

REGIONAL PARKS XCHANGE



BASELINE REPORT

January 2008

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to summarise progress to date on the development of Regional Parks in Northwest England.

It has been produced by Andy Routledge at the Mersey Basin Campaign / Northwest Regional Parks Xchange with substantial and helpful input from all of the Regional Park's Teams.

This is the first time that progress on all of the Regional Parks has been drawn together into a single report. The situation is continually evolving and an update is proposed during 2008.

The Northwest Development Agency and the Mersey Basin Campaign are working together to support the development of Regional Parks as a vital regeneration tool in the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy.

For further information please visit **www.rpx.org.uk** or contact Kate Fox, Sarah Heyes, Walter Menzies or Andy Routledge at:

Regional Parks Xchange
Mersey Basin Campaign
Fourways House
57 Hilton Street
Manchester
M1 2EJ

rpx@merseybasin.org.uk
0161 242 8200



NORTHWEST ENGLAND'S REGIONAL PARKS

(MAPS: CHRIS MARRS)

CONTENTS

CROAL IRWELL	7
EAST LANCASHIRE	11
MERSEY WATERFRONT	15
MORECAMBE BAY & DUDDON	19
NORTHWEST COASTAL TRAIL	22
RIBBLE COAST & WETLANDS	27
WEAVER VALLEY	31
WEST CUMBRIA ENERGY COAST	35
WIGAN GREENHEART	38

CROAL IRWELL REGIONAL PARK

Location

The proposed regional park project begins in the centre of Manchester as a narrow corridor close to the River Irwell and Ship Canal. It then loops around central Salford towards the University, where the valley widens, punctuated by open spaces and derelict land. This area marks the core of the park, bound roughly by the A56 to the east, A666 to the west and A58 in the north. Contained within are country parks, strategic linear routes and several soft end use regeneration programmes. From here the park splits into two fingers; the first following the Irwell Valley north towards the West Pennine Moors, the second running west towards Bolton and Jumbles Reservoir

Objectives

- Improve the image of the valley to attract inward investment
- Tackle the extensive industrial legacy of derelict land
- Create an attractive visitor destination with an emphasis on active recreation
- Support and develop opportunities for biodiversity and heritage interpretation
- Make the Regional Park accessible to the North West and beyond
- Encourage community participation, connecting people with the landscape, promoting healthy and active living

Key Themes & Projects

The Regional Park has been branded as 'An Urban Playground for the City Region'.

Over 70 detailed project proposals have been outlined, around the major themes of active recreation and healthy living, access and connectivity, environmental improvements, community engagement and urban regeneration. Examples include plans to build a regional active recreation centre close to the M60, with facilities for climbing, cycling, skateboarding amongst others. Also proposed is the development of the Croal Irwell Way, an all weather multi-user path linking Bolton and Bury with the park's core area. The parks identity will be marked through a series of strategic gateway developments. There are also a number of regeneration projects taking place within the proposed boundaries, the largest of which is a 97-hectare Newlands scheme in Salford.

Progress

There has been a substantial amount of spatial planning work undertaken to develop the scope and possibilities of the park. Considerable strategic work has been carried out to get the project included in local and sub-regional policies.

Work has begun on aligning Croal Irwell to existing regeneration and public realm projects. Strong efforts have been made to form partner relationships, for example coordinating the Newlands regeneration project with a commitment from the Forestry Commission for continued management of the site post completion.

Croal Irwell is now at a transition stage where the spatial planning aspects have been well developed, but a framework for implementation is still in the early stages.

Priorities

- Produce a regional park master plan and area action plan
- Produce marketing and branding plans
- Ensure continued sub-regional partnership support
- Identify the body most appropriate to lead the project
- Appoint a dedicated project officer
- Consider the strategic fit of aligning the project with the Irwell City Park

Governance & Management

An informal board has been meeting for the last year or so to guide the Croal Irwell Regional Park Project. Members include:

- Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
- Salford City Council
- Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
- Natural England
- Environment Agency

No dedicated project officer at present

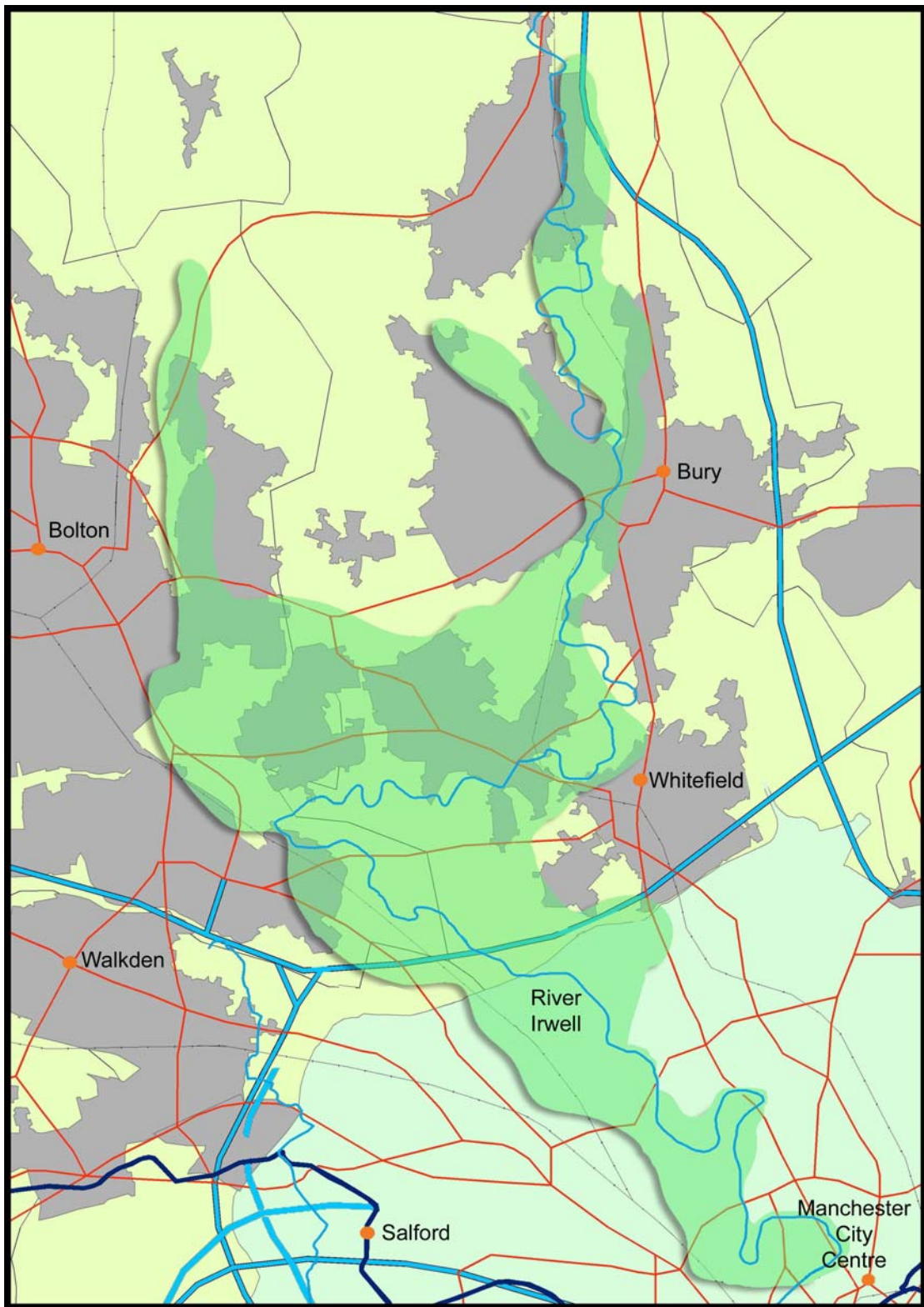
Contact

Mike Savage
Operations Manager
Red Rose Forest
Dock Office
Trafford Road
Salford Quays
Salford
M50 3XB

mike@redroseforest.org.uk
0161 872 1660

Partners

Salford City Council
Bury Metropolitan Council
Bolton Metropolitan Council
Red Rose Forest
Forestry Commission
BTCV
East Lancashire Railways
British Waterways
Groundwork Trusts



CROAL IRWELL

EAST LANCASHIRE

Location

The East Lancashire Regional Park is of a considerable scale, spanning as it does the breadth of East Lancashire's six local authorities. Within its boundaries lie the Forest of Bowland AONB, the West Pennine Moors, extensive tracts of farmland, and the ribbon of industrial towns stretching from Blackburn in the west through, Accrington, Burnley, Nelson then Colne in the East. There are several waterways within the park including the Leeds–Liverpool Canal, and the River Ribble. The Park is managed by the Lancashire Economic Partnership.

Objectives

- To establish the physical framework that will enable the positive transformation of East Lancashire as a regional asset
- To increase the prosperity and competitiveness of East Lancashire and contribute towards regional competitiveness
- To improve living environments and promote healthy lifestyles
- To promote involvement in the development of and responsibility for the community environment

Progress, Themes and Projects

East Lancashire was the northwest's first Regional Park. It became operational in 2000, starting life with a £5m grant under the SRB scheme. Those funds have been used across a wide range of projects tackling the objectives outlined above.

Since then almost 560 hectares of new woodland have been planted offering new opportunities for biodiversity to flourish and over 85 kms of new paths, cycleways and bridleways have been developed to create a strategic access network linking urban and rural areas, local communities with employment sites and recreation and tourist attractions. The ELWOOD tree planting and land improvement initiative has significantly contributed to this and the Arran Trail in Blackburn, which is both a nature trail and a cycling link, connects homes in the Shadsworth area with employment sites.

The Park now features the Panopticons, a series of innovative and iconic landmarks in the Park attracting local people and visitors. Colourfields is sited in Corporation Park in Blackburn, The Atom at Wycoller Country Park and The Singing Ringing Tree at Crown Point in Burnley. Halo can be found at Top O'Slate in Rossendale. The Panopticons have both an aesthetic and functional role, taking the form of shelters, viewing platforms or beacons, located at elevated sites and marking out key access routes into the Regional Park. The Singing Ringing Tree has recently achieved major recognition by being named winner of a National Award for architectural excellence at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

Community involvement in the Regional Park is and has been paramount. Land (2003-2007) was a unique education and creative arts project at the heart of the East Lancashire Regional Park initiative led by the Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP). Funded by LEP, Arts Council England North West and Lancashire County Council, Land was a partner project to Panopticons. While PanopticonsT involved professional designers and builders in creating large-scale structures, Land involved local people of all ages in making a positive difference to their own surroundings through creative activity led by professional artists.

The work on the Regional Park complements other urban regeneration schemes such as the ELEVATE programme which also aims to improve the East Lancashire environment by tackling housing problems through a programme of renewal and refurbishment. The Regional Park has also worked with the Lancashire Remade programme, a scheme that remediates derelict brownfield sites, converting them to soft end uses for recreation and nature conservation.

Priorities

Funding for the initial phase of the East Lancashire Regional Park project came to an end in March 2007 and the Park – now forms part of a wider Lancashire initiative - the Green Infrastructure programme – an essential component of the Central Lancashire City Region Development Programme (CLCR) and Lancashire Economic Strategy.

The Lancashire Economic Partnership is in the process of developing a Green Infrastructure strategy for Lancashire, which is set for completion in early 2008. Lancashire's Regional Parks are seen as an integral delivery mechanism for achieving the green infrastructure goals. Following the cessation of the SRB funding, East Lancashire now has the opportunity to reassess its strategy for the Regional Park to determine how it will develop within the broader context of the Green Infrastructure and other policy areas such as the Central Lancashire City Region Development Programme (The City with Room to Breathe) and climate change.

Governance & Management

The lead organisation for the Regional Park is the Lancashire Economic Partnership. A Regional Park Management Group has been formed from members of LEP and an appraisal panel assesses individual projects for approval by the Management Group which reports to the LEP Board. The Management Group takes responsibility for implementing the strategic goals and operations of the Regional Park.

Partners

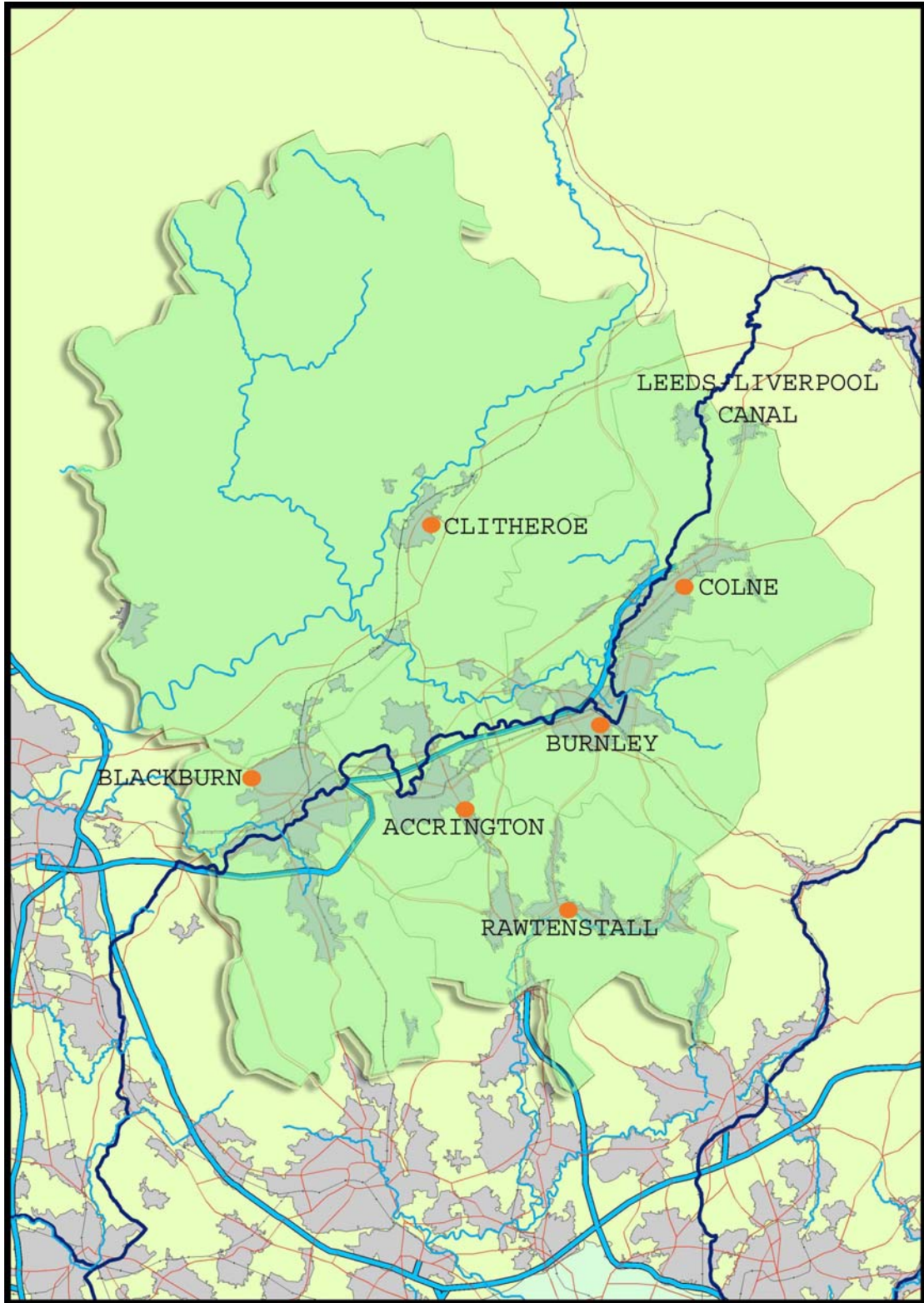
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
British Waterways
Lancashire County Council
Mid Pennine Arts
Ribble Valley Borough Council

Burnley Borough Council
Hyndburn Borough Council
Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Pendle Borough Council
Rossendale Borough Council

Contact

Joe Martin,
Strategy & Development Manager
Lancashire Economic Partnership
The Globe Centre
Accrington
Lancashire
BB5 0RE

jmartin@lancashire-ep.org.uk
01254 300490



EAST LANCASHIRE

MERSEY WATERFRONT

Location

The Mersey Waterfront extends for some 135 kilometres of coastal and estuarine waterfront, spanning the territories of 7 local authorities. There are resort towns at either end of the park, and a wide variety of landscapes in between, ranging from major cities and ports, to leafy suburbs and internationally important wildlife sites. At the heart of the park is the UNESCO World Heritage site of Liverpool Waterfront.

Objectives

1) Regeneration

- Promote inward investment within the Regional Park zone.
- Identify and target sites for reclamation and re-use

2) Environment

- Seek to create new landscaped 'open assets' on the waterfront, especially in urban areas.
- Reflect local character and identity, while creating a coherent image.
- Ensure the safeguarding of natural assets.
- Promote the areas heritage and cultural assets.

3) Leisure & Recreation

- Continue to raise the profile of the Regional Park, the Liverpool City Region and the northwest.
- Enhance the enjoyment and interpretation of the landscape.
- To ensure that waterfront access is delivered in as many places as possible on the Mersey.

Themes & Projects

- **Pride in our Promenades** – aiming to transform many of the historic promenades to provide well designed world-class seafronts.
- **Coastal Places, Open Spaces** – a programme of landscape, access and ecological improvements to raise the quality of important nature conservation sites.
- **Animating Waterspaces** – an innovative programme that finds ways of getting people to engage with Merseyside's rivers, lakes and estuary.
- **Promoting the Place, Engaging People** – a planned phase to increase community engagement, participation, social inclusion, marketing and communications.
- **Cleaner Greener Safer** – A long-term commitment to the ongoing management and maintenance of waterfront assets.
- **Waterfront Economy** – waterside regeneration has the potential to attract further inward investment, commerce and tourism. For that reason it is the overarching theme.

Progress

A pan-waterfront strategic partnership was established with an initial £8.5m NWDA grant which covered the initial commencement phase from 2003 to 2007. Further joint funding of roughly £20m has subsequently been secured for the succession period to 2009.

The Mersey Waterfront has developed its strategic framework that sets out, amongst other things, the spatial framework for the park, in particular the notion of the 'Windows on the Waterfront', a method of displaying the scale and diversity of the park to investors and users.

Priorities

- Continue to engender partnership working
- Get the core principals of the strategic framework embedded in key strategies and policies at the city region, and northwest levels. Integral to that is securing and co-ordinating partner support to give a coherent message.
- Continue to develop the governance and management capacity of the Mersey Waterfront team.
- Produce annual Regional Park Business Plans.
- Develop Regional Park signature projects.

Governance & Management

The secretariat is housed within the Mersey Partnership. There is a campaign manager and a number of support staff. Wirral Borough Council has been designated as the accountable body for the Regional Park. The Mersey Waterfront Board is comprised of representatives from the local and country authorities, the Mersey Basin Campaign, and has an independent academic chair.

Contact

Carole Carroll
Campaign Manager
Mersey Waterfront
Mersey Partnership
12 Princes Parade
Liverpool
L3 1BG

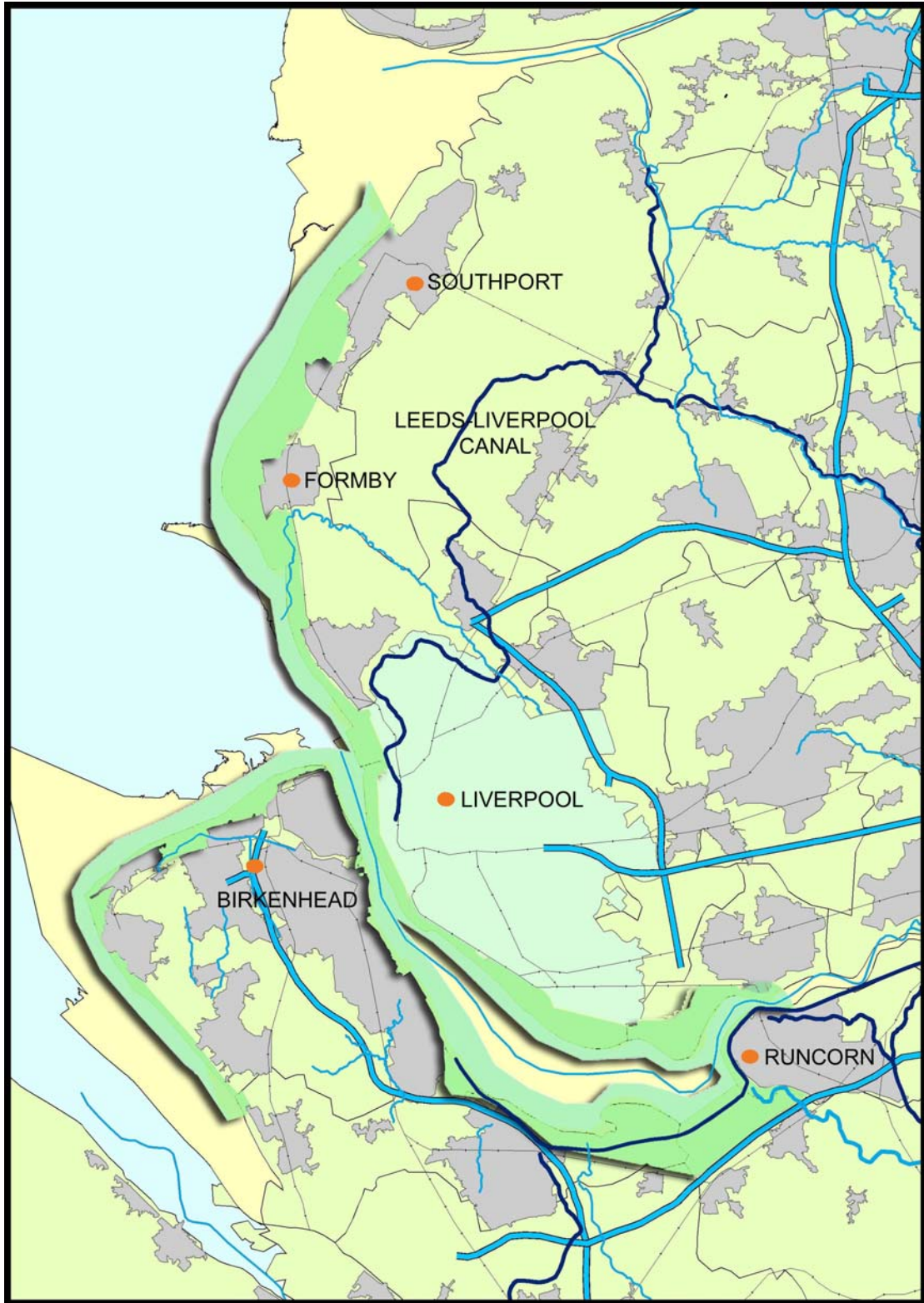
0151 237 3941

carole.carroll@merseyside.org.uk

Mersey Waterfront Website:
www.merseywaterfront.com/index.php

Partners

Mersey Basin Campaign
Sefton Borough Council
Liverpool City Council
Halton Borough Council
Warrington Borough Council
Vale Royal Borough Council
Ellesmere Port Borough Council
Neston Borough Council
Wirral Borough Council
Cheshire County Council
Knowsley Borough Council
St Helens Borough Council



MERSEY WATERFRONT REGIONAL PARK

MORECAMBE BAY & DUDDON

Location

Although meaningful consideration has been given to possible boundaries for a Morecambe Bay and Duddon Regional Park, the geographical area is not yet to be fully explored or consulted upon. One possibility would be to run along the coastal zone between Haverigg in the north and Fleetwood in the south, taking in the towns of Barrow, Ulverston, Grange-over-Sands, Morecambe, Lancaster and Heysham amongst others. Alternatively it may be preferable to use local authority boundaries, either fully or partially, to delineate the park's perimeter.

Objectives

- To secure investment in quality of place to unlock the economic potential of Morecambe Bay and the Duddon.
- To attract and retain economic development and high level skills.
- To invest in public realm and environmental improvements.
- To develop a distinctive identity and positive brand image.
- To attract more visitors and improve the quality of the visitor experience.

Themes and Projects

- **Public Realm and Environmental Quality** – Morecambe Bay and the Duddon are exceptional environmental assets - but are undersold and not widely appreciated. Improved public realm and environmental developments at key sites are vital aspects of the proposal.
- **Regeneration** – There are a range of regeneration initiatives currently taking place around the bay that could be brought together under a Regional Park banner. These include the Barrow Dock scheme and the Morecambe Masterplan amongst many others.
- **Access, Recreation, Tourism and Education** – Improving the quality of the visitor experience will require improved access, connectivity and interpretation at, and between, key sites.
- **Flagship projects** The promotion of new developments to capitalise on the existing assets are envisaged. A Morecambe Bay Harbour to receive walkers completing the traditional Cross Bay Walks and the Kent Estuary Wetlands project are just two potential flagship projects.
- **Cultural Heritage** – The Bay has a strong cultural history that could be further developed, particularly the fishing industry.

Progress

Foundation work to date has concentrated on developing the concept of a Regional Park in Morecambe Bay. Led principally by the Morecambe Bay Partnership, preliminary analysis has taken place to demonstrate the strategic fit of the project, developing themes and objectives, identify existing and potential projects, and forming ties with potential partners.

Priorities

- The continued development of the Morecambe Bay Regional Park concept is a high priority.
- To continue to forge ties with potential partners.
- To undertake preliminary feasibility work.
- To continue to identify and support a range of initiatives in and around Morecambe Bay, from large scale regeneration and environmental improvement schemes, to community events, recreational facilities and interpretation.

Governance and Management

The notion of a Regional Park in Morecambe Bay is still evolving, and as such the work carried out so far has been carried out in addition to the Morecambe Bay Partnership's workload. Strategic guidance is given by the Partnership's Trustees, which include members from county and unitary authorities. The Partnership's Project Officer takes responsibility for the implementation of projects. No formal arrangements have yet been put in place specifically for the Regional Park project

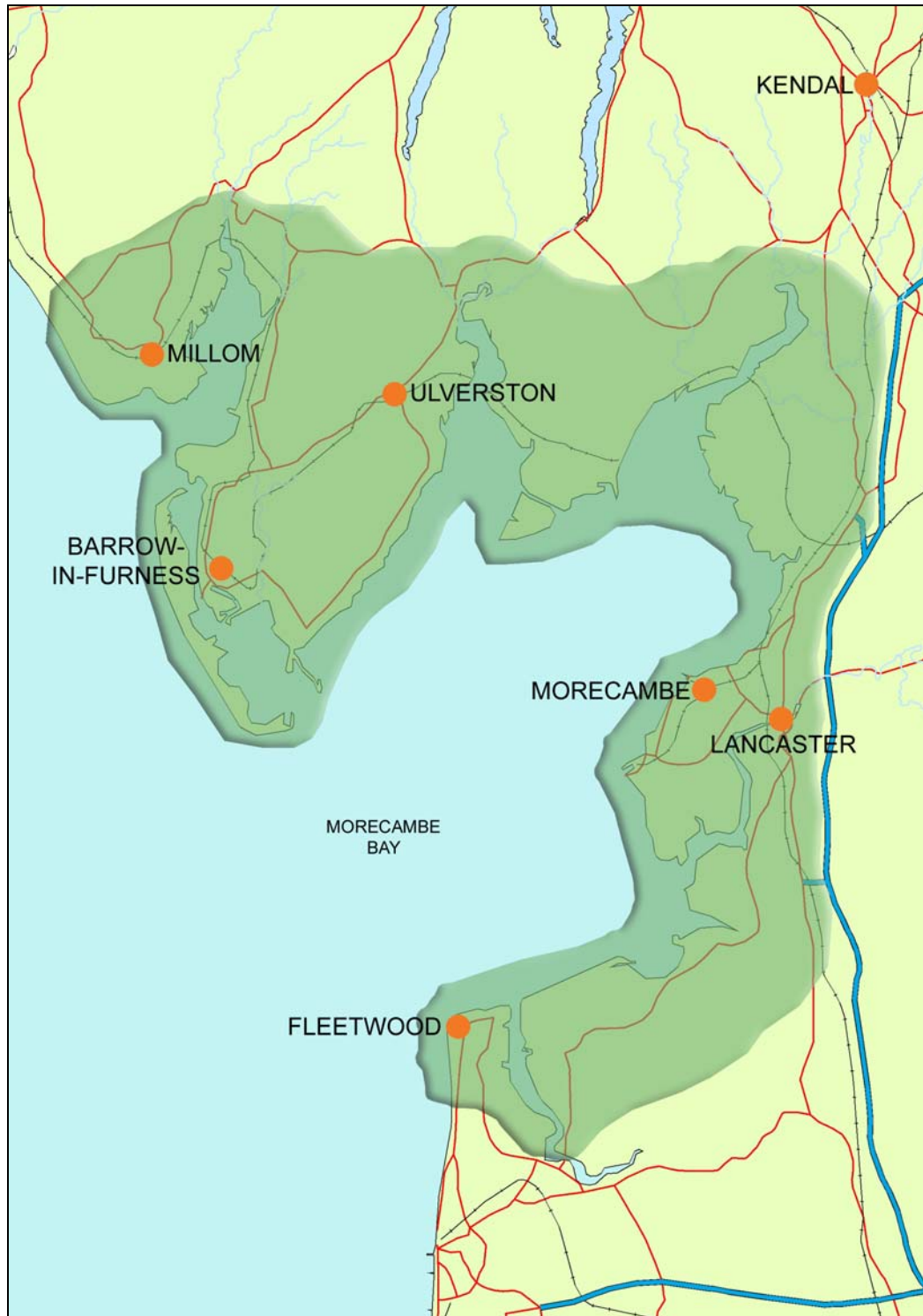
Contact

Susannah Bleakley
Morecambe Bay Partnership
32 Market Place
Kendal
LA9 4TN

sb@morecambebay.org.uk
01539 735900

Potential Partners

Regeneration Bodies
County Councils
District Councils
Tourism Bodies
Morecambe Bay Partnership



MORECAMBE BAY & DUDDON (indicative)

NORTHWEST COASTAL TRAIL

Location

As the name suggests this project aims to create a continuous high quality trail along the coast of northwest England, from Chester in the south to Carlisle in the north. The route, which would make provision for walkers, cyclists, and potentially horse riding, would be in excess of 600 miles, or 100km, in length. The trail would offer the opportunities for longer distance, multi-day, and day walks and cycles rides, as well as circular routes around resort towns.

Objectives

- To provide a recreational resource of local, regional and national significance
- To promote a healthy lifestyle in the north west
- Forming the link between resorts, regional parks, and other established routes
- Tourism and business development
- Interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage
- Encourage local residents to explore their environs
- Showcase and promote the northwest's image
- Promote the use of public transport in the northwest

Themes & Projects

- Recreation
- Tourism
- Business development
- Healthy lifestyles
- Cultural and landscape heritage

Projects relating to the development of the Coastal Trail are likely to concentrate on the provision of a high quality trail along the length of the route, rather than on individual landmark developments. The Coastal Trail will of course be able to count many of the attractions of the North West's coastal Regional Parks as selling points.

Progress

Considerable research and strategic work has already been carried to date. A 2003 feasibility study gave consideration to developing the trail concept, funding requirements, management possibilities, the provision of facilities, and the task of actually providing the route.

That was followed in 2004 by the production of an implementation framework for the trail, setting out a series of fifteen surveys, assessment and strategies, a body of work that sets a programme of work designed to bring the project to

fruition. The set of actions are accompanied by a five-year project management programme and a ten-year implementation timetable

Priorities

- To determine a definitive route and the work required to complete the trail
- Demonstrate the economic benefits of the project
- Develop a maintenance strategy for the trail
- Decide upon a consistent approach to promotion and signage
- Consider infrastructure along the trail, particularly in terms of transport and accommodation
- Resolve conflicts between users as they arise
- Attempt to work out a long term funding plan for the trail
- Produce a business plan.

Governance & Management

The project has been led through the Northwest Coastal Forum. The forum is comprised of representatives from local and regional government, regional and national government agencies, business, academia, and NGO's. It has an independent chair. The Coastal Trail has a steering group formed from members of the Forum, which gives strategic guidance for the project. A full time Regional Coastal Trail Development Officer was appointed in July 2007.

A formal system of governance has been proposed, that include a Partnership Management Board, responsible for policy decisions and funding commitments, a Development Group that would take responsibility for developing and implementing policies and programmes, and also a co-ordination unit, that would include the Coastal Trail Officer as well as northern and southern section co-ordinators and a funding and marketing officer.

Contact

Dave Perry
Regional Coastal Trail Development
Officer
NWRA
Wigan Investment Centre
Waterside Drive
Wigan
WN3 5BA

david.perry@nwra.gov.uk
01942 737910

Partners

Northwest Coastal Forum Secretariat
Natural Economy North West
Cumbria County Council
Cheshire County Council
Lancashire County Council
Groundwork Trusts
Unitary Authorities
NWRA
Mersey Partnership



NW COASTAL TRAIL – NORTHERN SECTION (INDICATIVE ROUTE)



NW COASTAL TRAIL – SOUTHERN SECTION (INDICATIVE ROUTE)

RIBBLE COAST AND WETLANDS

Location

The Ribble Coast and Wetlands Park has been zoned to include as many of the areas environmental assets without detracting from its sense of place. As such it skirts the coast between Preston and the gateway resort towns of Lytham, St Annes and Southport, then heading inland towards Burscough to capture the area around Martin Mere before stretching away north again to Preston.

The Ribble Estuary and its surrounds contain several habitat sites of national and international importance that, although well known to wildlife enthusiasts, are yet to feature prominently in the broader visitor market.

Objectives

- To build on the internationally significant natural assets and attractions.
- To improve the image of the area and develop the Ribble Coast as a tourist attraction, fostering new visitor destinations with gateways at Southport, Preston and Lytham St Annes.
- For the Regional Park to play an integral role in the economic growth and enhancement of quality of life in Central Lancashire.
- To maintain and enhance the Ribble's environmental assets.
- To promote and enhance community engagement.

Themes & Projects

- **Visitor Economy** - To enhance the Ribble Coast and Wetlands tourist destination – The Hesketh Out Marsh project is taking an area of previously reclaimed agricultural land on the Ribble's southern coast, and transforming it into a significant wetland habitat.
- **Access** – The Ribble Coast and Wetlands park aims to reinstate rivers and other linear routes as links between communities. The Douglas River Crossing, on the site of a former railway line between Southport and Preston, aims to do just that.
- **Environment** – Promoting existing and creating new environmental assets is prominent element of the park proposal – The Brockholes east of Preston, is seeing the transformation of a former quarry into a multi-habitat nature conservation area.
- **Community Engagement** – Finding ways of increasing public participation, through provision of facilities, education, interpretation and events.
- **Cultural Heritage** – The dunes, wetlands and mudflats of the Ribble Coast have been greatly altered by nature, agriculture, fishing, and sea defences. Capturing and promoting the changing landscape is an important element of the park proposal.

Progress

An initial feasibility study looking into the development of a Regional Park in the Ribble Estuary took place in 2003. Since then an outline business plan for 2007-2010 has been produced that sets out the vision for the park, its strategic link to regional and sub-regional strategies, the project's resource needs, marketing priorities, and details of the partnership.

Priorities

- To appoint a new chair.
- To complete the development of a Ribble Coast and Wetlands website.
- To form stronger ties with the private sector – potential partners include BNFL, British Aerospace, and Booths Supermarkets.
- To produce a comprehensive business plan.
- To develop a marketing plan.
- Set out a programme of projects and a delivery timetable.

Governance & Management

The Ribble Coast and Wetlands has a Steering Group made up of members of county and local authorities, environmental agencies, and other regional bodies. A five member Development Working Group has been formed to implement the Steering Group's strategic direction, and is comprised of representatives from the RSPB, Lancashire County Council, Groundwork, Environment Agency, and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. A marketing working group has also been assembled to promote the regional park project. A project development manager post was funded for a 12 months, which came to an end in early 2006.

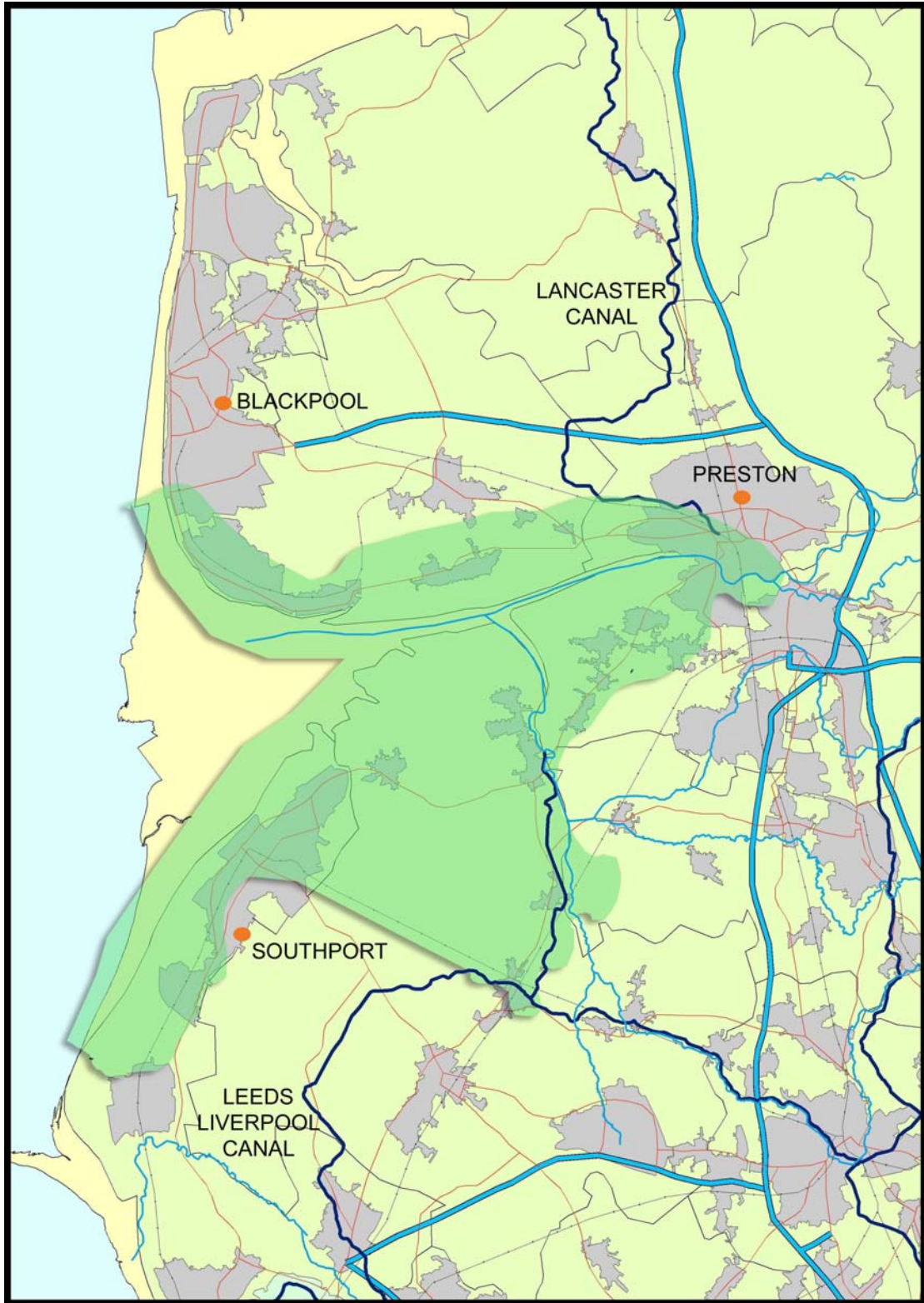
Contact

Bob Allen
74-80 Hallgate
Wigan
WN1 1HP

Ballen@groundwork.org.uk
01942 821 444

Partners

Groundwork Lancashire West
and Wigan
Lancashire County Council
Fylde Borough Council
Preston City Council
Sefton MBC
South Ribble Borough Council
Natural England
British Waterways
Lancashire Economic Partnership
Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board
Environment Agency
Lancashire Rural Futures
Wildlife Trust
RSPB
WWT



RIBBLE COAST & WETLANDS

WEAVER VALLEY

Location

The Weaver Valley covers approximately 33,000 hectares, and stretches some 45 kilometres through the centre of Cheshire, from Runcorn (Halton) in the north to Audlem in the south, taking in the market towns of Frodsham, Middlewich, Sandbach and Nantwich, and the county towns of Winsford and Northwich. The Weaver Valley has a diverse landscape, from semi-ancient woodlands, Cheshire plain to an incised valley. It is home to several waterways including the Shropshire Union Canal, Weaver Navigation and rivers Weaver and Dane.

Objectives

- To connect, transform and energise the Weaver Valley
- Drive forward an economic, environmental and social transformation of regional significance.
- To provide a high quality of life coupled with a sense of identity and pride, offering viability and vitality to residents and visitors alike.

Themes & Projects

A raft of projects are being undertaken and planned in the Weaver Valley, each of which comes together under the regional park's key themes:

- **Waterways** – The rivers and canals of the Weaver Valley are an under utilised resource. Environmental improvements and projects such as the proposed inclined plane and restoration of Frodsham Cut will help to improve the recreational use of waterways.
- **Access** – To better develop links between waterways and the valley's towns, as well as improving connections to other areas outside the park. Another principal aim is to create gateways into the park. The planned Weaver Way, a walking and cycling route, will transform the connections between rural and urban areas, and create a recreational resource of regional importance.
- **Market Towns** – The Weaver's market towns already have developing identities and entertainment programmes. However they are undersold, so a co-ordinated festival programme is being planned together with supporting public realm improvements.
- **Natural & Historic Environment** – The salt flashes, wetlands and woodlands of the Weaver Valley will be enhanced and protected to provide a strong natural asset for the Regional Park. The Weaver's industrial and cultural heritage, particularly the salt industry, is a unique selling point for the project.
- **A Place for People** – The Regional Park project is bringing together a number of regeneration initiatives that will transform towns, attract visitors and investment, and make the Weaver Valley a better place to live and work.

Progress

Substantial work has been done in forming a strong partnership, develop projects, strategic work and developing a vision for the Regional Park.

The Weaver Valley has recently been granted a capital investment award from the NWDA to fund a two year programme of feasibility studies and pilot projects, designed to bring the Weaver Valley Regional Park to the brink of full delivery, and furthermore to set out a programme of capital works scheduled for development between 2009 and 2011.

Priorities

- To develop a Spatial Framework and capital programme.
- To fully explore the economic value of the Regional Park proposal.
- Develop a clear strap line.
- To develop a clear marketing strategy that states what Weaver Valley is, and demonstrates the projects and activities involved.

Governance & Management

The Weaver Valley has an established a board, supported by a partnership and task groups. Cheshire County Council is the accountable body. The board provide strategic direction for the project, and is comprised of members of the partner local authorities, government agencies, the private sector and other sub regional bodies. A smaller management group has been established to meet regularly and undertake tasks delegated by the board. The Partnership Group coordinates activity and is a forum for partners; the Task Groups develop themes and look after individual projects.

Contact

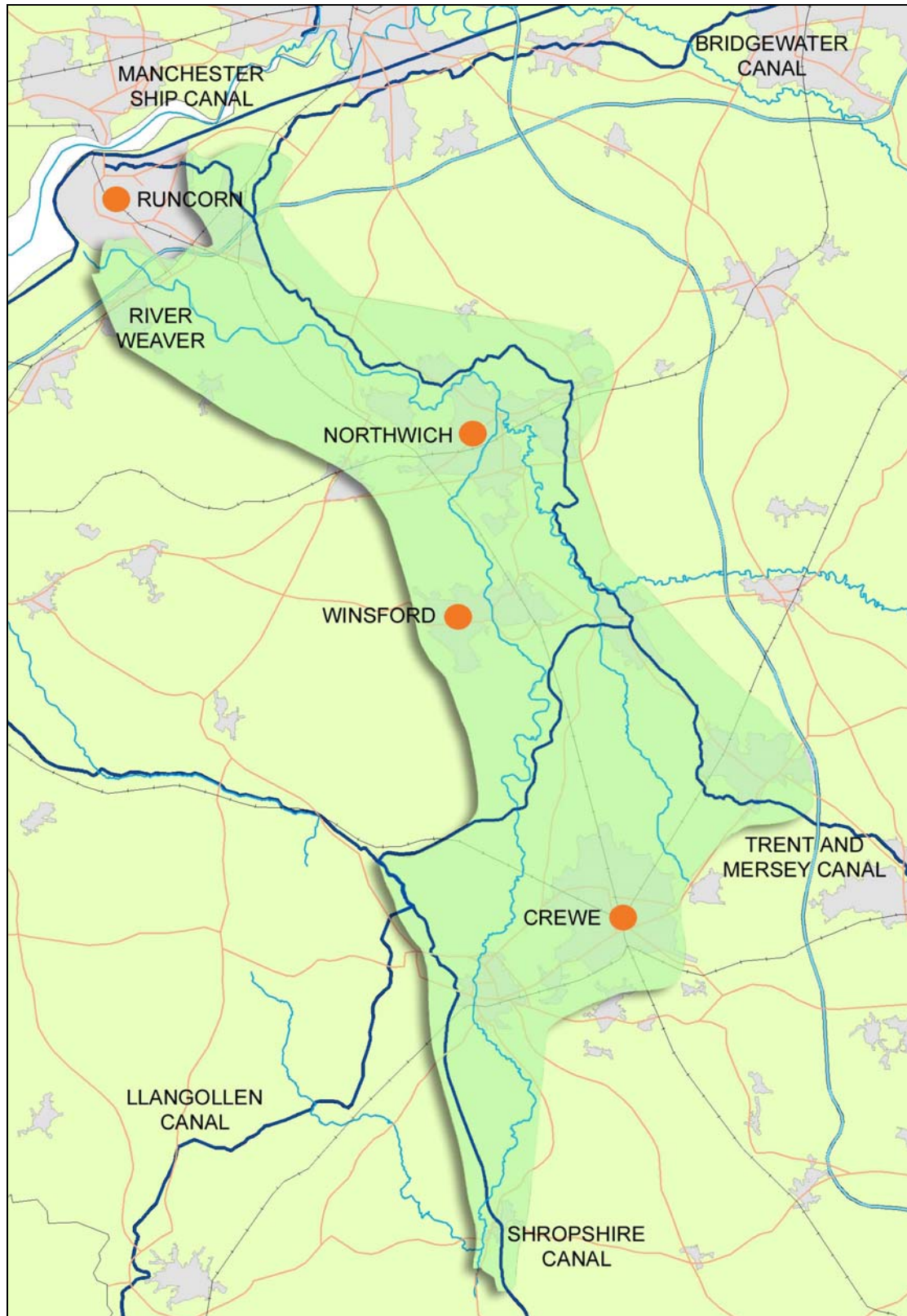
Ian Dale
Weaver Valley Programme Manager
Backford Hall
Backford
Chester
CH1 6PZ

ian.dale@cheshire.gov.uk
01244 6073174

Website
www.weavervalley.org.uk

Partners

Cheshire County Council
Halton Borough Council
Vale Royal Borough Council
Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council
Congleton Borough Council
British Waterways
The Mersey Forest
Groundwork Cheshire
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Natural England
Forestry Commission
Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Environment Agency
Forestry Commission
Cheshire Landscape Trust
Northwest Development Agency
Mersey Basin Campaign



WEAVER VALLEY

WEST CUMBRIA ENERGY COAST

Location

The Regional Park proposal in West Cumbria is still in the early conceptual stages, and as such a definitive boundary is yet to be established. A possible starting point however might be at the head of the Solway Firth in the north, taking in the coastal strip south through the Victorian resort of Silloth, and the Georgian towns of Maryport and Whitehaven, before joining the boundary of the Morecambe Bay and Duddon park to the north of Millom, although this may well be subject to change.

Key Themes & Projects

The proposed park is being branded as the 'Energy Coast' to reflect the economic restructuring taking place in West Cumbria, moving from nuclear energy production to the development of new skills and business in decommissioning and renewable energy sector.

A second complementary theme is that of a coastal renaissance, which aims to make the most of West Cumbria's built and natural assets, offering greater opportunities to existing communities, while setting the scene for investment and increased tourism.

These ideas are underpinned by a substantial and wide-ranging regeneration programme currently underway in West Cumbria. Examples include major business and leisure projects for the ports and harbours of Workington, Whitehaven and Maryport, while the Westlakes Science and Technology park near Whitehaven is one of the UK's best. Whitehaven is building on its visitor offer with upgrades to the Haig Pit and Beacon Museums, and its coastal park. There are also new masterplans in the pipeline for Whitehaven and Workington town centres.

Progress

Although the Regional Park concept is relatively recent, there has been considerable work undertaken in gathering support for the Energy Coast idea, while studies are imminent to help draw together the significant economic restructuring, regeneration and coastal renaissance work that is taking place, and what that might mean as a Regional Park.

Priorities

- Produce a scoping study, in conjunction with Morecambe Bay and Duddon, to establish the possibilities for progressing the concept.
- Maintain and build upon the support already established.
- To work closely with Morecambe Bay and Duddon to maximise the potential of both parks

Governance & Management

At present the Energy Coast concept is being overseen and developed through the board of West Lakes Renaissance (WLR), the Urban Regeneration Company for West Cumbria. WLR are responsible for a £200 million, 10-year programme of works, and also for implementing substantial elements of the NWDA's £2 billion Energy Coast policy.

Contact

Bob Pointing
Chief Executive
West Lakes Renaissance
Phoenix Business Centre
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria
LA14 2UA

b.pointing@westlakesrenaissance.co.uk
01229 84045

Possible Partners

Cumbria County Council
Lake District National Park Authority
Tourist Agencies
Network Rail
Local Councils



WEST CUMBRIA ENERGY COAST (indicative)

WIGAN'S GREENHEART

Location

The proposed boundaries for Wigan Greenheart cover approximately 20 square kilometres at the heart of Wigan's former coalfield. The Greenheart Regional Park falls entirely in the ownership of one borough council. There are 300,000 inhabitants living within the perimeter of the Park, bounded as it is by the former mining towns of Wigan, Ashton, Golborne, Leigh and Hindley, with the deprived communities of Platt Bridge and Abram at its centre. The area is easily accessible by road and rail.

The landscape, although still recovering from its' industrial past in places, includes the nationally important wetlands of Wigan Flashes, Hey Brook Corridor and Pennington Flash. Wigan's industrial heritage is represented by the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, which crosses the park.

Objectives

- The creation of a Regional Park in the Makerfield Basin. Acting as a sustainable gateway to the countryside from the regional capital, Manchester, and bringing the countryside to the doorstep of Wigan's residents.
- To create a Regional Park that combines canals, woodlands, wetlands, industrial heritage, sporting leisure and commercial attractions in a countryside setting.
- The development of a regional park that will help regenerate the economy, benefit local communities and radically change the image of the sub-region.
- To improve the health and well being of local communities with a diverse range of opportunities for physical activity through the 'Getting Wigan Active' programme.

Themes & Projects

There are already a large number of projects that have been completed, are in progress, or are being planned within Greenheart, which are being brought together under several themes.

- **Recreation** – The Leigh Sport Village will provide sports and recreational facilities of regional importance, including an athletics stadium and swimming pool, complementing the nationally important Robin Park complex, which lies at the northern boundary of the park.
- **Nature Conservation** – The Wigan Flashes cover an area of about 260 hectares, close to the centre of Wigan. Much of the area is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and contains a Site of Special Scientific Interest and seven Sites of Biological Importance. It forms part of a regionally significant and nationally important network of wetland habitats which run for over 9km along the Leigh branch of the

Leeds and Liverpool Canal and Hey Brook and includes the Abram Flashes SSSI, Pennington Flash Country Park and Hope Carr Nature Reserve.

- **Access** – The environmental improvements and trail provision at Wigan Flashes has allowed locals and visitors to access and interact with the environment. The development of walking, cycling and horse riding links around the park is progressing, linking key sites and connecting to the Sustrans National Cycle Network.
- **Heritage Conservation and Interpretation** – Development and refurbishment projects around the Pier Quarter will help develop Wigan's tourism offering.
- **Regeneration** - There are several soft and hard end regeneration and reclamation projects underway, tackling the legacy of industrial dereliction in Wigan. Programmes include Bickershaw, which will see a carbon neutral housing development with renewable energy sources, complete with Country Park and golf course on a site of 220 hectares, the largest site in English Partnership's National Coalfields Programme.

Progress

There has been strong activity in bringing together the spatial concept for the Regional Park. Identification of existing and new projects has helped to further develop ties with project partners. The project produced a prospectus in early 2006, outlining the main goals for the project, and Greenheart has begun to use its brand in projects across the borough.

Priorities

The key priority for Greenheart is to commission a consultancy to undertake a significant piece of work which will serve to formalise the Vision for the Regional Park and develop a number of Strategic Documents which detail how the Vision will be realised. A key element of this work will be to look at marketing and branding to ensure that awareness of Greenheart continues to increase. The task of producing technical supporting data for the Regional Park proposal is an important aspect of future development.

Governance & Management

The project is presently being led through Wigan Council. The Greenheart Partnership Board consists of twelve representatives from local and sub-regional organisation, as well as two community representatives. A steering group consisting of ten of the partners meets quarterly to give strategic guidance for the project. Key stakeholders meet regularly to ensure the delivery of current projects. A Greenheart Project Manager was appointed in June 2007, the first full time officer on the project, to drive forward the Regional Park concept.

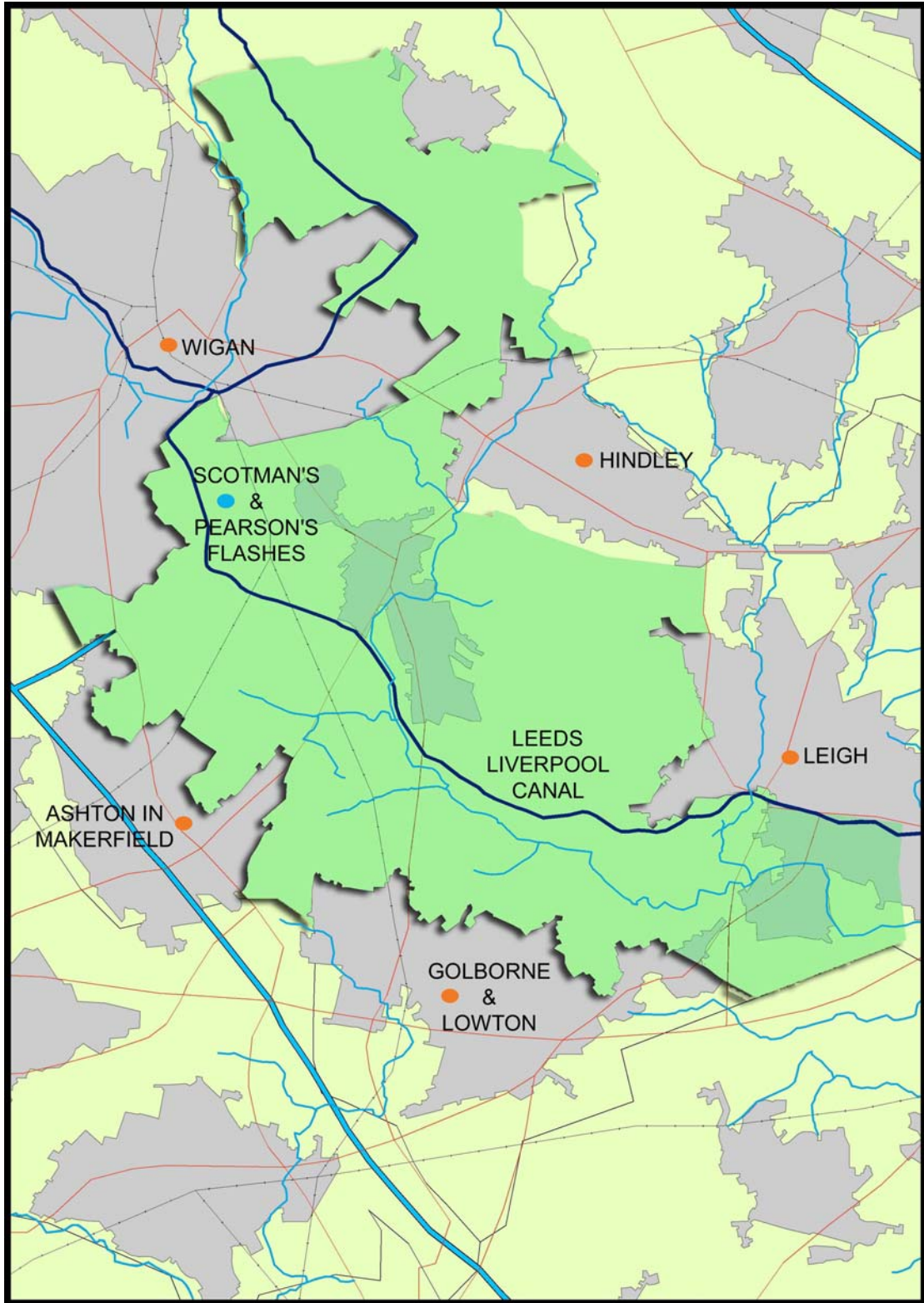
Contact

Joanne Harrop
Greenheart Project Manager
Wigan Metropolitan Council
Civic Buildings
New Market Street
Wigan
WN1 1RP

j.harrop@wigan.gov.uk
01942 408021

Partners

Wigan MBC
Red Rose Forest
Forestry Commission
Groundwork Trusts
BTCV
British Waterways
United Utilities
Woodland Trust
Wildlife Trust
RSPB
Environment Agency
Sustrans



WIGAN GREENHEART