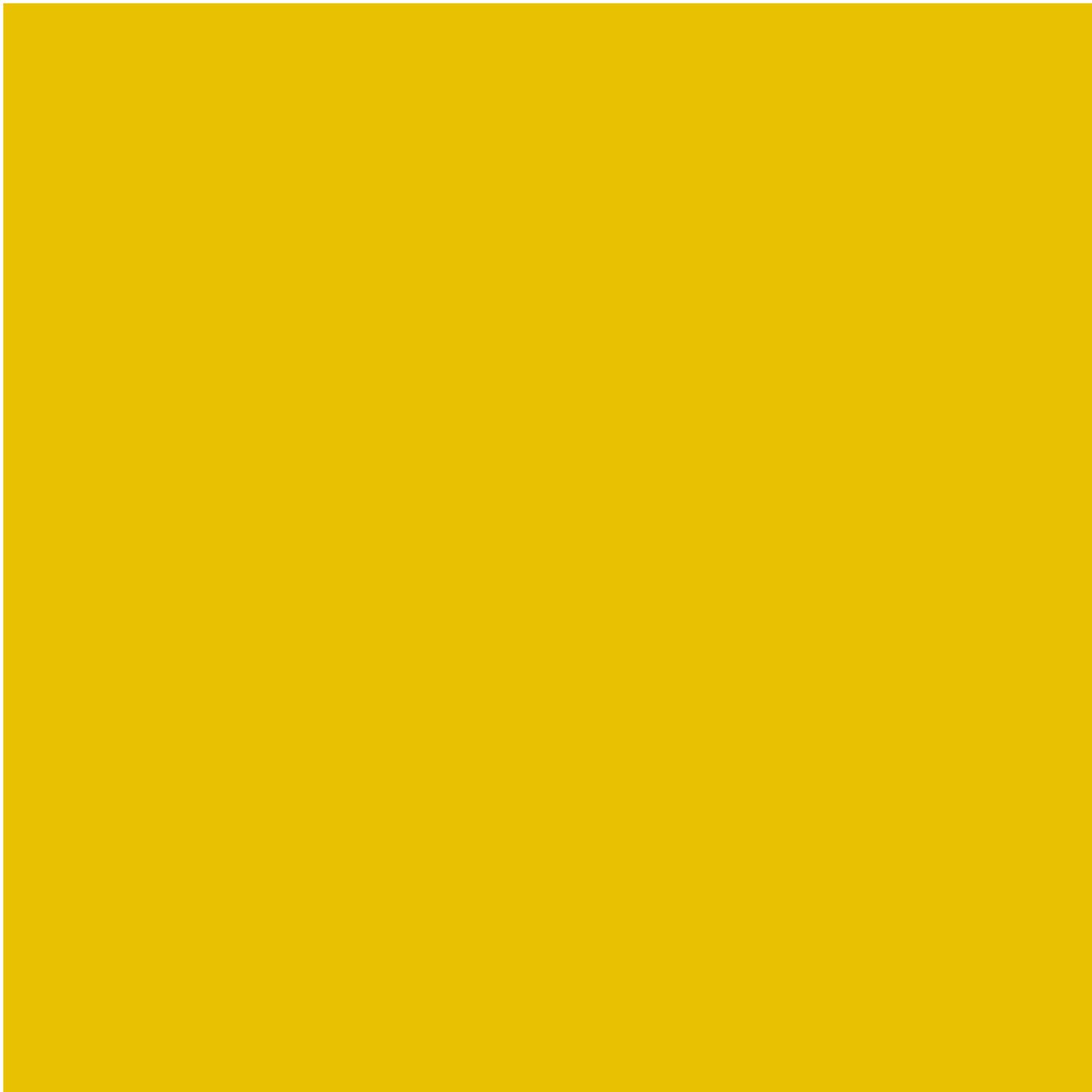
SYF - South Yorkshire Forests

WRF - White Rose Forest partnership

YPP - Yorkshire Peat Partnership

Yr - Yorwoods

YWT - Yorkshire Wildlife Trust



SECTION 4.0
DELIVERING THE STRATEGY



4.1 LEADERSHIP

Much of the strategy will be delivered through the local authority development process, local green infrastructure strategies and through the existing local partnership processes that are at work across the city region. The strategy will therefore be followed by a Delivery Plan that will support strong cross boundary political leadership, sustained investment, robust partnership working and the local planning system.

The success of the strategy depends on local partnerships to deliver green infrastructure action on the ground. Given the opportunities to achieve multi-functional green infrastructure benefits, it is likely most local actions will need to bring together a range of local agencies into partnerships to plan and design schemes; to win resources; to deliver the project; and then to secure its ongoing management.

There are many other partnerships planning and delivering green infrastructure at the regional, sub-regional and local levels in the city region with either a wide scope, such as the White Rose Forest partnership, or narrow focus such as Incredible Edible, a local community food project in Calderdale.

The White Rose Forest partnership is a sub-regional model of successful green infrastructure partnership working. It has established a strong track record in the West Yorkshire local authorities' area by working closely with regional and local agencies with a focus on delivering quality green infrastructure. It is currently working with other local authorities in the city region with a view to extending its geographical scope to cover the whole city region.

Working through existing partnerships, agencies and structures, the Leeds City Region Leaders Board will oversee and guide the successful implementation of the Strategy and the forthcoming Delivery Plan. At the city region level, we will add value to ongoing work by:

- leading communications, lobbying and advocacy of the importance of green infrastructure, and the delivery of the green infrastructure Strategy, across the city region
- commissioning city region wide prospectuses for Strategic Initiatives, where efficiency gains can be realised;

- coordinating collaborative working and pooling of resources through establishing a Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Design Network consisting of specialist officers from local authorities and agencies to support development management teams across the Leeds City Region on masterplans and planning applications where green infrastructure will play a significant role;
- coordinating high level partnership working between the local authorities, agencies and other sectors, who are current parties to the Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- establishing high-level agreements with major land owners and employers;
- integrating the strategic initiatives into existing city region programmes and examine the scope to deliver more and higher quality green infrastructure in current and emerging local regeneration, conservation and economic development programmes and housing investment plans and programmes;
- encouraging partners to make the most of opportunities to encourage delivery of green infrastructure in local planning, forward planning and development management work;
- leading the research and development of the proposed green infrastructure investment funds;
- developing a ‘Total Capital’ approach to green infrastructure investment;
- supporting the preparation of joint city region-scale bids for funding on strategic projects;
- promoting investment in green infrastructure nationally; and
- monitoring performance of the strategy and implementing future reviews.

4.2 INVESTMENT

Investing in green infrastructure in the city region has traditionally been seen as a public sector activity. The local authorities have built and managed parks and open spaces for more than a century. The Environment Agency and British Waterways own and manage significant lengths of waterways and adjoining land. The Forestry Commission owns and manages thousands of hectares of woodland. And Natural England invests in supporting nature conservation.

Public funding has been supplemented in more recent years by funding secured through the development of land using planning obligations (i.e. Section 106 Agreements). This has commonly secured on-site provision of public open space and payments to local planning authorities for the creation and management of green infrastructure off site. Where development has been at a relatively high level in the city region, this source of funding has made a significant contribution to the overall investment in green infrastructure.

Whilst the planning system will continue to support investment in green infrastructure over the coming years, our level of ambition for green infrastructure across the city region,

and the tightening of public funding, requires additional funding approaches be developed. We will therefore diversify our investment funds used for green infrastructure capital and revenue expenditure, in order to ensure that sufficient investment is available without an over-reliance on any one funding source.

Where such action will add value, the strategy will be financed by the preparation of city region-wide funding bids for green infrastructure investment. The White Rose Forest partnership, for example, has been very successful in bringing local partners together to promote investment opportunities, most recently resulting in the £2m green infrastructure fund sourced from Yorkshire Forward.

The city region green infrastructure investment model therefore has three key features:

- consolidating and aligning existing public funding;
- securing private sector funding through the planning system; and
- generating new public and private sector funding.

Four new investment initiatives have been identified in the process of developing the strategy. Each has the potential to become an important future source of investment but all four will require further feasibility work to determine their precise structure:

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE TOTAL CAPITAL

Public sector funds will likely continue to be the largest source of funding for investment in the Leeds City Region. The strategy will depend on the public sector maximising the value of its green infrastructure spending. The current public sector spending – local authorities and the statutory agencies, as well as others like the NHS – will total many millions of pounds. Much of this spend will be regarded as discretionary and therefore more vulnerable to tighter public sector budgets.

The city region is in a strong position to investigate how funding in green infrastructure can be used to best effect when planning other capital projects. Working through the Total Capital programme we will identify:

- What green infrastructure asset management services are operated now and how well do they work?
- How effective are those services on maximising the multi-functional value of green infrastructure assets?

- What opportunities exist to share green infrastructure assessment management responsibilities with other public bodies in the locality?
- What are the barriers and issues that prevent this happening now?
- How can those barriers and issues be addressed?
- How can the most be made of the total public sector spend in these areas?

ADVANCE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

This new Fund will be set up in the city region with the objective of investing in green infrastructure actions in the Green Infrastructure Growth Areas identified in the strategy and to leverage public and other funds into these projects from national, regional and local sources.

The fund will invest in major green infrastructure actions in advance of development in the Growth Areas where there is a reasonable prospect of that investment being recouped from subsequent development schemes via S106 agreements. Capital receipts from successful investments will be re-invested in other qualifying development schemes.

It will seek to attract national and city region loan funds and may secure private debt finance in the longer term once the programme is established with a track record of delivering future capital receipts from successful schemes.

There are emerging proposals of a similar intent in the city region, such as proposals for Accelerated Development Zone (ADZ) funding. The ADZ is seeking to use a 'tax increment financing' model to secure future revenues for a specified area. At present, the ADZ proposal is intended to cover the Aire Valley in Leeds⁶⁶.

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Consultation with businesses on the Leeds City Region Innovation Prospectus and Investment Plan has identified the passion and commitment of the private sector on supporting a high quality environment and moving to a low carbon future.

In order to capture this commitment alongside public sector spend, it is proposed that a city region-wide fund be established to attract payments from corporate organisations in the private, sector and third sectors to invest in the Investment Programmes. In the long term, this fund may become a city region carbon offsetting scheme that meets national standards for such schemes. In the meantime, payments will be sought on a voluntary basis to invest in accredited green infrastructure projects within the Investment Programmes.

It is anticipated that corporate organisations will be able to choose either an Investment Programme or a specific green infrastructure project for their investment. The fund will have a joint city region and local brand identity to enable corporates to be seen to invest in their local district if desired.



The fund is, in effect, an extension to a proposal currently being developed in the region (e.g. the CREDIT carbon reduction and investment technique project⁶⁷) to enable corporates to fund carbon storage projects on a voluntary basis. The White Rose Forest partnership is developing an online donation and sponsorship facility, run by its accountable body, Kirklees Council, to attract funds from corporate organisations and households across the area for new woodland creation schemes that deliver woodfuel, carbon storage and biodiversity benefits in key, strategically significant, locations.

HABITAT BANK

It is proposed that a Habitat Bank is established to invest in green infrastructure in the city region. Focusing on mitigating for the unavoidable physical loss of biodiversity assets as a result of development the Habitat Bank creates incentives for mitigation schemes in the locality of the loss to replace the equivalent quantum and type of lost habitat.

In many cases abroad, a credit system is used to enable the cost of delivering the mitigation scheme to be met from credits paid for by those requiring the mitigation as a condition of planning consent⁶⁸. The types of mitigation funded through such credit mechanisms match many of those types of green infrastructure investment anticipated in this strategy.

Although some of the features of the international exemplars, notably in the USA and Australia, cannot yet be replicated in the UK, some of the key features of the concept may be possible to adapt into a UK context. The concept is gaining ground in the UK (also known as ‘biodiversity offsetting’ and ‘conservation credits’) and it is likely that it will become a viable mechanism to fund green infrastructure within the next decade.

Assuming the key feature of the concept can be replicated within UK legal and financial regulations, the city region may be of sufficient geographical scale to sustain such a funding mechanism. The city region local authorities will therefore seek to collaborate with other local partners and central government to develop the Habitat Bank.



4.3 PLANNING

The promotion and management of development through the local planning system – the respective Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) – will play an important role in delivering our green infrastructure proposals on the ground. Local planning policy needs to support the case for green infrastructure and local development management teams will ensure that this policy will be implemented effectively.

POLICY

As place shapers, Leeds City Region Local Authorities are already working towards robust and aspirational green infrastructure policies within their Local Development Frameworks (LDF). The Frameworks are taking ownership of the Regional Spatial Strategy (and policy YH8 in particular) with their Core Strategies and other Development Plan Documents (DPD), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and other planning policy statements and include policies covering the protection, improvement, creation, connection, management and funding of green infrastructure assets.

The Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy will complement local policy and strategy development by demonstrating the context of green infrastructure interventions to the wider city region economy. In addition, it provides the basis for enhanced cross boundary working that is required to maximise the benefits of green infrastructure investments.

Naturally, although each Local Authority shares priorities at the City Region level, local policies will also respond directly to the needs of their local communities and the prevailing economic, social and environmental factors of place. As an example, the existence of local habitat sites in specific areas will be need to be considered at an area and site level.

Through the LDF process and complementary strategies, the Local Planning Authorities in the Leeds City Region will seek to ensure that green infrastructure policy is prominent and consistent with other local policy, e.g. Green Belt, open spaces, leisure/recreation, climate change, economic development, housing supply.

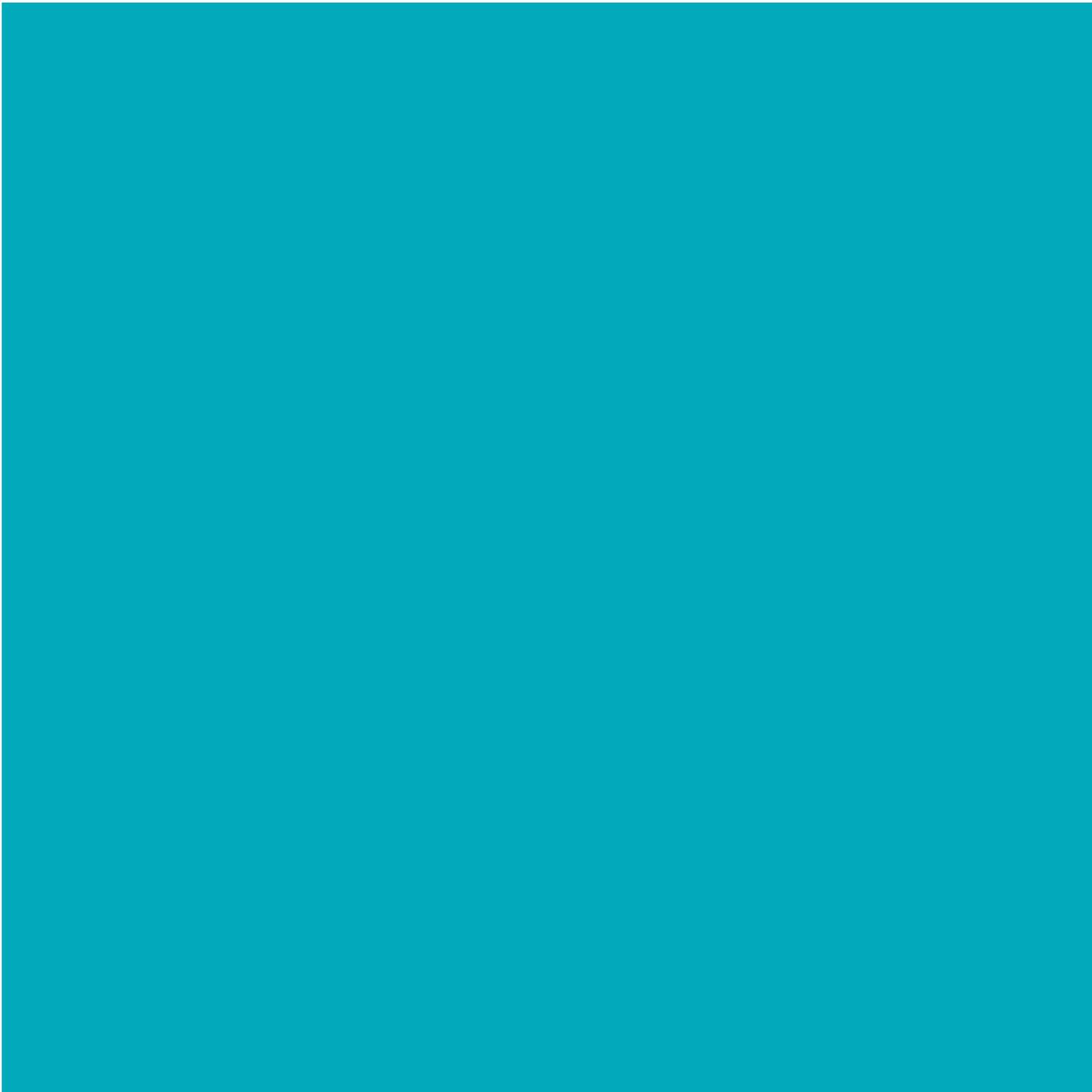


DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

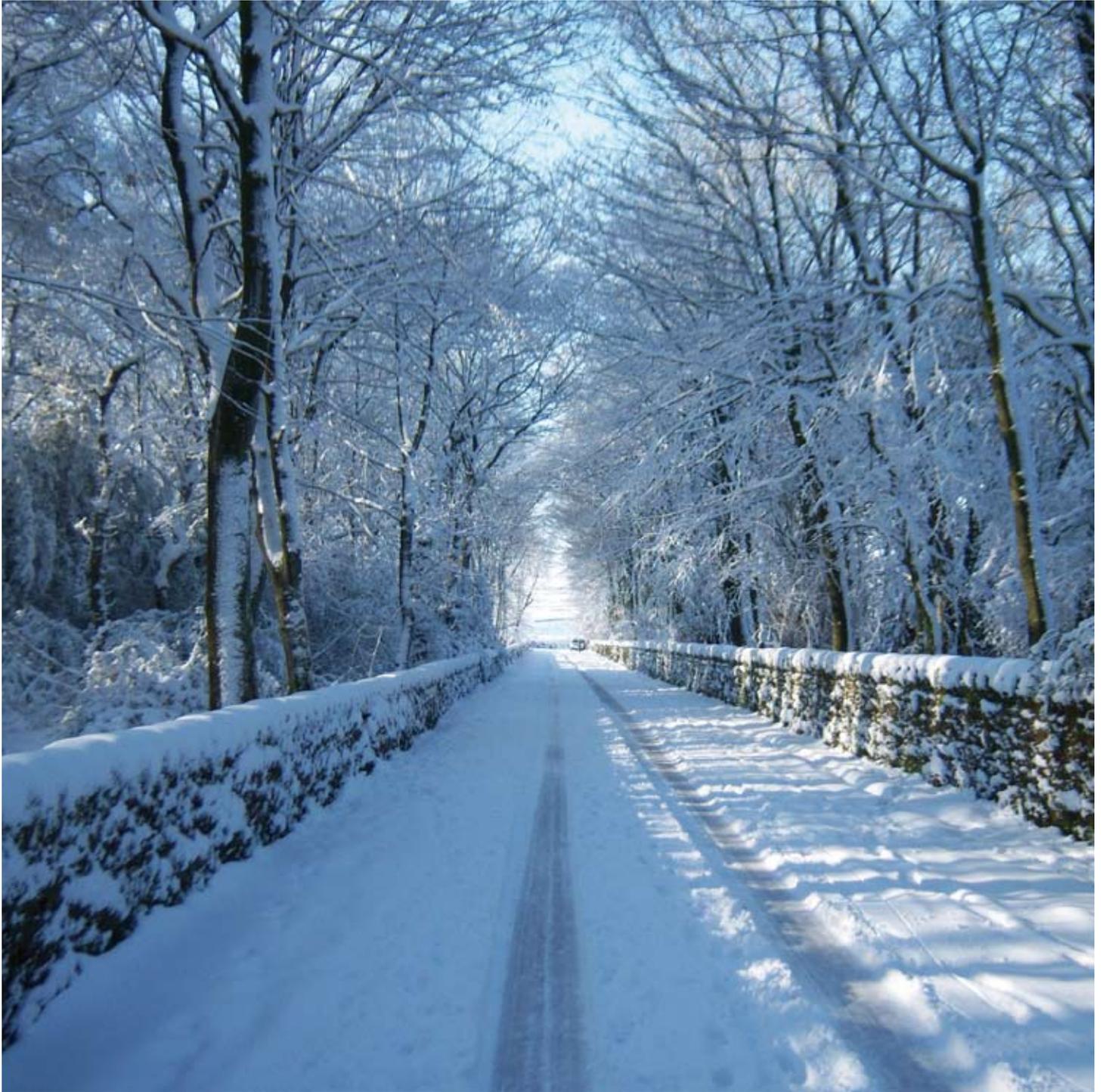
The Draft Planning Policy Statement on Development Management⁶⁹ identifies a number of elements as central to successful delivery of policy at the local level. Getting these elements right will have a major impact on the success of green infrastructure policy in the planning system. The following actions will help deliver success:

- Adopting a positive approach to place shaping by understanding the breadth of what green infrastructure can achieve on the ground as an integral infrastructure as important as utilities.
- Putting planning policy into action by using the local policy framework to get the right blend of protection, enhancement and creation of green infrastructure assets from development proposals.
- Front loading by shaping development briefs and using pre-application discussions to express a clear intent for green infrastructure action.
- Taking a proportionate approach by obtaining enough information about the proposal to understand the relative importance of green infrastructure alongside other infrastructures and finding ways to make green infrastructure work.
- Employing effective engagement by considering the comments of green infrastructure specialist agencies on planning applications positively and engaging members at the right stage of the process.
- Securing pro-active delivery by understanding how green infrastructure can help resolve complex development issues through creative design solutions.
- Monitoring & reviewing to ensure green infrastructure commitments in planning conditions and obligations are adhered to.

To put these elements into practice, the local planning authorities will seek to improve joint-working on proposals that cross boundaries and will develop ways for sharing staff resources offering specialist green infrastructure design advice.



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LDĀDESIGN



leeds city region
intelligence driving growth