



Natural Economy Northwest

Natural Economy Northwest Business Plan: Executive Summary Revised July 2009

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Natural Economy Northwest (NENW) is a **regional partnership programme**, led by Natural England, the NWDA and SITA Trust on behalf of a wide cross-sectoral partnership to deliver priority action 113 in the Regional Economic Strategy, Enriching Nature and the contribution to Natural England's Strategic Direction.

This revised Business Plan clarifies the rationale for the NENW Programme and the approach until December 2009. This revision takes into account the progress made in the first 18 months and the positive outcome of the NWDA Change Control, along with business planning sessions held by the team in 2008 and early 2009. The primary audience for this Business Plan is the Natural Economy Northwest Team and Programme Board, the latter for approval.

1.2 Changes

This July 2009 edition of the NENW Business Plan differs from the July 2008 version in the following ways:

- The Outputs & Outcomes section has been updated (see section 8).
- Milestones have been identified for the remainder of the Natural Economy Northwest Programme (see section 9.1).
- The budget profile against the portfolio of Natural Economy Northwest projects has been reprofiled (see section 9.2).
- Work programmes and work priorities for team members have been updated (see section 10).
- An Action Plan has been added to the Legacy section (see section 7.7).
- The list of Natural Economy Northwest reports has been updated (see section 3.3).
- The position to date section has been updated (see section 3.2).

1.3 The Nature of Our Business

At the heart of the NENW's ethos is the **vision** for a prosperous economic future with a thriving natural environment for the Northwest. The **mission** is to maximise the economic benefit from existing and new investment in the natural environment.

Investment in the **environmental economy**, of which the **natural environment** is a significant component, contributes to economic prosperity through 109,000 jobs and £2.6 billion Gross Value Added to the region's economy.

The principal **funders** for this £3 million, 3 year NENW programme are the Northwest Regional Development Agency, SITA Landfill Trust and Natural England, working directly with key partners from the public, business and voluntary sectors.

The NENW programme is underpinned by its current **Business Plan** with the strong principle of working with and through existing strategies and organisations, towards a legacy within the region by December 2009. By that time significant progress will have

been made towards mainstreaming the natural environment in the future prosperity of the Northwest.

The objectives of Natural Economy Northwest come under the 3 Ds of **Direction, Delivery and Dissemination**.

- **Direction** - to provide leadership on priorities and promotion at the regional / sub-regional level
- **Delivery** - to enable action on the ground through new project planning approaches, training and development and joined up funding in a strategic framework
- **Dissemination** - to make research on economic benefits, best practice and the value of healthy ecosystems available to practitioners in a clearly understood, easy to use way

The **Green Infrastructure approach** underpins the programme. Green Infrastructure is the Region's life support system - the network of natural environment components and green and blue spaces that lies within and between the North West's cities, towns and villages and provides multiple social, economic and environmental benefits. The purpose here is to optimise the economic benefits of current and future investment in the Green Infrastructure.

The **overall outcomes** that will result from the successful development of the natural economy are summarised below. Natural Economy Northwest will create the necessary conditions to enable delivery organisations to grow, improve and enhance these outcomes:

- **Economic growth & investment** - businesses attract and retain more motivated staff in greener settings
- **Land and property values** - views of natural landscapes can add up to 18% to property values
- **Labour productivity** - green spaces near workplaces reduce sickness absence, increasing productivity
- **Tourism** - rural tourism supports 37,500 jobs in the Northwest
- **Products from the land** - 40,000 people work in agriculture in the Northwest
- **Health & wellbeing** - green infrastructure reduces pollution which leads to asthma and heart disease
- **Recreation & leisure** - footpaths, cycle paths and bridleways enable healthy, low-cost recreation
- **Quality of place** - community-owned green spaces can create jobs and local pride
- **Land & biodiversity** - green infrastructure provides vital habitats and jobs managing the land
- **Flood alleviation & water management** - urban green spaces reduce pressure on drainage and flood defences
- **Climate change adaptation & mitigation** - green infrastructure can counter soaring summer temperatures in cities

1.4 Legacy

The team and partners are fully committed to the process of mainstreaming the natural economy within the strategies, organisation and ways of working within the Northwest Region. The actual delivery of the legacy will depend on the region's approach towards sustainable economic growth, sustainable communities and a rich and healthy natural environment as well as the priorities and resources of public, business and voluntary organisations.

1.5 Programme Delivery

These outcomes are included in figure 2 which also emphasises the contribution of the NENW programme to the delivery of regional strategies through the existing infrastructure of groups and organisations. The strategic positioning of NENW within the region is to develop the natural economy to enhance the delivery of existing strategies. NENW occupies a neutral position, a brokering role between the economy and the environment sectors, facilitating the ability of both to deliver natural economy outcomes.

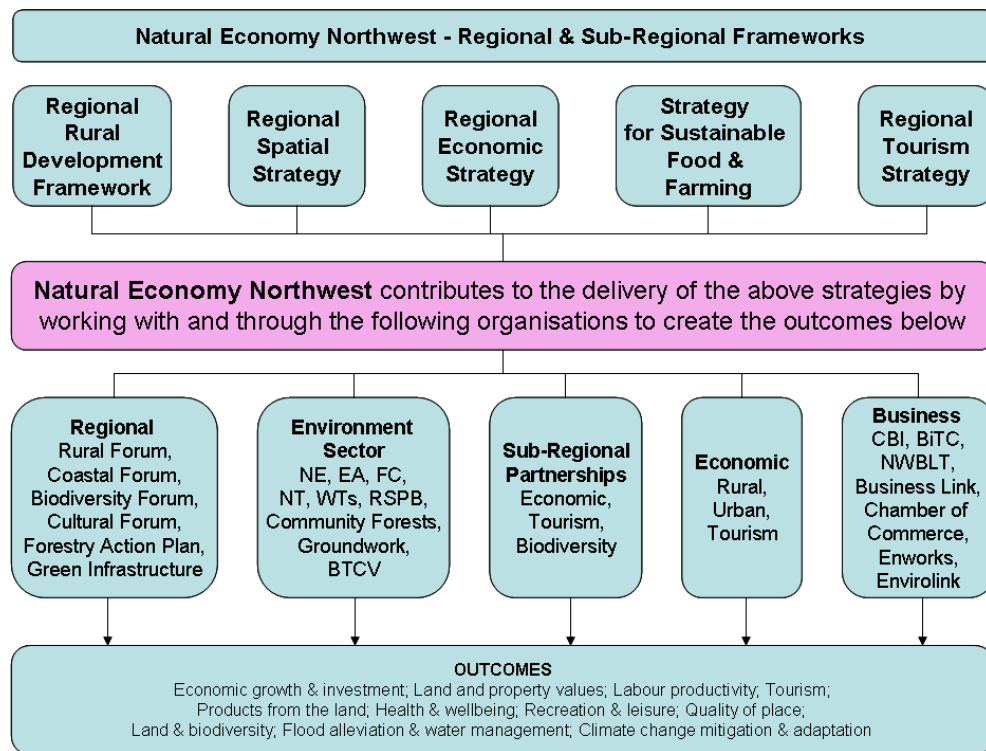


Figure 2: Natural Economy Northwest Regional Positioning

The themed project portfolio is included in figure 3, the full details of each including the respective outputs are in the full Business Plan. In the full Business Plan the synergy between the portfolio of NENW projects and key regional strategies is explored. Therefore the programme's contribution to the RES and other strategies can be seen:

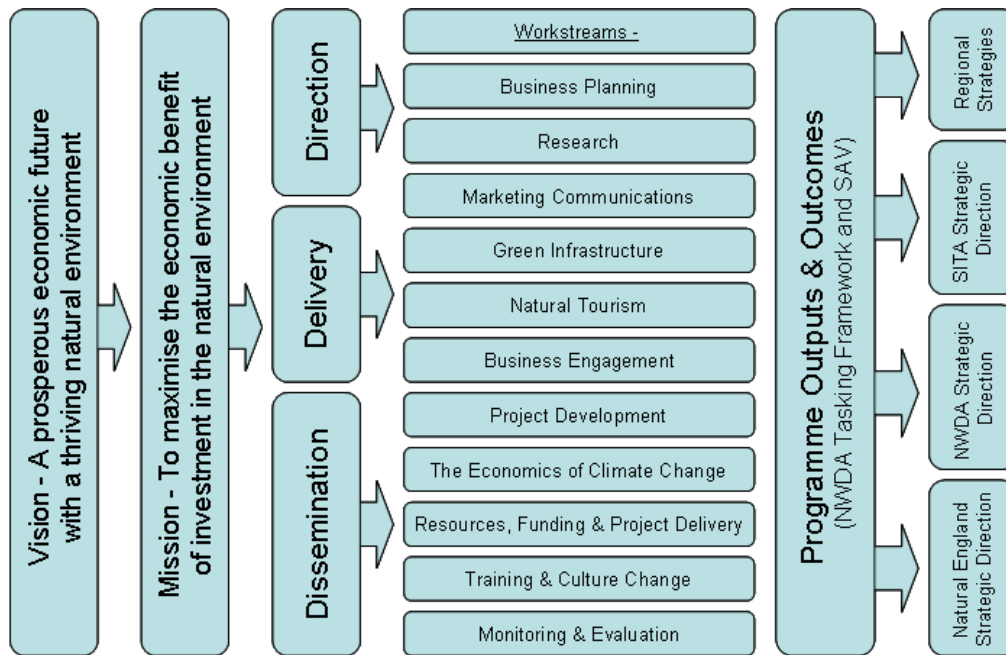


Figure 3: Natural Economy Northwest Programme Delivery

1.6 Drivers and Demands

Our target market is the regional strategic bodies and the sub-regional delivery bodies for the economy, business and the environment.

The drivers are:

- NWDA RES Action 113
- Sub National Review
- The Single Regional Strategy
- Cross-government PSA 28 - 'to secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future'
- Marketing activity by NWDA
- The development of Natural England
- The government emphasis on quality of life and sustainable development
- The England Biodiversity Strategy
- The Government Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets
- Increasing emphasis on Corporate Social Responsibility by public and business organisations
- The ODPM Communities Plan / Northern Way
- The Natural Tourism potential
- And climate change adaptation

The NENW programme aims to address the following current demands at a number of levels:

- For delivery mechanisms and processes for the growth in the natural economy anticipated by the Regional Economic Strategy
- For the added value that can be realised for integrating the natural environment targets with the economic and social targets in the RES & other regional strategies.
- For re-linking the natural environment with people through identifying practical and tangible benefits for communities and society in general
- For better value for money from existing funding streams
- For implementing the recommendations of “Marketing the Natural Environment” report, the recommendations of the “NW Wetlands Network” report and the implementation of the proposed Green Infrastructure Guidance
- For local partnerships which need to identify the economic benefits of their natural environment projects
- For sub-regional economic and Green Infrastructure strategies.
- For Tourism sector for realising the potential for natural tourism development.

There is also a demand that will be generated through the increased awareness of the potential economic and social benefits. Such new demands will need to be supported by services, tools and processes to deliver these benefits. Some key areas for these increased demands are likely to be:

- Businesses that will have been convinced by the benefits of integrating the natural environment within their operations
- Economic regeneration organisations that will want to include the natural environment opportunities in their overall approach
- Local communities that will want support to realise the value that the natural environment can contribute to their sustainable futures
- Health organisations that become aware of the social benefits of the natural environment

1.7 Marketing & Communications

Our **marketing position** is to work with and through existing organisations to increase their capacity and capability for developing the natural environment. We will not duplicate existing arrangements. The intention is not to set up new services but to help existing services to evolve to support the delivery of the anticipated benefits. The emphasis will be on funding action to facilitate change.

The **communication aim** is to promote the benefits from the development of the natural economy sector and to create relationships with key organisations to influence their culture, policy, strategy and programmes.

To summarise, the overarching aim of **the communications campaign** is simple:

- To raise the profile of the natural economy, and position it as central to the region’s social and economic prosperity

The Communications Strategy will be achieved by developing:

- An events strategy - June stakeholder launch and November lunch for business opinion formers, along with a final year event.
- A marketing strategy that hinges on a major cross-sector campaign (the '100 Days Campaign')
- A PR strategy that supports the products that the NENW Programme produces

Stakeholder Influencing Plans have been outlined for the NWDA, Natural England, SITA Trust, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Natural Tourism Sector, Green Infrastructure Sector, Business, Funding, Regional & Sub-Regional Strategies and Training Programme.

1.8 Natural Economy Northwest Reports

The Natural Economy Northwest website is the programme's primary route for stakeholder communications www.naturaleconomynorthwest.co.uk. A number of different types of resources are published there from case studies and press releases to NENW and partner reports.

1.9 Funding

The funding income profiled over the lifetime of the Programme is as follows:

Cash contributors	2006 - 07		2007 - 08		2008 - 09		2009 - 10		Total
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	
NWDA	4,113	326,342.62	70,000	177,358.53	75,887	304,149.18	0.00	74,250	1,032,100.33
Peter Wilmers costs (NOT claimed from NWDA)	0.00	0.00	0.00	43,800	0.00	49,009.59	0.00	36,750	129,559.59
Natural England	0.00	35,000	0.00	23,000	0.00	81,585.20	0.00	137,200	276,785.20
NWRA	0.00	3,000	0.00	3,000	0.00	3,000	0.00	0.00	9,000.00
Forestry Commission	0.00	2,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
SITA	500,000	0.00	500,000	0.00	500,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500,000.00
									2,949,455.12

Strategic future funding is a strategy in itself to optimise the creation of future project funding. With the support of NENW the NENW Investment Forum (formerly the ANEC - Access to the Natural Environment Consortium - Group) are developing two pilot projects (City Cooling and Worklessness ILM) that will lead to the formulation of consortium bids to suitable funding targets.

1.10 Organisational Structure

The organisational structure includes:

- The Board
- The Green Infrastructure Steering Group

- The Natural Tourism Steering Group

The NENW Team includes:

- Programme Director - Will Williams (Natural England)
- Natural Tourism Manager - Katie Read (seconded from Cumbria Tourism)
- Green Infrastructure Manager - Peter Wilmers (seconded from NWDA)
- Business Manager - Gareth Richards (now employed by Natural England on a short-term contract)

1.11 Governance

The NENW programme management is as follows. The Board approves governance, financial, Risks & Issues, progress, business planning. The Natural Economy Northwest Business Manager provides quarterly and annual progress reports. The Business Plan is revised annually.

The delivery of the Natural Economy Northwest Programme is guided by the Green Infrastructure and Natural Tourism Steering Groups. Steering Group members contribute according to their expertise, role and available time commitment.

The Business Manager monitors and manages Programme spending through liaison with the Project Managers and Programme Director.

Project Managers have the responsibility for managing allocated project budgets in liaison with the Business Manager.

Managing projects in the portfolio is delegated through a number of MoUs, with a Natural Economy Northwest team member taking the lead role in ensuring delivery. Lead individuals report back to the team and steering group for advice and direction. MoU organisations manage contractors and then invoice Natural England.

Natural England, through the NENW Programme, has signed up to a **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** which lays out the NWDA reporting requirements for the lifetime of the Programme. This document helps to ensure that the Programme delivers on time, to budget and to the agreed level of outputs.

This revised Business Plan ensures the regional positioning of NENW in developing the natural economy within the delivery of the region's strategies and focuses on generating the outputs and outcomes that will enable and equip delivery organisations, both economic and environmental, to integrate the natural economy within their operations.