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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

1.1. This evaluation of the Community Forest Programme (CFP) was undertaken by Land Use Consultants and SQW Ltd. on behalf of the Countryside Agency, which has lead responsibility for managing the Programme up to March 2005.

1.2. Following 15 years of national support for the CFP, and with a change in core funding arrangements from this year, it is an appropriate time to review and evaluate the programme and to inform its future development, including the potential role of community forestry in the countryside around towns in the future.

1.3. The Treasury Green Book states that when any policy, programme or project is completed or has advanced to a pre-determined degree, it should undergo a comprehensive evaluation. Evaluation examines the outturn of a policy, programme or project against what was expected, and is designed to ensure that the lessons learned are fed back into the decision-making process. This ensures government action is continually refined to reflect what best achieves objectives and promotes the public interest.

AIMS OF THE EVALUATION

1.4. The evaluation addresses seven key questions, which focus on identifying how well the CFP has performed against its original aims and objectives (see box below).

Key questions addressed by the evaluation

1. Has the CFP delivered its original aims and objectives? If not why not?
2. How and why have the CFP’s aims, objectives and outputs evolved and expanded since its establishment and what has this meant for the Programme?
3. What policy, structural, operational and resource factors have contributed to or limited the CFP’s ability to achieve its aims and objectives?
4. Does the programme represent the most efficient and cost effective approach to achieving those aims and objectives?
5. What is the impact and significance of the CFP’s achievements, in terms of influencing policy, outputs and wider achievements, taking account of its potential future contribution to existing and emerging environmental, social and economic

1 Community forestry is a general term, many of the features of which are encompassed by the CFP. Community forestry is broader than the traditional process of woodland creation and management, encompassing not just the woodland itself and its associated silvicultural concerns but also its environmental, social and economic setting. In this context community forestry is relevant to a wider range of agendas, providing a mechanism through which forestry can make important contributions to regeneration, health, social inclusion, sustainable development, biodiversity, education and life-long learning. Paper 6/01 of the England Forestry Forum 10 January 2001.

1.5. The evaluation also considers how the CFP is contributing to several ‘key themes’ (see box below). The key themes include targets for Government departments and Regional Development Agencies, and also aims and indicators set by the Countryside Agency and objectives for forestry set out in the England Forestry Strategy.

**Key themes addressed by the evaluation**

- Government PSAs and departmental SDAs including regional delivery targets e.g. Tier 2 and 3 targets
- Criteria for sustainable development
- The Countryside Agency’s 20 indicator themes
- The Countryside Agency’s rural urban fringe vision
- The England Forestry Strategy.

**APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION**

1.6. The evaluation focuses on the performance of the Community Forest Programme as a whole, rather than the achievements of the individual Community Forests. It assesses the performance of the CFP in terms of:

- Priority targets (the CFP has been monitored against a number of targets annually).
- Its overarching objectives (17 in total), which were defined at the outset of the Programme.
- The targets of Government departments and Regional Development Agencies, the aims and indicators set by the Countryside Agency, and objectives for forestry set out in the England Forestry Strategy.
- Wider outcomes and policy agendas (which go beyond the original objectives set for the CFP). These included ‘process’ outcomes, such as partnership working and policy influence, as well as impacts on the ground.

1.7. To facilitate understanding, the evaluation considers the CFP’s performance in relation to four topics, representing the main areas of operation and achievement of the CFs. The topics are:

- Increasing woodland cover and improving the environment
- Providing for access, recreation, art and culture
- Regenerating local economies
- Encouraging community development and lifelong learning

1.8. **Table 1.1** sets out the Objectives and Priority Targets addressed in each of the five topic areas.

**Table 1.1: What is covered by each section of the evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five topics of the evaluation</th>
<th>Performance against CFP Objectives</th>
<th>Performance against CFP Priority Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing woodland cover and improving the environment (Chapter 3)</td>
<td>• Objective 1: To regenerate the environment of the Green Belt and equivalent areas where it is public policy to keep it open, and help to ensure that it is permanently green and open.&lt;br&gt;• Objective 2: To improve the landscape of the area, including reclamation of derelict land, to create a visually exciting and functionally diverse environment&lt;br&gt;• Objective 4: To protect areas of high quality landscape or historical or archaeological interest.&lt;br&gt;• Objective 5: To protect sites of nature conservation value and create new opportunities for nature conservation.</td>
<td>• First Order Priority (1) 'Creating well-designed woodland that is:&lt;br&gt;  • of at least 20ha with full public access&lt;br&gt;  • on smaller sites with full public access adjacent to housing, connecting to other woodland sites, part of a recreational network and/or on damaged or reclaimed land'.&lt;br&gt;• Second Order Priority (6) 'Creating woodland on sites other than those in Priority 1 where there are significant landscape, heritage and/or biodiversity gains'.&lt;br&gt;• Second Order Priority (7) 'Securing landscape, heritage and biodiversity benefits in the non-wooded parts of the Community Forests, where opportunities are presented by new developments or on agricultural or reclaimed land, including hedgerow restoration'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing for access, recreation, art and culture</td>
<td>• Objective 3: To increase opportunities for sport and recreation, including artistic and</td>
<td>• First Order Priority (2): Securing access to and good management of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five topics of the evaluation</td>
<td>Performance against CFP Objectives</td>
<td>Performance against CFP Priority Targets</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Chapter 4)</td>
<td>cultural events, and access.</td>
<td>existing woodlands meeting Priority 1 criteria</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Objective 16: To complement the Government’s priorities for inner cities, by providing for associated leisure and open space needs at the physically closest locations.</td>
<td>• First Order Priority (3): Creating and re-opening good quality walking/cycling/riding networks for leisure, recreation and/or commuting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regenerating local economies (Chapter 5)</td>
<td>• Objective 12: To seek private sector support to implement the forest and to invest in leisure and other relevant service sectors.</td>
<td>• First Order Priority 5: Securing financial and in-kind investment from local businesses and external sources to support major restoration and recreation projects leading to environmental regeneration, and to develop a woodland economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Objective 7: To protect the best agricultural land and increase opportunities for farm diversification elsewhere in accordance with Government agricultural and local planning policies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Objective 8: To establish a supply of timber and other woodland products.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Objective 13: To create jobs in the new woodland industries, both management of woodland and use of the raw materials.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Objective 10: To give public and private sector confidence in the long-term prospects for the area and to provide a proper base for investment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Objective 15: To sustain other local jobs by providing an outstanding environment as a comparative economic advantage over competitor areas.</td>
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<td>• Objective 11: To improve the environment near housing and local industry and to increase the value of properties and businesses.</td>
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<td>Five topics of the evaluation</td>
<td>Performance against CFP Objectives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Objective 14: To create jobs in the leisure industry developed in and around the Community Forest.</td>
<td>• First Order Priority 4: Securing involvement in the Community Forest by a wide range of local communities, especially those socially excluded from their environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging community development and lifelong learning (Chapter 6)</td>
<td>• Objective 6: To provide new opportunities for educational use of the area, and ensure the mosaic of habitats in the forest can be used for the full range of environmental education needs of the surrounding schools. Also to ensure that urban schools are not disadvantaged in meeting the needs of the National Curriculum. • Objective 9: To achieve a high level of local community commitment to the concept and involvement in it implementation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process outcomes (Chapter 7)</td>
<td>• Objective 17 ‘to remain flexible in the light of changes, such as in the leisure market’ is being achieved to a high level.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.9. In addition to considering the performance of the CFP against the above objectives, and targets, an indication is given of ‘key themes’ to which the CFP is also contributing under each of the five topics of evaluation.

**METHODOLOGY**

1.10. The evaluation is based on an analysis of published data held in the Annual Monitoring Reports, supplemented by data obtained from a process of consultation, and any specific project reports produced by the CF teams.

**Research**

1.11. **Appendix I** sets out the range of literature reviewed, including research and evaluation reports on the CFP produced by the Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission, Government Departments, and academic research.

**Consultation with stakeholders**

1.12. An extensive consultation exercise sought to build up the evidence of the CFP’s achievements and ascertain the views of key stakeholders about CFs. Structured interviews were undertaken with representatives of a range of national, regional and local organisations, as well as the Directors of the Community Forests Teams.
1.13. An interview proforma was prepared for each group of interviews, to ensure consistent data was collected from each interviewee. The proformas were tailored to obtain the most relevant information from each organisation.

1.14. Four of the CF Director interviews were undertaken as face-to-face meetings; the remainder by telephone. The consultants also discussed the interim findings of the evaluation with the Directors at a meeting in October 2004. All other interviews were carried out by telephone. All interviewees received a note providing background to the study prior to the interview as well as the interview proforma.

1.15. Appendix 2 provides details of the organisations and contacts therein who were involved in the consultation process.

Data

1.16. Data to underpin the evaluation were gathered from a range of sources:

- Consultation with stakeholders, particularly the Community Forest Directors, who provided examples to illustrate performance against the 17 objectives
- Published sources, such as *The National Community Forest Partnership: Examples of Good Practice* by Penn Associates (2002)
- Data from CF annual monitoring reports.

1.17. It is acknowledged that there are limitations to the data used in the evaluation:

- Much information is anecdotal and speculative drawn from interviews.
- The CF annual monitoring reports measure progress against the more limited range of Priority Targets set for CFs, but do not directly provide data in relation to the 17 objectives. This also raises the issue that the CFs arguably work to the Priority Targets more so than the objectives.
- In terms of data available for undertaking the assessment of monetary inputs and value for money, the data available in the CF annual monitoring reports is inadequate: it is inconsistent and incomplete. This highlights a significant weakness of the CFP: public sector programmes need to be accountable in order to justify expenditure, and quality monitoring systems should be part of this.

Distinguishing between inputs, outputs and outcomes

1.18. The evaluation distinguishes between the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the CFP:

- **Inputs** – Government funding and other support to CFs (Chapter 2).
- **Outputs** - direct outputs– typically physical achievements 'on the ground', measured against CFP Objectives. A consideration is also given as to how these direct outputs also contribute to CF Priority Targets and other policy agendas (as identified in the ‘Key Themes’) (Chapters 3 to 7).
• **Outcomes** - CFP contributions to broader policy agendas which are equally, if not more important than the achievement of the CFP’s objectives and targets, with regard to the succession and/or mainstreaming of community forestry (wider outcomes are drawn out in Chapters 3 to 6 and ‘process’ outcomes are discussed in Chapter 7).

**Measuring performance**

**Priority targets**

1.19. Performance against Priority Targets is measured through the use of data from the CF annual monitoring reports.

**Objectives**

1.20. The extent to which each objective has been met is classified into four categories. The use of categorisation seeks to bring objectivity to the evaluation; however, the judgement for each objective necessarily involves a degree of professional reasoning (in some cases based on limited data/evidence, as discussed below in relation to research, consultations and data). The categories are as follows:

• **Achieving objective to a low level** – The CFP is failing to meet the objective, or only addressing the objective to a limited degree.

• **Achieving objective to an intermediate level** – The CFP is addressing the objective to some extent, but not fully meeting it. Where an objective has several components (e.g. Objective 5 which seeks to protect existing nature conservation sites and create new ones), the CFP is either meeting aspects of the objective well (but failing to address other aspects to any significant degree) or overall addressing most aspects to some extent, but not to such a degree that could be considered a ‘high level’.

• **Achieving objective to a high level** – The CFP is meeting the objective to a significant degree and therefore can be judged to be performing well against the objective.

• **Insufficient evidence to judge** – Where quantitative and/or qualitative data is insufficient to draw clear conclusions.

1.21. The assessment of performance against objectives is based on quantitative data as available (e.g. from the CF annual monitoring reports), supported by case studies and illustrative examples.

**Wider outcomes**

1.22. Achievement of a range of wider outcomes is assessed qualitatively, through identifying other relevant policy agendas to which CFP achievements on the ground are contributing. For example, in terms of environmental objectives, the CFP is starting to play a role in delivering renewable energy, which is contributing to achievement of Government policy for renewable energy, which is not one of the CFPs’ objectives as such.
Value for money

1.23. The assessment of value for money focuses on the outputs of the CFP in relation to the Regional Tier 2 and 3 Targets, which are set by the Government to evaluate investment performance in the English Regions. These targets, which are managed by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), provide appropriate ‘benchmarks’ for the CFP, and will provide an important benchmark when assessing the future funding of the CFP.

1.24. The evaluation also seeks to demonstrate additionality, through an assessment of the CFP’s ability to use its initial investment to lever additional support and funding from a range of sources, including the private sector.

REPORT STRUCTURE

1.25. The remainder of the evaluation report is structured as follows (the boxes show the key questions which each chapter addresses):

- **Chapter 2** provides the context for the evaluation, in terms of origins, aims and inputs.
  
  Key question 2. How and why have the CFP’s aims, objectives and outputs evolved and expanded since its establishment and what has this meant for the Programme?

- **Chapters 3 to 6** set out the findings of the evaluation in terms of performance against objectives, and the key ‘themes’ and other wider outcomes

- **Chapter 7** sets out how the CFP has contributed to a range of wider ‘process’ outcomes. This looks at the positive benefits created by the mode of operation of the Community Forests, over and above what they have achieved in terms of outputs on the ground. For example, the influence the CFP has had on policy development and on establishing partnership working.

  Key question 1. Has the CFP delivered its original aims and objectives? If not why not?

  Key question 2. How and why have the CFP’s aims, objectives and outputs evolved and expanded since its establishment and what has this meant for the Programme?

  Key question 3. What policy, structural, operational and resource factors have contributed to or limited the CFP’s ability to achieve its aims and objectives?

  Key question 5. What is the impact and significance of the CFP’s achievements, in terms of influencing policy, outputs and wider achievements, taking account of its potential future contribution to existing and emerging environmental, social and economic policy agendas?

- **Chapter 8** sets out the evaluation of value for money

  Key question 4. Does the programme represent the most efficient and cost effective approach to achieving those aims and objectives?

- Finally, **Chapter 9** draws together the evidence set out throughout the report, and provides a summary of conclusions and an overview of what the evaluation
means overall, and recommendations for the way ahead for the CFP and community forestry generally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key question 5. What is the impact and significance of the CFP's achievements, in terms of influencing policy, outputs and wider achievements, taking account of its potential future contribution to existing and emerging environmental, social and economic policy agendas?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Key question 6. What conclusions, challenges and recommendations can be made on how best to sustain and realise the future potential of the 12 Community Forests?

Key question 7. What wider technical and methodological lessons can be learned in relation to the future planning and management of the wider rural-urban fringe?
2. ORIGINS, OBJECTIVES AND INPUTS

ORIGINS & OBJECTIVES

2.1. A paper from the Countryside Agency entitled Trees for people: A better countryside (CP99/9) provides a useful overview of the context for the development of Community Forests. Until relatively recently (the last 15 years or so), the aims and objectives of the forestry sector, the National Parks Commission and the (then) Countryside Commission were largely diametric. By the 1980s, woodland policy was split between traditional broadleaved woodlands, often small scale and managed for amenity purposes with little economic return from timber production, encouraged by the Countryside Commission, and commercial softwood plantations in the uplands encouraged by the Forestry Commission and the timber industry.

2.2. The Countryside Commission was keen to see a new approach to multi-purpose forestry replacing what it saw as an outmoded conservation versus production argument. In 1987 the Commission launched what became a ten year campaign to secure a re-orientation of forestry policy in England. It published "Forestry in the Countryside" (CCP245, 1987) which set out the Commission’s objectives. This report advocated the creation of two major initiatives - the National Forest, and the Community Forests, as demonstrations of this new approach, supplemented by smaller scale projects.

2.3. The Programme of 12 Community Forests (alongside the National Forest) was launched by the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission in 1989, as an experimental Programme to develop and test the use of multipurpose forestry as a mechanism to revitalise and regenerate 5,230 square kilometres (about 15 times the area of the Isle Wight) of countryside and greenspace around 12 major towns and cities (Appendix 3 provides a summary of the location and context of the 12 CFs). The CFP was seeking to respond to a number of key issues at the rural-urban fringe including the need to integrate forestry with recreational interests, problems of land management and despoiled land e.g. through waste management or mineral extraction.

2.4. In 1990 the government approved the Forest Plans of the first three CFs. The remaining nine were established in the early 1990s and had their Forest Plans ‘signed off’ in 1995. The 12 locations were identified to ensure a good geographic spread, with at least one forest in each region (see Figure 2.1). Existing landscape character was also a factor in the choice of locations, as was the potential degree of political/financial support. The timescales for the operation of this ‘experimental’ project are not easy to trace. However, in 1995 when all the Forest Plans were signed off, a 10 year programme was announced. Since then it is evident from Government announcements that the CFP is considered to be a longer term programme which will continue beyond 2005 (the end of the 10 year programme timescale). For example a press release in October 2001 noted that ‘the long term
aim is to increase woodland cover to around 30% of the area over the next 30-40 years\textsuperscript{3}.  

\textsuperscript{3} News Release 4328 Government Committed to the Community Forest Partnership. 16 October 2001.
Evaluation of the Community Forest Programme

Figure 2.1: Location of Community Forests

Key
- Community Forests
- Large Urban Areas
- County Boundary

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2.5. **Figure 2.2** illustrates the significant populations falling with a 20km catchment of each CF. **Figure 2.3** illustrates the context of the CFs in relation to a range of statutory nature and landscape designations.

### THE CHANGING CONTEXT

2.6. Since the late 1980s, the role of multi-purpose forestry has increasingly gained acceptance. The publication of the Government’s forestry strategy for England, in 1998, which sets out as public policy many of the approaches advocated by the Countryside Commission over the previous ten years, represents a key milestone in the mainstreaming of community forestry principles.

2.7. Over this period, the policy context has developed considerably. Two key themes may be identified:

- The emergence of sustainable development policy, which seeks to integrate environmental, social and economic objectives;
- Policies relating to urban and rural areas, and the interface between the two.

2.8. In 1990 the Government published its Environment White Paper *This Common Inheritance* introducing the concept of sustainable development in England and Wales. This policy emerged in the wake of the 1987 Brundtland report, which first drew the concept of sustainable development to mainstream audiences, calling for a global partnership to seek sustainable development, which it defined as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

2.9. In 1999 the Government published the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (DETR, 1999), which has four objectives:

- Social progress which meets the needs of everyone;
- Effective protection of the local and global environment;
- Prudent use of natural resources;
- High and stable levels of economic growth.

2.10. The Government’s 2005 revised strategy, *Securing the Future*, builds on the 1999 strategy with stronger focus on international and societal dimensions. Its four priorities are sustainable consumption and production, climate change, natural resource protection and sustainable communities.

2.11. This policy context has provided an ideal setting for the evolution of the concept of community forestry as embodied in the CFP, which represents a model of a local level sustainable development approach.

2.12. The policy traditionally associated with the rural urban fringe is Green Belt. Although the original concept of Green Belts paid attention to environmental concerns, its main contribution has been to serve spatial planning purposes; primarily the prevention of urban sprawl. However, since the publication of PPG 2 (Green Belts),
in 1992, which defined positive objectives for land in designated Green Belts, the Countryside Agency has done much to raise awareness of the need to address this policy area.

2.13. A report under the Countryside Agency Research Programme on Sustainable Development in the Countryside Around Towns notes that policy for the rural-urban fringe is often overtaken in priority by the problems of inner cities and of rural countryside. However, the study notes that there is a growing appreciation of the importance of the area at the edge of towns and cities, and the linkages between urban and rural areas. For example, these linkages are recognised in the Rural and Urban White Papers of 2000. The CFP has done much to influence this changing awareness of the rural-urban fringe (as discussed in Chapter 7 on process outcomes), and has also benefited and is likely to continue to benefit from this evolving policy consciousness, which provides a clear locus for the programme.

2.14. Far from operating in a vacuum, CFs are one of a number of initiatives that focus on the rural-urban fringe. Appendix 4 provides a characterisation of the urban fringe outlining some of the issues facing this area which CFs and other initiatives are seeking to address, and an overview of the other initiatives currently operating in the urban fringe.
Evaluation of the Community Forest Programme

Figure 2.2: Population Density for areas within 20km of a Community Forest (Quintile Classification)

Legend:
- Community Forests
- County Boundary
- Wales
Evaluation of the Community Forest Programme

Figure 2.3: Community Forests with other major statutory environmental and landscape designations

Key
- Green: Community Forests
- Light green: National Parks
- Blue: AONB
- Pink: Heritage Coasts
- Light grey: County Boundary
- Dark grey: Large Urban Areas

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OBJECTIVES OF THE CFP

2.15. The CFP’s vision is ‘to transform the landscapes closest to where most people live and work, assisting urban and rural regeneration and enhancing the health, well-being and quality of life of local communities.’

2.16. Fourteen objectives for ‘creating Community Forests’ were agreed by the Department of Environment and the Treasury at the start of the programme. These were then interpreted in the first tranche of Forest Plans (formally approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1995). For example the Forest of Mercia Forest Plan, dated 1993, presents a modified set of objectives as does the plan for Watling Chase.

2.17. The original 14 objectives remain the overarching objectives for the CFP, although they have since been broken down further into 17 objectives, but this simply reflects the fact that two objectives have been divided into several separate objectives (see box below – which indicates which objectives were originally combined).

2.18. The more recently revised Forest Plans (e.g. The Tees Forest in 2000, Great Western Forest Plan 2002) all use the 17 objectives set out below. Therefore, there has been no change to the overarching objectives for the CFP since the programme commenced. However, the original individual Forest Plans (approved in 1995) may have interpreted the objectives and presented an alternative wording/set of objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Forest Programme Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To regenerate the environment of the Green Belt and equivalent area where it is public policy to keep it open, and help to ensure that it is permanently green and open.</td>
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<td>2. To improve the landscape of the area, including reclamation of derelict land, to create a visually exciting and functionally diverse environment</td>
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<td>6. To provide new opportunities for educational use of the area, and ensure the mosaic of habitats in the forest can be used for the full range of environmental education needs of the surrounding schools. Also to ensure that urban schools are not disadvantaged in meeting the needs of the National Curriculum.</td>
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<td>7. To protect the best agricultural land and increase opportunities for farm diversification elsewhere in accordance with Government agricultural and local planning policies.</td>
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4 http://www.countryside.gov.uk/CountrysideForTowns/countrysideAroundTowns/communityforests/index.asp
5 Progress on Community Forests (CP9850) Prepared by Deborah Cassell, Local Identity Branch.
in its implementation.

10. To give public and private sector confidence in the long-term prospects for the area and to provide a proper base for investment.

11. To improve the environment near housing and local industry and to increase the value of properties and businesses.

*(n.b. originally objectives 10 and 11 were combined)*

12. To seek private sector support to implement the forest and to invest in leisure and other relevant service sectors.

13. To create jobs in the new woodland industries, both management of woodland and use of the raw materials.

14. To create jobs in the leisure industry developed in and around the Community Forest.

15. To sustain other local jobs by providing an outstanding environment as a comparative economic advantage over competitor areas.

*(n.b. originally objectives 13, 14 and 15 were combined into one objective)*

16. To complement the Government’s priorities for inner cities, by providing for associated leisure and open space needs at the physically closest locations.

17. To remain flexible in the light of changes, such as in the leisure market.

### Priority Targets

2.19. The CFP also has seven Priority Targets, divided into first and second order priorities (see box below). These were agreed by the National Partners and Defra in 1994. Since 1994, data on progress against the targets have been collected from each CF by independent consultants⁶ and presented in an annual monitoring report.

#### First order Priorities

- Priority 1: Creating well-designed woodland that is:
  - of at least 20ha with full public access
  - on smaller sites with full public access adjacent to housing, connecting to other woodland sites, part of a recreational network and/or on damaged or reclaimed land.

- Priority 2: Securing access to and good management of existing woodlands meeting Priority 1 criteria.

- Priority 3: Creating and re-opening good quality walking/cycling/riding networks for leisure, recreation and/or commuting.

- Priority 4: Securing involvement in the Community Forest by a wide range of local communities, especially those socially excluded from their environment.

- Priority 5: Securing financial and in-kind investment from local businesses and external

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⁶ The Annual Monitoring Reports have been produced by Project Partners Research.
sources to support major restoration and recreation projects leading to environmental regeneration, and to develop a woodland economy.

Second order Priorities

- Priority 6: Creating woodland on sites other than those in Priority 1 where there are significant landscape, heritage and/or biodiversity gains.

- Priority 7: Securing landscape, heritage and biodiversity benefits in the non-wooded parts of the Community Forests, where opportunities are presented by new developments or on agricultural or reclaimed land, including hedgerow restoration.

Diversity

2.20. Whilst all 12 CFs are working to the same objectives and targets, there is clear variation between them. As well as the aim of the CFP to encourage diversity, a range of external factors have contributed to this, for example, forests such as the Great North Forest have very much been responding to the regeneration agenda, whereas many of the southern forests (e.g. the Great Western Forest and Watling Chase) have been responding to development pressures.

INPUTS TO THE PROGRAMME

2.21. This section provides an overview of inputs to the CFP from 1990 to 2003, including a review of Government funding, other funding sources and non-monetary inputs (including time inputs by Countryside Agency staff teams and the voluntary sector).

Monetary funding

2.22. Core Government funding has been an important source of funding in the early years of the Programme and up to the present day. Its existence provides the programme with credibility as a national programme with a direct tap into central government funds. National partner funding is allocated through the Countryside Agency, which supports around half the costs of each CF Team, and also contributes towards project implementation. However, the CFs also rely heavily on a range of other sources of funding, which include:

- Other public sector funding, for example from the Rural Development Commission or Single Pot
- Private sector funding from businesses
- Donations
- In-kind support
- European funding
- Lottery money
- Landfill tax revenue
- Other grant funding such as training grants or local charity awards.
The categories used to monitor funding sources have changed throughout the 14 years of CF operation. It is difficult therefore to analyse how funding opportunities have varied over time. Nevertheless an attempt has been made to do so. Annual monitoring of the CFP has collected the following financial data:

- **1990 – 1994** – data broken down into seven key funding sources: Countryside Commission, Local Authority, Forestry Commission, other Government, NGOs, private sector and miscellaneous public.

- **1994 – 2000** – data broken down into six categories of private and voluntary sector support: sponsorship and donations, support in kind, secondment, land transfers, land acquisitions and Landfill Tax, and eight categories of non-forestry funding benefiting the programme: Rural Challenge, Rural Development Commission, National Lottery, Single Regeneration Budget, training grants, European Union, other funding sources and other public sector.

- **2001 – 2003** – data categorised into nine key funding sources: business, donations, in-kind, European funding, Lottery, Landfill Tax, public sector, national partners, other.

**Key trends in funding**

**Public Sector Funding**

Data are not available to show national partner support for the Forests for the full programme period. For the early years, 1990-4, national partner support equalled £3.3m for the four year period. By 2000, when data again is recorded in monitoring reports, this figure had risen to £5.8m. The size of national partner support for the period 2000-2003 is illustrated in Figure 2.1, below.

![Figure 2.1: Public funding 2000-2003](image-url)
Grant funding (1994 – 2003)

2.25. Grant funding is recorded in monitoring reports for the period 1994-2003. Over the nine year period grant funding accounts for a total income of £128.4 million. The annual breakdown is shown in Figure 2.2. As this shows, the largest contributions were achieved in 1997/8, due to a particularly large National Lottery Fund contribution of £56m in this year. Total grant funding over the nine year period amounted to £128.4 million.
2.26. The breakdown by source is shown in Figure 2.3. It can be seen that National Lottery Funding is the most significant source of grant funding, accounting for 65% of the total. Landfill tax and European funding account for 8% and 9%, respectively, and the remainder is divided amongst Rural Challenge, Rural Development Commission, SRB, RDA Single Pot, EP funding and other miscellaneous sources.

Figure 2.3: Grant funding by source, 1994-2003
Private and voluntary sector funding (1990 – 2003)

2.27. As Figure 2.4 shows, private and voluntary sector funding\(^7\) rose steadily from 1990 and peaked at over £12m in 1998/9. In recent years this component of funding has been declining, but again it is not clear what the reasons behind this are.

![Figure 2.4: Total private & voluntary sector funding, 1990-2003](image)

Other inputs

2.28. The CFP has also drawn heavily on a range of other non-monetary inputs. The Community Forest Directors have highlighted the importance of:

- High quality, dedicated CF teams, of which staff members tend to stay for several years providing consistency;
- A strong partnership approach with a range of other organisations enabling effective delivery.

2.29. In terms of the latter point, Community Forests have developed strong links with a range of organisations, including Government funding agencies, as well as regional bodies and local organisations. Such links have not only led to funding, but also to provision of knowledge and expertise, staff time, secondments and use of buildings, to cite a few examples of non-monetary inputs.

2.30. Inputs from the voluntary and community sectors are also highly valued, particularly in terms of voluntary hours and, importantly, support from local communities for Community Forest initiatives.

\(^7\) Which includes Sponsorship and Donations, Support in Kind, Secondments, Land Transfers and Land Acquisitions and Landfill Tax.
2.31. The Community Forest Unit, established within the Countryside Commission at the outset of the programme, provided an important source of information and management support for the Community Forests, which is an additional input to the monetary inputs detailed above. The Unit had a variety of roles, including coordinating the production of a manual for the preparation of Community Forest Plans, identifying and commissioning research, managing the Commission’s financial contribution, and organising, monitoring and evaluating the programme, as well as an administrative function organising regular national meetings between Community Forest Directors and funding agencies. The unit employed between two and four people over the time of its operation. In recent years the Unit has been integrated with other activity within the framework of the Countryside Agency’s ‘Countryside Around Towns’ programme. This still provides vital support to the programme nationally and regionally.

CONCLUSION

2.32. This chapter sets out the background to the emergence of the CFP in terms of forestry policy, and demonstrates that the principles of Community Forests and more widely community forestry have gained increasing acceptance over the 15 years of the CFP’s operation, largely brought about by the key role that the CFP has played (this theme is discussed further in relation to ‘process outcomes’ in Chapter 7). It can also be seen that Community Forests were timely in terms of responding to and building on the sustainable development agenda and have been instrumental in developing the Countryside Agency’s agenda for the countryside around towns.

2.33. The CFP has worked to a consistent set of objectives over the course of the programme, although these were open to interpretation in the early raft of plans (approved in 1995), whereas the more recently revised plans (2000 onwards) stick more closely to the original overarching objectives. Progress against objectives has not been monitored, but the CFP is monitored against a range of Priority Targets, which means that in many cases the CFs are working towards these targets (possibly at the expense of some of the objectives; the extent to which this is the case is explored in the core evaluation chapters 3-6), which they must report on annually.

2.34. National partner funding meets around half the costs of each Community Forest team. The CFP relies heavily on a range of other sources of funding, including: other public sector funding; private sector funding; European funding; Lottery money; Landfill tax revenue; and other grant funding.

2.35. The amount of grant funding has varied significantly during the life of the CFP. Total grant funding over the period 1994 to 2002 amounted to £128.4 million. National Lottery Funding, landfill tax and European funding are the most important sources of grant funding.

2.36. Private and voluntary sector funding rose steadily from 1990 and peaked at over £12m in 1998/9. In recent years, both grant funding and private and voluntary sector funding appear to have declined. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, although it considered likely to relate to the way in which such income has been spent over a number of years.

2.37. The CFP has also drawn heavily on a range of important non-monetary inputs, including: the original Community Forest Unit, now superseded by the Countryside
Agency’s ‘Countryside Around Towns’ programme; high quality, dedicated CF teams; and a strong partnership approach with a range of other organisations.
3. INCREASING WOODLAND COVER AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

3.1. This chapter assesses the performance of the CFP against its ‘environmental’ Priority Targets and objectives. It also identifies the wider environmental outcomes the CFP, including delivering against a number of other ‘key themes’ i.e. targets of Government departments and Regional Development Agencies, the aims and indicators set by the Countryside Agency, and objectives for forestry set out in the England Forestry Strategy.

MEETING PRIORITY TARGETS

3.2. Table 3.1 indicates progress against Priority Targets used to monitor the CFP in terms of increasing woodland cover and improving the environment.

Table 3.1: Progress against priority targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Targets</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Progress to date (2004)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Order Priority (1)</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘Creating well-designed woodland that is:&lt;br&gt;• of at least 20ha with full public access&lt;br&gt;• on smaller sites with full public access adjacent to housing, connecting to other woodland sites, part of a recreational network and/or on damaged or reclaimed land’.&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td>1995-2000: 794.2 ha of new woodland planted per annum (i.e. 3,971ha over 5 years)&lt;br&gt;2000-2005: 1077 ha of new woodland planted per annum (i.e. 3,231 ha over the 3 years 2000-2003)</td>
<td>Progress&lt;br&gt;10,041 ha of new woodland created between 1990 and 2003 which includes:&lt;br&gt;1995-2000: 4,938ha of new woodland created.&lt;br&gt;2000-2003 (data not yet available for 2004/5): 2349 ha of new woodland created&lt;br&gt;Discussion&lt;br&gt;The CFP exceeded its targets over the period 1995-2000 by 24%. The CFP fell short of its target between 2000 and 2003 by 27%. Taking performance over the whole 13 year period, the CFP is slightly exceeding its overall target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Order Priority (6)</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘Creating woodland on sites other than those in Priority 1 where there are significant landscape, heritage and/or biodiversity gains’.</td>
<td>2000-2005: 300.1 ha of woodland created on sites other than those in Priority 1 per annum (first target set in 2000) (i.e. 900.3 ha over 3 years)</td>
<td>Progress&lt;br&gt;2000-2003 (data not yet available for 2004/5): 272 ha of new Priority 6 woodland created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Targets</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Progress to date (2004)</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Second Order Priority (7)</em></td>
<td>‘Securing landscape, heritage and biodiversity benefits in the non-wooded parts of the Community Forests, where opportunities are presented by new developments or on agricultural or reclaimed land, including hedgerow restoration’</td>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong>&lt;br&gt;The CFP is falling considerably short of this target, by 30%.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Progress</strong>&lt;br&gt;1995-2000: 743 ha of non woodland habitat created per annum. (3715 ha created over 5 years)&lt;br&gt;2000-2005: 435 ha of non woodland habitat created per annum. (1305 ha created over 3 years)&lt;br&gt;11,754 ha of non woodland habitat created between 1990-2003, including:&lt;br&gt;1995-2000: 3455 ha of non woodland habitat created.&lt;br&gt;2000-2003 (data not yet available for 2004/5): 5195 ha of non woodland habitat created&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussion</strong>&lt;br&gt;The CFP fractionally missed its target for 1995 - 2000, but significantly exceeded its target for 2000 - 2003. Over the whole 13 year period it exceeded its target by 72%&lt;br&gt;<strong>Progress</strong>&lt;br&gt;1995-2000: 76.6 km of hedgerows created or managed per annum. (383 ha created over 5 years)&lt;br&gt;2000-2005: 103.43 km of hedgerows created or restored per annum. (310.29 km created or restored over 3 years)&lt;br&gt;1,303 km hedgerows created and managed between 1990-2003, including:&lt;br&gt;1995-2000: 746 km of hedgerows created or managed.&lt;br&gt;2000-2003 (2004/5 data not yet available) 350 km of hedgerows created or restored.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussion</strong>&lt;br&gt;The CFP significantly exceeded its target for 1995 - 2000, and to a lesser extent exceeded its target for 2000 - 2003. Over the whole 8 year period it exceeded its target by 58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3. It can be seen that the CFP is generally performing well against these priority targets. In terms of woodland creation on ‘priority 1 sites’, the CFP performed particularly well in the middle years of the programme (targets were only set from 1995 onwards, so it is not possible to benchmark performance in the early years). However, in more recent years this has levelled off with the CFP falling 27% short of its targets over the period 2000 to 2003. The CFP has performed less well in terms of woodland creation on sites outside of ‘priority 1 sites’.

3.4 In addition to the targets outlined above for woodland creation, a Forestry Commission press release (16 October 2001, No. 4328) indicated that the ‘long term aim is to increase woodland cover to around 30% of the area over the next 30-40 years’. The early monitoring reports suggest that the baseline in 1990 was 6% woodland coverage in the CF areas. The total increase in woodland to date of around 101 square kilometres represents around 20% of the total CF area, which suggests rapid progress towards this target.

3.4. The CFP has performed very well in terms of non-woodland habitat creation and creation/restoration of hedgerows. Particularly in more recent years, the CFP is performing better in terms of these targets, than targets for woodland creation. This may reflect a change in mindset of the CFs from being very oriented to woodland planting to working more closely with nature conservation bodies to identify the most appropriate habitats for different sites, which may not always be woodland (see discussion below in relation to Objective 5).

MEETING OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1: To regenerate the environment of the Green Belt and equivalent areas, where it is public policy to keep it open, and help to ensure that it is permanently green and open

Evaluation and commentary

3.5. The CFP is achieving this objective to a high level.

3.6. PPG 2 Green Belts advocates the pursuit of ‘positive objectives’ for land within the Green Belt, including improved access, landscape and nature conservation and enhancement. Where located in Green Belt areas, Community Forests have played a key role in delivering these objectives. However, it is notable that Community Forests generally do not differentiate between Green Belt and non-Green Belt land, which reflects their aim of generally improving the rural urban fringe.

3.7. This objective is core to the CFP as it centres on keeping land at the rural-urban fringe green and open. Many projects demonstrate the work the CFP is doing on the rural-urban fringe. For example, the Green Tips project in Red Rose Forest demonstrates work the forest has done in conjunction with landfill site owners to improve the quality of the urban fringe. It is still early days in terms of seeing environmental improvements from many schemes, however, the CFP will continue to deliver environmental improvements over time as projects mature.
The Red Rose Forest formed a partnership with the principal owners of landfill sites in the Greater Manchester area and obtained their approval to undertake physical surveys of a number of sites to assess their suitability for tree planting. A community consultation exercise was carried out at all of the short-listed sites to identify community proposals and concerns. These were presented to site owners and a development plan for each site was jointly agreed. The result is that eight sites have been converted from landfill to great community and environmental assets thus contributing to the regeneration of land at the urban fringe. (Source: Penn Associates Study)

Whereas in the past most woodland and non-woodland habitat creation tended to be on public sector owned land, there is a increasing emphasis on regenerating privately owned brownfield land through tree planting. The current Government emphasis on regenerating brownfield land has meant significant funding being directed towards land regeneration on these sites (e.g. the current ‘Newlands’ project in the two North West CFs has been funded by £20 million of RDA funding for land reclamation). A key role for Community Forests has been brokering with landowners and funding bodies to assist regeneration of the Green Belt.

The Forest Teams have also worked with farmers on the urban fringe to secure increased take up of agri-environment schemes; a particularly important part of the CFPs work with farmers has been helping with funding applications. The Foxrush Farm project in the Tees Forest (see below) provides an example of how the CFP has been working with farmers to improve the rural urban fringe.

This 46ha urban-fringe site has been converted from intensive arable farmland into a rich and varied landscape of broadleaved woodland. The site is land-locked by residential and business development and is now widely used for countryside sport and recreation by the local community.

Farmers showed an initial reluctance to join the scheme due to the relatively low level of grant aid and the lack of flexibility regarding land ownership at the end of the grant aid period. The scheme turned out to be a test case with farmers with a relatively large land holding (>15ha) receiving a grant supplement for the entire area of woodland planted, and permitting the land to be transferred to local authority ownership upon the cessation of the 15-year Farm Woodland Premium Grant scheme. (Source: North East Community Forests Good Practice File)

Through securing appropriate uses for land, and raising the profile of environmental and landscape issues, Community Forests are helping to keep land open. The case study below describes the Patchway Community Forest Path in the Forest of Avon, which is successfully opening up access to land on the rural urban fringe. Further consideration is given the CFPs role in maintaining and improving access to open areas under Objective 3 (To increase opportunities for sport and recreation, including artistic and cultural events, and access) in Chapter 4.
Patchway Community Forest Path: Forest of Avon

A 45-mile Community Forest Path was established encircling Bristol. The Patchway is a nature reserve and a greenway. The aim was to encourage residents and others to visit the Forest area, and especially the additional 1200ha of land that had been opened up to public access through the activities of the Forest Team.

The CF team worked in partnership with Patchway Town Council and two schools in the town to identify a safe walking and cycling route for pupils to use to get to school. Through securing environmental gain and public access to this land on the urban-fringe the CF and their partners are helping ensure that the land remains open. (Source: Penn Associates Study)

3.11. The box below sets out some statistics from one Community Forest (the Great North Forest) demonstrating how this forest has achieved considerable successes in relation to Objective 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Forest Example: Great North Forest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievements between the Great North Forest’s establishment in 1990 and 2003:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 890ha of new woodland created
- 1300ha of existing woodland brought under more sustainable management
- Over 200ha of derelict land reclaimed
- Over 500ha of new or improved wildlife habitat
- More than £20 million of public, private and voluntary sector investment in environmental regeneration

Limiting factors

3.12. The major limiting factors cited by Forest Directors are ‘hope value’, whereby landowners are unwilling to use their land for Community Forest purposes, as they are hoping that the land may have development value in future. There is also resistance to woodland planting on the best agricultural land. A lack of available land and a lack of funding to purchase land in high value areas on the urban fringe is another key limiting factor.

3.13. In addition, the nature of the environmental improvements CFs are working towards mean that results are not always visible in the short-term. Some Forest Directors indicated that this makes it difficult to maintain partners’ support for the Forests.

OBJECTIVE 2: To improve the landscape of the area, including reclamation of derelict land, to create a visually exciting and functionally diverse environment.

Evaluation and commentary

3.14. The CFP is achieving this objective to an intermediate level. This reflects the fact that whilst localised landscape improvements are clearly visible, and often ‘visually exciting’, landscape scale improvements are not always so clearly evident since it...
3.15. The majority of stakeholders see improving the landscape of the rural-urban fringe as the core function of the CFP. Improving the landscape also contributes towards meeting a number of other CFP objectives, for example, the previous objective in relation to regenerating the environment of the Green Belt. Most forest areas include large areas of brownfield land and a degraded environment as a result of past industrial activity, which provides opportunities for landscape improvement. The Monitoring Report for 2002 to 2003 revealed that 46% of new woodland was planted on reclaimed land, and a figure of 31% was achieved in 2003 to 2004.

3.16. Landscape character assessment has been a key factor in the formulation of the more recent Forest Plans, particularly those produced from around 2000 onwards. The CFs are typically undertaking and/or influencing two types of landscape improvement work:

- localised improvements, through site-specific project work;
- broader ‘landscape scale’ improvements, through influencing relevant partners and third parties.

3.17. Two examples of projects to improve the local landscape are provided below. The first example, in the Great Western Community Forest is of a single development site being used for landscape improvements rather than built development. The second, in the Red Rose Forest, is an example of a smaller scale more diffuse project to plant trees in peoples’ streets to improve their very immediate, local landscape.

**Shore Forest Park: Great Western Community Forest**

This long-term project has involved 8-10,000 volunteers planting trees over the past ten years to create a forest park for the local community. A previous proposal to build a football stadium on the site was blocked due to huge public opposition. This provides a good indication of the high level of community involvement in and commitment to long-term landscape enhancement. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

**Green Streets: Red Rose Forest**

This project aims to create green infrastructure literally on people’s doorsteps by planting trees in the streets. The Red Rose Forest is working across the entire forest area on this including the centre of Manchester and in areas where Housing Market Renewal is a priority. They support a wide range of community organisations (including those representing a variety of ethnic minorities) to raise funds, liaise with Local Authorities and plant street trees. The project’s innovative approach includes using software which allows residents to plant virtual trees on a photo of their street to decide on landscape design. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

3.18. Two further case studies (below) demonstrate the types of broader landscape scale improvements that CFs are also achieving. Both relate to improving the wider landscape around the edge of towns.
Swindon Southern Development Area: Great Western Community Forest

Swindon is a growing town so one of the main roles of Great Western Community Forest is to work in the ‘buffer zone’ around the town to secure landscape improvements. The Forest Team worked with partners to develop a vision and mitigation plan for the Swindon Southern Development Area which has now been accepted by the developer and which may attract up to £1 million of funding for its implementation. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

Northwich Community Woodland: Mersey Forest

Approximately 500ha of community woodland has been created around the urban settlement of Northwich thus enhancing the landscape. Areas of dereliction have been regenerated and the landscape has been enhanced and opened up for public enjoyment. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

Limiting factors

3.19. The key factor limiting greater ‘landscape-scale’ enhancement is the limited level of influence CF teams can exert on the planning system and on landowners. Furthermore, woodland and other habitats created are typically still too immature to have had any significant landscape impact.

OBJECTIVE 4: To protect areas of high quality landscape or historical or archaeological interest.

Evaluation and Commentary

3.20. The CFP is achieving this objective to a low level. This reflects the fact that there are many other organisations working to meet this objective, and therefore the CFP does not see it as a priority. However, the CFP is increasingly addressing the heritage importance of industrial landscapes, which provides it with a clear niche alongside more traditional approaches to heritage.

3.21. The extent of ‘high quality’ landscapes varies between forests, for example, with some such as the Great Western CF, containing large areas and others such as Marston Vale containing very little. Community Forests indirectly protect areas of high quality landscape by raising awareness of the benefits of a high quality environment, however, typically it is the remit of other organisations, such as the Countryside Agency and AONB units to protect these landscapes. Therefore the extent to which this is viewed as a priority varies between the CFs. Typically the CFs see their role as far more about improving degraded landscapes and reclaming derelict land than about protecting existing areas of high quality landscape.

3.22. All the Forests contain sites of archaeological and/or historical interest and many contain a significant number of sites reflecting industrial legacies. There is a high level of awareness of these interests amongst the Forest Teams. However, most do not work to identify areas of landscape, historical or archaeological interest themselves but rather liaise with other organisations such as local authorities, historical societies, local archaeological units and local geological units who have the specialist expertise
to do so. The key role of the CFs is in disseminating historical and archaeological knowledge to a wider audience through organised walks and events. The case studies below demonstrate this role of the CFP.

**Walk and Talk: Forest of Mercia**

A programme of organised walks was set up using grants obtained from seven different sources. This funded two part-time project officers who were trained to give talks on the historic environment of the forest. They established a series of walks through the forest in connection with a local history club to provide historical information about the forest. This taps into both the wider health agenda and the dissemination of historical knowledge of the area. The project funding totaled £27,000 for the first year and the Forest team is now trying to secure funding to continue the project. (Interview with Director)

3.23. Nevertheless, some CFs do play a more ‘hands on’ role in relation to historical and archaeological landscapes. For example, the Tees Forest has been involved in archaeological digs (see case study below).

**Summerhill: Tees Forest**

Summer digs have been held to investigate the site of the Iron Age Catcote Village with the aim of ‘bringing archaeology to life’ through improved access and education. This project taps into the recreation and access and wider health agendas as well as working to protect a site of archaeological interest. (Interview with Director and North East Community Forests Good Practice File)

3.24. The main way in which CFs address this objective, however, is through work in relation to ‘industrial heritage’ and how this is reflected in the landscape e.g. the landscape of old coalfields, which complements the work of other organisations such as English Heritage by working outside the remit of existing statutory designations. The two case studies below illustrate this role of the CFP.

**Former mining areas: Great North Forest**

The Great North Forest has focused on identifying and interpreting the landscape and historical value former mining areas. This complements and adds value to the role of the statutory agencies, which generally focus on designated areas. (Interview with Director)

**Fuelling Revolution/The Woods That Founded The Steel Country: South Yorkshire Forest**

This on-going project is dedicated to increasing access to and protecting ancient woodlands with a historical/archaeological interest, particularly in terms of the role they played in providing fuel for the industrial revolution. Detailed assessments have found a large number of artifacts and identified areas of interest, which are now protected by a management plan. The project has involved the commissioning of a number of interpretative artworks. (Interview with Director)

**Limiting factors**

3.25. The extent to which CF teams/Directors view landscape, archaeological and historical protection as part of their remit varies between the CFs. In some CFs this aspect of
the environment is not given as much weight as habitat creation and landscape enhancement.

**OBJECTIVE 5: To protect sites of nature conservation value and create new opportunities for nature conservation**

**Evaluation and Commentary**

3.26. The CFP is achieving this objective to a **high** level.

3.27. In the early days of the CFP, land regeneration was centred on tree planting but a broader approach is now being pursued, with a wider range of habitats being created. In the past there was some tension between Forest Teams and local nature conservation bodies over the appropriateness of planting in certain areas. For example, CFs often sought to create woodland on lower quality agricultural land, whereas other bodies felt it would be more appropriate to protect and enhance existing habitats. In recent years the emphasis of Community Forests has shifted away from woodland creation to the creation of a wider range of habitats and there is now more of an emphasis on quality rather than ‘quantity’. The case studies below illustrate the wide range of habitats created by the CFs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marston Vale Millennium Country Park: Forest of Marston Vale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 250ha Country Park has been created in the Forest of Marston Vale which is popular with groups and coach parties, with tours being offered that link to the National Curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Forest Centre located within the park has become a focus for a wide range of community and business activities with a café and conference centre as well as a bike hire facility raising money for the Community Forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Country Park contains a number of initiatives which create new opportunities for nature conservation. Two lakes have been created with smaller ponds and reed beds which attract wetland birds and other species now disappearing from the wider countryside. Of considerable importance was the appearance of a Bittern in the park in the summer of 2002. Over 18ha of trees have been planted and wildflower meadows created. (Source: Interview with CF Director and Penn Associates Study)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Shirebrook Valley: South Yorkshire Community Forest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A nature reserve was created on a former sewage works through partnership working with a high degree of voluntary involvement from the local community as a result of the danger they perceived the site posed to their children as well as the desire to remove an eyesore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Across the 50ha site:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3600 sq m of wetland habitat was created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 trees were planted over 24ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4ha of wildflower meadow was created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500m of new hedgerow was created</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition, wildlife ponds were created in old sewage tanks and kingfisher nests installed. The nature reserve is now a well-used resource for the local community. The regional value of the site was recognized in 2001 when it was designated as a Local Nature Reserve and more recently English Nature has granted a Wildspace grant that will be used to continue work at the site. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

3.28. Overall there is a general consensus amongst regional and local stakeholders as well as the Directors themselves that Community Forests are successfully working towards meeting this objective and this is reflected in evidence from the monitoring reports in relation to woodland planting and creation of non-woodland habitats (as discussed above in relation to Priority Targets). The data shows that the CFP has significantly exceeded its target for non-woodland planting in recent years, and over the whole 13 year period of monitoring, exceeded targets by 72%. It has also performed well in relation to woodland creation, although in more recent years this has levelled off with the CFP falling 27% short of its targets over the period 2000 to 2003 (which reflects the change in emphasis from woodland creation to wider aims for nature conservation). An example from the Mersey Forest, below, shows how links are also being made between landscape scale enhancement and broad scale ecological enhancement.

Joint Landscape and Ecology Project: Mersey Forest

The Mersey Forest is undertaking a GIS-based joint landscape and ecology project to study landscape grain and nature conservation value of the forest in order to improve the ecological network across the Community Forest area. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

3.29. Consultation with representatives of Local Wildlife Trusts and English Nature indicated that the CFP has performed favourably in relation to this objective, and that it is helping to meet their objectives for nature conservation. The CFP has successfully worked in partnership with nature conservation bodies, which has enabled them to access advice on habitat creation, and in return to provide specialist advice on woodland habitats. The CFP has played a key role in applying for grant funding for partnership projects. Forest Teams have also been involved in the preparation of Biodiversity Action Plans; for example, the Mersey Forest have created their own BAP.

3.30. The box below sets out some statistics from one Community Forest (the Greenwood Community Forest) demonstrating how this forest has achieved considerable successes in relation to Objective 5.

Individual Forest Examples: The Greenwood Community Forest/ Forest Plan 2000

- 638 ha of new woodland and over a million trees planted
- 283 ha of existing woodland brought into positive management
- 241 ha of heathland, limestone grassland and wetland habitats have been created and/or managed
- 184 km of hedgerows have been created and/or restored
Around 80 farmers have been actively involved in creating and/or managing woodland or hedgerows

The largest lowland planting scheme in England for 30 years is underway in and around Greenwood through the work of the Forest Partnership in reclaiming and planting British Coal Tips. (Updated through Interview with Director)

Limiting factors

3.31. The key factor which may limit achievement of this objective is the extent to which there is potentially conflict between planting woodland and enhancing other habitats, which may be more beneficial ecologically. However, as noted above, the CFs are increasingly aware of and sensitive to these issues.

WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

3.32. The CFP is contributing to a range of environmental policy agendas that go beyond those directly covered by the objectives for the CFP. Indeed the environmental policy agenda has widened considerably over the 15 years of the CFP’s operation, for example, from primarily addressing nature conservation to wider resource issues, and the CFP has responded to this as discussed in relation to a range of wider outcomes below.

Combating climate change

3.33. Although not one of the CFP’s original objectives, the CFs are playing a role in contributing to improved air quality and providing carbon sequestration. There is potential to increase the recognition of this important role, possibly through partnership with organisations such as Future Forests8, which seeks funding from sponsors and work in partnership with forestry organisations to create ‘carbon offset forests’. In this way the CFP is contributing to the objectives of the UK Climate Change Programme.

Van Dieman’s Land: carbon offset forests

The Forest of Marston Vale has formed a partnership with Future Forests, with financial support from British Telecom to create a woodland at Van Dieman’s Land. Such forests and woodlands must generally be new planting, use predominantly native species, and be managed for at least 99 years. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

Wise use of resources

3.34. The role of the CFP with respect to minerals has generally been restricted to influencing planning applications for the development and restoration of mineral sites. Thames Chase and the North East CFs in particular have made a significant impact in this respect. CFs also play a role in the procurement of recycled or secondary

8 http://www.futureforests.com/forestsandprojects/forest.asp?id=66
aggregates for footpaths, thereby reducing the need for quarrying of primary aggregates.

3.35. The CFP's involvement with waste management is a relatively recent development, signifying the ability of the Programme to respond effectively to current issues. Key projects include the United Utilities project in the Red Rose and Mersey Forests (see box below).

**United Utilities Project: Red Rose & Mersey Forest**

Red Rose and Mersey Forest are working with United Utilities. The CFs identify sites where United Utilities can dispose of sewage sludge. In exchange United Utilities provides funding and allows planting on their land. The company has pledged £100,000 per year for 10 years. The Mersey Forest also gets support from Littlewoods, Vauxhall, Shell, Ford and M&S.

(Source: Interview with CF Director)

**Waste Recycling Project: Red Rose Forest**

Red Rose Forest is working closely with waste disposal authorities and other partners on an innovative project to develop a strong durable wood plastic composite using MDF waste and plastic bag waste. The partnership is currently looking to develop markets for the product.

(Source: Interview with CF Director)

**Renewable energy**

3.36. The Government’s Energy White Paper and the new PPS22 place considerable emphasis on generation of energy from renewable sources. Whilst not a key element of their activity, CFs have started to galvanise action at the local level. In South Yorkshire Forest, for example, a wood energy co-ordinator is employed to foster demand for combined heat and power systems using wood energy and provide funding for wood heat projects. A wood chip boiler will heat the new visitor centre at Thames Chase. There are also examples of short rotation coppice growing within the forests. This is explored further in Chapter 5 in relation to objectives 8 and 13 which relate to woodland industries.

**Reducing the need to travel**

3.37. Through creating attractive green spaces close to urban centres, CFs are not only improving quality of life for local people, but also reducing the need for people to travel to the countryside beyond. To help realise this potential CFs are engaged in a number of transport related initiatives, including the provision of walking and cycling routes within and across the forest areas, and liaising with local public transport providers to secure bus routes into the forest areas and better signposting from stations.
THEMES TO WHICH THE CFP IS CONTRIBUTING

3.38. In considering the performance of the CFP against its Priority Targets and objectives and its wider outcomes, it is clear that the Programme is contributing to targets for Government departments and Regional Development Agencies, the aims and indicators set by the Countryside Agency, and objectives for forestry set out in the England Forestry Strategy (see box overleaf). Information on the way in which the CFP is contributing to PSA targets is provided in Chapter 8.
Themes to which the CFP is contributing

Government PSAs
- ODPM PSA 5 Achieve a better balance between housing availability and the demand for housing in all English regions while protecting valuable countryside around our towns, cities and in the greenbelt - and the sustainability of existing towns and cities - through specific measures to be set out in the Service Delivery Agreement.
- Defra PSA 3 Care for our natural heritage, make the countryside attractive and enjoyable for all, and preserve biological diversity by:
  - reversing the long-term decline in the number of farmland birds by 2020, as measured annually against underlying trends;
  - bringing into favourable condition by 2010 95% of all nationally important wildlife sites; and
  - opening up public access to mountain, moor, heath and down and registered common land by the end of 2005.
- DfT with DEFRA 6 Improve air quality by meeting National Air Quality strategy objectives for carbon monoxide.
- DTI with DEFRA 4 Ensure the UK ranks in the top 3 most competitive energy markets in the EU and G7 in each year, whilst on course to maintain energy security, to achieve fuel poverty objectives; and improve the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources, including through the use of energy saving technologies, to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% from 1990 levels and moving towards a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.

Examples of RDA targets
- EEDA 'A Shared Vision' Under Goal 8 'An exemplar for the efficient use of resources' identifies measures for capturing the advantages of the renewable energy potential of the region, including biofuel production.

The Countryside Agency's 20 indicator themes
- Changes countryside character and countryside quality
- The state of natural resources
- Biodiversity
- Sustainable land management
- Traffic effects

The Countryside Agency's rural urban fringe vision: ten key functions for the rural urban fringe
- A nature reserve
- A recycling and renewable energy centre
- A cultural legacy

The England Forestry Strategy
- Promote forestry for land regeneration
- Promote environmental improvements
- Protect existing woodlands
- Protect cultural heritage
- Use the biodiversity action plan to guide nature conservation
- Promote forestry through land use planning
CONCLUSION

3.39. Overall, the CFP is performing well in terms of increasing woodland cover and improving the environment. The data from annual monitoring reports indicates that the CFP has successively met targets for woodland creation, and non-woodland habitat creation and creation/restoration of hedgerows.

3.40. The CFP’s core environmental objectives - regenerating the environment of the Green Belt, improving the landscape of the area, and protecting sites of nature conservation importance – are generally being met. Protecting areas of high quality landscapes and archaeological sites is not a priority for the CFP, because this falls within the remit of a range of other organisations. Interestingly, however, the CFP is involved in protecting and promoting industrial landscapes, which are less well served through traditional structures.

3.41. The CFP is also contributing to a range of wider environmental outcomes, including climate change mitigation, wise use of resources, renewable energy through development of energy crops and use of wood for energy, and also reducing the need to travel through development of greenways and networks (which are discussed further in Chapter 4).
4. PROVIDING FOR ACCESS, RECREATION, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

INTRODUCTION

4.1. This chapter assesses the performance of the CFP against its Priority Targets and objectives related to providing for better public access, recreation opportunities, culture and the arts. This is another key area of work for the CFs, which typically involves managing the woodland, and other habitats created, in such a way that they are accessible to people, both physically but also culturally. There is a wide body of research around social inclusion and exclusion in countryside recreation, and it is widely recognised that some social groups are less likely to partake in recreation in open spaces than others, both within urban areas and beyond. The objectives covered in this chapter seek to ensure that the CFs are widely accessible, including for people in urban areas.

4.2. This chapter also identifies the range of wider outcomes the CFP is delivering in relation to this topic. Through the efforts of the CFP to meet these targets and objectives and also deliver a range of wider outcomes, the CFP is also contributing to a number of other ‘key themes’ which are identified at the end of this chapter.

MEETING PRIORITY TARGETS

4.3. Table 4.1 presents progress against priority targets of relevance to this topic (covering access to woodlands and creating and re-opening access routes). Chapter 6 presents data in relation to numbers of community events held, which may also be of relevance to the topic of providing for access, recreation, culture and the arts, as many of the events held are likely to focus on one or more of these activities.

Table 4.1: Progress against priority targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Targets</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Progress to date (2004)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Order Priority (2): Securing access to and good management of existing woodlands meeting Priority 1 criteria.</td>
<td>2000-2005: 791 ha of existing woodlands meeting Priority 1 criteria to which access secured per annum (2,373 ha over 3 years)</td>
<td>Progress 2000-2003 (data not yet available for 2004/5) 2038 ha of existing woodlands meeting Priority 1 criteria to which access secured. <strong>Discussion</strong> The CFP fell short of its target for the period 2000-2003 by 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Order Priority (3): Creating and re-opening good quality walking/cycling/riding networks for leisure,</td>
<td>1995-2000: 303.3km of rights of way opened to create access per annum (1,516.5km over 5 years)</td>
<td>Progress 1995-2000: 2795 km of rights of way opened.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Priority Targets Progress to date (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Targets</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Progress to date (2004)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>recreation and/or commuting.</td>
<td>2000-2005: 285.3km of rights of way opened to create access per annum (855.9km over 3 years)</td>
<td>2000-2003 (data not yet available for 2004/5): 922 km of rights of way opened.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Discussion

The CFP exceeded its targets for 1995-2000 and 2000-2003. Over the whole period it exceeded targets by 57%.

### 4.4.

In summary the CFP has performed well in terms of opening up rights of way, exceeding targets for 1995-2003 by 57%. However, it has performed less well in terms of opening up access to woodland (quantitatively, not qualitatively), falling short of targets by 14% in recent years. This reflects the fact that the CFP has not been meeting targets for new woodland creation over this period, as discussed in Chapter 3.

### MEETING OBJECTIVES

**OBJECTIVE 3: To increase opportunities for sport and recreation, including artistic and cultural events, and access.**

#### Evaluation and commentary

4.5. The CFP is achieving this objective to a **high** level.

4.6. All CFs are addressing this objective to some extent, and all Forest Plans have a chapter on access, recreation and events. Many CFs have ‘gateways’ or identified entry points to the CF to encourage access, and many have identified greenways or multi-user routes.

4.7. In terms of providing opportunities for sport, the emphasis is to provide for informal recreation, for example walking, cycling, riding or other more passive leisure activities. The Community Forests do not tend to focus their efforts on organised sports, although there are some exceptions of where sports have been incorporated within the Community Forests, such as the Summerhill project within the Tees Forest.

4.8. A number of the CFs have developed a range of recreational activities such as identifying leisure routes and delivering guided walking tours (often linked to the wider but increasingly important health agenda). For example, Greenwood Forest has developed walking packs to encourage people to use the Forest (see case study overleaf).
Break Free – Greenwood Walks I and II: The Greenwood

Information packs for walks were produced that aim to make the countryside more accessible by breaking down barriers and enabling people to make informed decisions about accessing the countryside. The CF team consulted with people with special needs to identify access barriers. The length of time needed for a walk, distance and obstacles such as stiles and gates are amongst the problems identified. The project won the ‘Heart of Tourism Gold Award’ in 2002. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

4.9. Many of the CFs also organise programmes of events such as over the summer holiday period (for example, Thames Chase, Red Rose Forest and Watling Chase have both organised events, some of which are illustrated in the case studies below). The CFs are also involved in other initiatives to encourage outdoor recreation, such as an equestrian strategy for the Redcar area in the Tees Forest, where horticulture is a major growth area for the leisure industry.

Forest Fever: Red Rose Forest

Red Rose Forest organises an annual programme of events called ‘Forest Fever’ which is put together by the Partners of the forest and delivered within the CF. Occurring over several weeks during the summer period, the event includes activities such as archery and bird spotting (Source: Community Forest Director).

Scratchwood Woodland Festival: Watling Chase Community Forest

Barnet Council worked with the CF and local conservation and community groups to organise a one day woodland festival which informed people of the need for woodland management, introduced them to various woodland crafts and craftsmen and enabled them to take part in various art and craft activities. Over 600 people attended the event with 50% using a free park and ride facility. (Source: The National Community Forest Partnership: Examples of Good Practice. Penn Associates, 2002).

4.10. Involvement in artistic and cultural events has occurred within each of the Community Forests, but with some embracing this objective much more than others. There is a general trend for organised events to mark the start of a new project and for all the CFs to contain public art features such as sculptures and furniture. Within Thames Chase CF for example, there is considerable emphasis on artistic expression in the landscape; art being used to influence perceptions of accessibility. Artistic and cultural expression is often responsive to the culture of the local area.

Marking The Ways: Great North Forest

A programme that provided local communities with the opportunity to work with local artists, to create way markers and sculptures along public rights of way. This project sought to re-engage communities with their local countryside by enabling them to work within it to create personal and locally relevant signposts, furniture and sculpture. (Source: The National Community Forest Partnership: Examples of Good Practice. Penn Associates (2002).

Salt Industry: Mersey Forest

The CF has ensured that Northwich’s salt industry is depicted through interpretative art reflecting this aspect of the area’s cultural legacy (Source: Interview with CF Director)
4.11. Officers from a range of Local Authorities either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that the Community Forests are meeting this objective, but particularly made reference to achievements in terms of ‘recreation’ and ‘access’. In terms of access, the CFs have been successful in both improving the quality of public areas and increasing public access to the urban fringe and the wider countryside – the targets being exceeded in every case for access to woodland and non-woodland areas and to walking/cycling/riding networks. They are also helping to break down ‘cultural barriers’ to access, through, as discussed above, incorporating artwork in the forests to make them more welcoming.

4.12. The box below sets out some statistics from two Community Forests (Red Rose Forest and Greenwood) demonstrating how these forests have achieved considerable successes in relation to Objective 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Red Rose Forest 2004 (information obtained from interview with Forest Director)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>329 ha of woodland has been opened for access to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>620 ha of non-woodland areas has been opened for public access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>571 km of routes has been opened for public access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8333 community events have been held since inception of the CF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenwood 2001 (information obtained from Greenwood Forest Plan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>206 ha of woodland has been opened for access to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137 ha of heathland, limestone grassland and wetland has been opened up for recreation and access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>578 km of routes have been opened up or improved for recreation and access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OBJECTIVE 16: To complement the Government’s priorities for inner cities, by providing for associated leisure and open space needs at the physically closest locations.**

**Evaluation and commentary**

4.13. The CFP is achieving this objective to an intermediate level.

4.14. Community Forest Directors indicated that, by virtue of their urban fringe location, and the commitment of Forest Teams to improving and enhancing the environment and access, CFs are going a long way to fulfilling this objective. However, the CFs are perhaps performing less well in terms of extending their activities further into urban areas.

4.15. This objective is intrinsically linked to (as well as a natural outcome of) the achievements of other objectives e.g. regeneration of Green Belt land, and provision of spaces for recreation and improving access. The case study below provides an example of how CFs are linking more inner urban areas with the countryside of the rural urban fringe, in this case the centre of Bristol to the countryside of South Gloucestershire.
Lawrence Weston Greenway: Forest of Avon

This was a community–based project to create a multi-user path with the aim of breaking down physical and social barriers in an area of high social exclusion.

The 2km long path passes through local greenspace, providing critical links between residential areas and local facilities e.g. schools, sports facilities, the community farm etc. A local sports club provided funding to construct a new bridge over a waterway – previously a major barrier to access - and the greenway has become much used for day-to-day journeys by school children and residents, reducing the need for car and public transport use. It also forms one of the main areas of open space in the estate, and a useful, off-road link for cyclists and walkers, from the centre of Bristol to the countryside of South Gloucestershire.


4.16. Watling Chase has particularly embraced links with inner city areas, by ensuring the Forest’s work extends into London Boroughs with a view to maximising access to open space.

4.17. Whilst the CFs are good at providing links to urban areas, and providing for associated leisure and open space needs at the physically closest locations, this does not always mean within urban areas themselves. The CFs could strengthen their achievements in relation to this objective by extending their activities into inner urban areas.

Limiting factors

4.18. Limiting factors include a limited awareness of the CFs amongst people within urban areas and a lack of resources for wider promotion.

WIDER OUTCOMES

Contributing to the wider health agenda

4.19. The Government’s Public Health White Paper (2004) includes a number of actions to increase physical activity, some of which have close links to the work of Community Forests, for example, new initiatives to encourage the use of pedometers to promote awareness of the benefits of physical activity, measures based on the lessons learned from local authority pilots on improving parks and public places and measures to build on the Sustainable Travel Towns pilot to develop new guidance on ‘whole town’ approaches to walking, cycling and public transport. The paper also notes the importance of cycle networks, such as Sustrans for encouraging healthier lifestyles. The CFP is contributing significantly to the Government’s preventative health agenda through the provision of accessible green space close to where people live. This is seen as a significant area of development for the CFP in future.

4.20. The CFs are more directly engaging in the wider health agenda through working with the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), which have a remit in relation to wider health through health promotion and preventative activities. This activity is mutually beneficial as the CFs give PCTs an additional opportunity to promote health. Funding
availability for PCTs to undertake preventative health is limited, but involvement with the CFP opens up access to a wider range of funding streams.

4.21. The Rural White Paper (2000) noted that ‘The Government would like to see the [Community Forest] adopted more widely and will consider how it can be used to assist with the implementation of other regeneration, forestry and community-based initiatives’. In response to this the Countryside Agency launched the REACT programme (Regeneration Through Environmental Action) which is adding value to more mainstream regeneration programmes, by showing how the environment can play a part in promoting health and social inclusion and creating a vibrant local economy. An example of a REACT initiative, which has been developed by Thames Chase Community Forest in association with the Barking and Dagenham PCT, is the THERAPI project (Tackling Health Through Environmental Regeneration and Public Involvement). The PCT became involved due to the well documented evidence of positive links between use of open space and health outcomes. There has also been a concerted effort by the Thames Chase project worker to promote the THERAPI project with the local Mental Health Community Trust and involve patients in stress management programmes. The project also includes a research aspect which will report on benefits felt by the public.

4.22. A public health advisor interviewed at the PCT indicated that provision of better quality environments is considered to have a range of benefits for health, including mental health (including stress) and physical health. Benefits include reducing social isolation (e.g. amongst older people), provision of appropriate environments for walking, jogging, cycling, and relaxation as an alternative to gyms, and provision of safer environments for children to play.

THEMES TO WHICH THE CFP IS CONTRIBUTING

4.23. In considering the performance of the CFP against its Priority Targets and objectives and its wider outcomes, it is clear that the Programme is contributing to targets for Government departments and Regional Development Agencies, the aims and indicators set by the Countryside Agency, and objectives for forestry set out in the England Forestry Strategy (see box below). Information on the way in which the CFP is contributing to PSA targets is provided in Chapter 8.

Themes to which the CFP is contributing

PSA targets
- DCM&S/DfES PSA 1 Enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5-16 year olds by increasing the percentage of schoolchildren who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum from 25% in 2002 to 75% by 2006.
- DCM&S PSA 2 Increase significantly the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by new users aged 20 and above from priority groups.
- DH 6 Reduce substantially the mortality rates from the major killer diseases by 2010, including from heart disease by at least 40% in people under 75.
- DH 11 By 2010 reduce inequalities in health outcomes by 10% as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth.

Examples of RDA targets
- The SEEDA RES includes a Priority to Support the development of sound community infrastructure and services, and under this an action to ensure a healthy region.

The Countryside Agency’s 20 indicator themes
- Health and special needs
- How people use the countryside

The Countryside Agency’s rural urban fringe vision: ten key functions for the rural urban fringe
- A health centre
- A bridge to the country
- A gateway to the town

The England Forestry Strategy
- Increase access to woodlands
- Improve the quality of information about access
- Enhance the nation’s forest estate

CONCLUSION

4.24. The CFP is performing particularly well in terms of providing opportunities for informal recreation and opening up rights of way. It has performed less well in terms of the area of woodland opened up to public access, although where this has occurred the quality has been high. The CFs have helped to provide links between urban parks, Country Parks and the wider countryside. The CFP’s contribution to formal sports provision has been limited, although the forest areas provide attractive and popular settings for sports such as golf.

4.25. The CFP’s growing contribution to the public health agenda is an important wider outcome. Through forging links with Primary Care Trusts and Mental Health Care Trusts, a number of CFs are helping to address physical and mental health issues.
5. **REGENERATING LOCAL ECONOMIES**

**INTRODUCTION**

5.1. This chapter assesses the performance of the CFP against its Priority Targets and objectives related to regenerating local economies. It also identifies the range of wider outcomes the CFP is delivering in relation to this topic. Through the efforts of the CFP to meet these targets and objectives and also deliver a range of wider outcomes, the CFP is also contributing to a number of other ‘key themes’ which are identified at the end of this chapter.

**ACHIEVEMENT OF PRIORITY TARGETS**

5.2. The key priority target which relates to regenerating local economies is Priority 5: Securing financial and in-kind investment from local businesses and external sources to support major restoration and recreation projects leading to environmental regeneration, and to develop a woodland economy.

5.3. Annual monitoring over the 15 years of the CFP has been inconsistent and it is therefore difficult to analyse accurately sources of funding over the full 15-year period. However, it is possible to interpret the data to provide an indication of private sector funding (see **Figure 5.1 below**). The footnote explains what has been interpreted and therefore included as being private funding during different time frames.

**Figure 5.1: Private sector funding 1990 – 2003**

![Private sector funding 1990-2003](image)

N.b. data for 1990/92 – 1993/94 includes data categorised as ‘Private’
Data for 1994/5 – 1999/00 includes data categorised as Sponsorship and Donations
Data for 2001/02 – 2002/03 includes data categorised as Business
5.4. Figure 5.1 shows that in the early years private sector funding was very low averaging around £100,000 per annum. Over the period 1994/95 to 1999/00 funding rose, averaging £1,310,533.333 (which reflects the particularly high level of sponsorship and donations in 1999/00; the annual monitoring report for this year does not provide any explanation for this significant increase). After this point funding fell to £261,006 in 2001/2, and rose again to £1,059,660 in 2002/3 and £1,182,330 in 2003/4.

5.5. Generally, private sector funding makes up a small proportion of total funding, for example, in 2001/2 it accounted for just 1% of total investment received by CFs and 4% in 2002/3. This suggests that the majority of CFs are not engaging as well with the business community as they could be and vice-versa. It is generally recognised by CF Directors that the private sector will have an increasingly large role in funding the CFP in future.

5.6. Table 5.1 details the targets set for Priority 5 for securing total investment (i.e. from all sources, not just the private sector) and the actual investment secured. It can be seen when all funding is taken into account the CFP is exceeding targets. No targets are specifically set for levels of private sector investment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000/01</th>
<th>2001/02</th>
<th>2002/03</th>
<th>Total to Date</th>
<th>2003-2005 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment secured (£ millions)</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Investment secured (£ millions)</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Investment secured (£ millions)</td>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79.229</td>
<td>27.948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACHIEVEMENT OF COMMUNITY FOREST OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 12: To seek private sector support to implement the forest and to invest in leisure and other relevant service sectors.

Evaluation and commentary

5.7. The CFP is achieving this objective to a low level.

5.8. Generally speaking the CFs are seeking private sector support to implement CFP objectives, although it is less clear that they are seeking such support specifically to invest in the leisure and other relevant service sectors. Private sector contributions are typically used to sponsor activities such as forest events, tree planting and other environmental improvements.

5.9. Data from the most recent monitoring reports, as discussed above, indicates that private sector funding accounts for a very small proportion of investment, with the majority of funding coming from the public sector, and significant amounts from national partners, Landfill Tax, lottery funding and from European funding.

5.10. Most CFs engage with the private sector. Timberland UK (a shoe company), for example, donated £10,000 to each CF to establish a Timberland Trail. However, activities involving the private sector are generally fairly small scale and represent a small proportion of CF activity. Some forests receive very little private sector...
support, for example, Watling Chase and Mercia CFs, whilst other CFs are making
significant efforts to obtain private sector funding. For example, the North East CFs
have employed a fund raiser to obtain investment and other in-kind support.
Marston Vale CF is also seeking to develop private sector contributions. This forest
has become a charitable trust in order to attract a greater variety of funding, and the
structure includes a team responsible for securing funding and private sector support
(the ‘Business Development Team’).

5.11. To a great extent, the ability of the CFs to obtain private sector investment depends
on the socio-economic circumstances of the CF area. Areas which are seeing
significant new economic investment, for example the CFs in the North East, are
more likely to be able to lever in funds compared to areas with long established
small-scale businesses.

5.12. The case studies below provide examples of how CFs are levering in private sector
support.

Coatham Wood: The Tees Forest

The England Forestry Strategy aims to use woodlands for timber, and also for economic
regeneration, recreation, access and tourism and for environmental gain and conservation.
Stockton-on-Tees and Darlington are separated by a wedge of open land that forms an
important physical barrier between the two towns. The majority of the low-lying land is in
agricultural use with only limited locations for public access. The Tees Forest team instigated
the purchase and planting of some 200ha of this land by Forest Enterprise as community
woodland. Financial contributions from various well-known public figures have been received
via ‘Future Forests’ to offset the carbon output generated by their business activity.

(Source: The National Community Forest Partnership: Examples of Good Practice. Penn
Associates (2002))

Paper Planet: Watling Chase

The Pearce Recycling company is based in St Albans, just to the north of Watling Chase, and
was keen to promote recycling amongst businesses in the area, whilst also benefiting the local
environment. A partnership was formed with Watling Chase Community Forest, who
identified Highfield Park, as a suitable initiative for Pearce Recycling to sponsor. The site is a
CF gateway site, and is an area in need of woodland planting to complement a small area of
mature woodland. Watling Chase brokered an agreement between Pearce Recycling and the
Highfield Park Trust, which has resulted in an extensive new area of community woodland
being created. Pearce Recycling collect waste paper from local businesses in the Milton
Keynes, Luton and Corby area, and donate a tree to the community woodland for every 50
bags of paper collected. Support from local businesses has been high, and the company has
collected many thousands of tonnes of paper to recycle. The initiative has led to 5000+ trees
being planted. The initiative has also raised the profile of the forest among local companies,
whose staff have become personally involved with the park, assisting with tree planting, etc.

(Source: The National Community Forest Partnership: Examples of Good Practice. Penn
Associates (2002))
Co-operative Bank: Red Rose Forest

The Co-operative Bank, whose head office is located in Manchester, wanted to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Bank in a manner that would bring long-term and sustainable benefit to the people of the north west. The Bank joined forces with Red Rose Forest and other partners, to plant four major woodlands, one each in Manchester, Salford, Trafford and Wigan. As the four woodlands have begun to mature, they are already having a visible impact on the landscape of Greater Manchester, transforming previously derelict land into a thriving wooded landscape. Monitoring of the biodiversity value of the sites is being undertaken and posted on a dedicated website.


Limiting factors

5.13. A key factor that limits the ability of CFs to secure private sector support for their activities is the extent to which there are businesses operating in the vicinity of the forests with the scope to contribute funds. For example, the Forest of Mercia noted that there are not very many large companies with big funds available in the vicinity of this CF.

5.14. In some places there are several similar initiatives competing for funding. For example, the Forest of Mercia is not receiving any direct private sector support and is finding that funding is going to the National Forest instead. Other schemes such as the Green Arc project around Birmingham are also attracting funding (for example, the M6 toll road (Midlands Express Way) provides support).

5.15. A further limiting factor is the extent to which CFs can or are engaging in marketing activities. Several CFs noted that obtaining funding from businesses is very time consuming and that businesses often place significant demands on the CFs, for example, in terms of marketing expectations. This means that obtaining private sector funding is often not cost effective. Several interviewees in national organisations felt that the CFs are not doing enough to market themselves, which could be a factor limiting recognition of the CFP amongst businesses and developers.

5.16. Finally, several CF Directors cited a lack of RDA support for the CFP as a factor that limits the extent to which they can successfully engage with the private sector.

OBJECTIVE 7: To protect the best agricultural land and increase opportunities for farm diversification elsewhere in accordance with Government agricultural and local planning policies

Evaluation and commentary

5.17. The CFP is achieving this objective to a high level.
5.18. Working with farmers and land managers is an important area of work for the CFs, and provides a key delivery mechanism for delivering against a wide range of objectives (such as woodland creation and landscape enhancement), which is confirmed by a study undertaken by Penn Associates\textsuperscript{10}. Data presented in the annual monitoring reports highlights the importance of this objective for achieving a range of CF objectives. For example, in 2003/4 habitat enhancement on agricultural land accounted for 89% of total habitat enhancement.

5.19. The Penn Associates study notes that many of the Community Forest teams have developed constructive relationships with landowners (partly due to being viewed as independent from local authorities), which have been critical in enabling land to be acquired and used for CF purposes. It also notes the importance of the CFs in disseminating information, such as on availability of grants, and in building confidence amongst farmers to diversify their enterprises. Most CFs are undertaking activities to increase diversification. For example, the Mersey Forest team liaises with farmers on a regular basis, and Watling Chase CF acts as a land management advisory service to provide a mechanism for uptake of agri-environment schemes amongst farmers. The latter CF has contributed to the establishment of five stewardship agreements. The case study below from the Greenwood Community Forest illustrates the advisory role that many CFs are playing.

Sustainable landscapes: Greenwood Community Forest

Greenwood CF has been involved in a project providing a coordinated education, training and grant service to land managers to promote sustainable land management. This project was established in recognition of the need for rural regeneration and restructuring of rural businesses. Greenwood formed a partnership with many bodies active in land management and rural enterprise (e.g. FWAG, ADAS, Defra, FRCA, CLA) to provide a one-stop shop for farmers, land managers, leisure providers etc. to assist them in achieving sustainable land management. For example, advice is available on ways of moving towards alternatives to agricultural incomes e.g. biomass production.


5.20. Diversification activity in which CFs are involved tends to be in the form of landscape and habitat enhancement through agri-environment schemes, including the Woodland Grant Scheme and Countryside Stewardship agreements, rather than 'economic' forms of farm diversification, such as assisting farmers to diversify into tourism, farm shops, etc. The Forest of Mercia, Watling Chase and Mersey Forest in particular highlighted this point. An exception to this is in terms of development of woodland industries, although to a great extent new businesses, rather than existing farmers, are building up this industry. The case study below from the Great Western Community Forest illustrates how the CFs are, in addition to playing an advisory role, working with farmers on a one to one basis on individual projects.

Roves Farm Visitor Centre: Great Western Community Forest

Roves Farm is a relatively small farming enterprise located in the Great Western Forest. The poor soils, and decline in agricultural returns prompted the farmer to seek alternative means of generating an income from the land. Supportive of the principles of the forest, and passionate about engaging the public in modern farming and sustainable living, he worked with the Forest to transform his farm into a demonstration farm for sustainable agricultural and woodland enterprises. The Forest worked with the landowner to create a visitor centre and education service that attracts over 25,000 people per annum. The economic basis of the farm has been changed from one dependent upon agricultural production, to an income stream that is more dependent on visitor services. The farm is still productive, with agro-forestry crops, meadows grazed by rare animal breeds and productive woodland.


5.21. In terms of protecting the best agricultural land, CFs have limited scope to influence this aspect of the objective, as this depends on wider circumstances in agricultural policy. Nevertheless by contributing to the economic viability of farm enterprises, through supporting diversification, CFs contribute to the continued use of the best agricultural land for mainstream farming. Some Forests demonstrate an innovative approach to supporting the agricultural economy, such as the North East CF (Great North & Tees Forest), which is currently seeking to encourage procurement of local produce for school dinners by local schools.

5.22. At the national level, representatives from both English Nature and the NFU indicated that the CFs are doing much to meet this objective overall.

Limiting factors

5.23. ‘Hope value’ of agricultural land is a key constraint to delivering this objective. This occurs where landowners are unwilling to put land to alternative uses as they are waiting to see if the land could have development value in the future.

5.24. In areas where there is a high proportion of high quality agricultural land, it is harder to obtain land for Community Forest uses, as land is profitable under mainstream agricultural production.

5.25. Farmer attitudes were also cited as a limiting factor. The CFP faced opposition from farmers initially and the NFU noted that landowners often do not like woodland or community involvement in management. The NFU further indicated that there is a perception that CFs are not doing enough to help deal with urban fringe farming problems such as trespass, vandalism and fly-tipping.

5.26. European and national agricultural policy were cited by some as limiting factors in achieving CFP objectives, although several consultees noted that CAP reforms are likely to represent a step in the right direction in terms of achieving objectives for landscape and nature conservation, given the increased weight given to environmental support through agri-environment schemes.
OBJECTIVE 8: To establish a supply of timber and other woodland products

Evaluation and commentary

5.27. The CFP is achieving this objective to a low level.

5.28. Overall there is some evidence that the Community Forests are seeking to establish a supply of timber and other woodland products. Typically such initiatives are small in scale and this objective does not represent a key area of work for many CFs. For example, Watling Chase Community Forest is not specifically working towards this objective.

5.29. Where Community Forests are contributing to this objective, activity typically takes the form of provision of advice e.g. on grant aid for forestry planting and timber markets, through the establishment of support networks, selling woodland products, providing training in woodland industries and supporting networks of suppliers. This approach is illustrated in the case study from Red Rose Forest below.

Green Business Development Scheme: Red Rose Forest

Despite growing interest in the use of local timber and timber products by customers, many potential and existing timber-using businesses struggle to successfully start-up or expand. Red Rose Forest established a formal network of woodland industries operating, or hoping to operate, in the Red Rose Forest area. The network offered informal support and formal business training.


5.30. The CFs also work with landowners on an individual basis on specific projects, some of which include an element of timber production; for example the Great Western Community Forest has worked with a farmer to develop a commercial poplar plantation (see below).

Poplar timber production: Great Western Community Forest

Located close to the M4, the owner of Great Chaddington Farm was concerned about the decreasing economic viability of his farm unit, which produced forage and fodder crops for cattle. The Great Western Community forest approached him with information about financial aid available for planting new woodlands in the forest area, and he has since converted part of his farm to a commercial poplar plantation. The woodland has also contributed to landscape, access and biodiversity benefits.


5.31. An increasingly significant area of activity is in the use of wood fuel/biomass for energy production, which is an expanding area of activity for several forests, such as the Great North Forest, which is sending timber waste to a biomass plant, South Yorkshire Forest, which employs a Wood Energy Coordinator as part of the South Yorkshire Wood Energy Network, the Forest of Mercia, which is involved in setting up a wood waste for fuel scheme.
5.32. However, as noted by the CLA and other consultees, Community Forests have not been successful in establishing a supply of timber. Woodland products have generally been confined to small scale timber production and specialist products for local crafts.

**Limiting factors**

5.33. The depressed state of timber markets was cited by several consultees as a limiting factor in meeting this objective, for example, caused by the sudden influx of cheaper softwood timber from the Baltic States onto the world market which has depressed prices for home grown UK softwoods.

5.34. Development of wood fuel markets and schemes is seen as a growth area for Community Forests. However, the market for these products is relatively underdeveloped and supply chains need to be better developed. There are also issues in terms of the amount of investment needed to get this industry established. Marston Vale ran a study looking at the potential to set up large-scale biomass schemes in the CF but found that it was not feasible without large-scale Government investment. Great Western CF has experienced difficulties in developing facilities for processing timber products. For example, funding fell through for a wood fuel project, and the CF Director feels there is a need to influence the planning system before delivery can happen.

**OBJECTIVE 13: To create jobs in the new woodland industries, both management of woodland and use of the raw materials**

**Evaluation and commentary**

5.35. The CFP is achieving this objective to a low level.

5.36. This objective is very closely related to the previous objective, as the extent to which the CFs create jobs in the woodland industries is dependent on the extent to which they contribute to successful woodland industries, as the former is a ‘spin-off’ of the latter. Typically the CFs have not seen actions to create jobs in the woodland industries as a priority. Nevertheless there is some evidence that the CFs are contributing to job creation in the new woodland industries, as illustrated in the two case studies below and set out in Chapter 8.

<table>
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<th>Forestry Resources: South Yorkshire Forest</th>
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<td>The decline of many traditional heavy industries in the South Yorkshire region has left a legacy of dereliction. The South Yorkshire Forest Partnership has been tasked with developing a viable and sustainable forestry industry, which will contribute directly to economic development through the creation of new products and markets, as well as indirectly by delivering an improved physical landscape that also brings social benefit. Opportunities for new woodland establishment are widespread, the planting and management of which would support a local forestry industry and create new jobs. The Partnership manages a set of financial incentives that are available to local communities, organisations and enterprises that will promote woodland establishment, management and actions that promote the harvesting, marketing and processing of forestry products. The</td>
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Forest Team has proved critical in developing links between producers and end-users, such as in the case of a community heating system near Doncaster.


**Urban Timber Initiative: Red Rose Forest**

Red Rose Forest is one of the most urban of the forests, and yet there was a recognition that the forest holds a considerable timber resource in the form of existing urban woodlands, park and street trees, and second hand timber that was not being utilized to its full potential. The Forest Team undertook studies to establish whether there was potential to meet a greater proportion of local timber demand from local timber sources. The Forest Team have since put in place a number of practical projects to address the issues raised by the supply and demand studies. For example, the Forest has worked with over 30 local companies, to produce eight new jobs and 20 new products that used local timber.


5.37. The CLA, representing the views of landowners, expressed the view that the Community Forests have not been successful in creating jobs in the woodland industries. As noted in relation to Objective 8 above, English Nature noted that due to the fact that timber markets are in a state of decline, it is hard to achieve positive outcomes in relation to woodland industry. Similarly, the Woodland Trust and NFU considered that CFs are not achieving this objective.

**Limiting factors**

5.38. Many of the factors cited above in relation to Objective 8, which are limiting the development of woodland industries, are also limiting the extent to which the CFs have contributed to job creation in these industries. These include the state of timber markets and the relatively underdeveloped state of wood fuel markets.

**OBJECTIVE 10: To give public and private sector confidence in the long-term prospects for the area and to provide a proper base for investment.**

**Evaluation and commentary**

5.39. The CFP is achieving this objective to an *intermediate* level. This judgement reflects the fact that there is evidence from studies (discussed below) focusing on non-Community Forest areas to suggest that a high quality environment should contribute to attracting investment. However, there is no conclusive evidence specifically relating to CFs. Furthermore it will take several years before landscape scale improvements are really appreciable, and therefore this objective will only really be met comprehensively as schemes mature and landscape scale changes are built up through a ‘patchwork’ of projects.

5.40. A high quality natural environment and access to green space and outdoor recreation are often seen as crucial determinants of quality of life – and a good quality of life has been found to play a key role in encouraging inward investment, particularly in
regional economies, as workers with the highest skills, incomes and ability to generate new jobs seek to live where the quality of life is high.

5.41. In considering this objective it is necessary to look at performance against the environmental objectives. The evidence presented in relation to Objective 2 (To improve the landscape of the area, including reclamation of derelict land, to create a visually exciting and functionally diverse environment), suggests that CFs are delivering many projects which will deliver landscape improvements, but that it is early days in terms of actually seeing an improvement on the ground.

5.42. The CF Directors interviewed through this study typically indicated that their gut reaction is that the CFs have influenced this objective positively, for example the CF Director of the Mersey Forest described a general feeling of increased economic confidence in the area. However, no CF Directors could provide quantitative evidence to support the evaluation of this objective. The case study below from the Mersey Forest, however, provides good qualitative evidence to support the idea that a high quality natural environment can have economic benefits.

**Stanlow Oil Refinery Site: Mersey Forest**

The Stanlow oil refinery site at Ellesmere Port was a heavily industrialised site that had been on the market for over 10 years. The CF planted fast growing poplar trees on the site to provide a green setting within a heavily industrialised landscape. Following the growth of the poplars, the site was purchased by the Hertz car rental company, which provides an indication of the impact greening an industrial landscape can have.

(Source: Interview with CF Director)

**Evidence from other studies**

5.43. A number of studies over the past ten years have demonstrated the importance of the natural environment as a factor in locational decisions. Many of these studies have found that the environment plays a significant role in attracting inward investment. In the UK, ERM (2001)\(^{11}\) cite PACEC Inward Investors Interviews, which showed that 33% of respondents in a 2000 survey cited the attractiveness of the environment as an ‘important’ reason for choosing their main site. ERM also quote a UK survey by Black Horse Relocation, which found that among personal factors influencing executives’ choice of cities for relocation, access to the countryside was ranked 6th (cited by 27% of respondents).

**Implications for the CFP**

5.44. In order to assess fully the impact of the CFs on regional investment over the past 15 years, one would need to conduct a large-scale business survey of inward investors – based on asking businesses to identify the factors that influence their decision to locate and ranking the different factor (and indeed a number of CFs are undertaking some form of study to test the link between environmental improvements and economic growth).

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5.45. Based on the evidence presented here and elsewhere, however, there is good reason to conclude that the Community Forests have done much to enhance regional and city competitiveness. SQW and LUC recently conducted a similar survey for One NorthEast\(^{12}\), looking at the value of protected landscapes to the region. The study found that £22m of annual business turnover and 1,187 FTE jobs were supported in the protected landscapes by businesses that started or relocated to the area because of the quality of the landscape and environment in the area.

5.46. A study by Penn Associates for the Countryside Agency looking specifically at the economic impacts of the Community Forest Programme draws on interviews with a range of representatives from the Regional Development Agencies, other Government Agencies, local authorities and the private sector. The study found that the interviewees were unanimous in considering that the physical environment was a factor in determining the economic status of an area. As to whether the CFP itself had added value to the economy of the region, the picture presented in the Penn Associates study was mixed, with some consultees suggesting the CFP has had, and will continue to have, a significant impact, whilst others found it harder to pinpoint the exact role of the CFP in this process. The cases study below from the Great North Forest illustrates how a local authority and RDA in the Great North Forest recognised the importance of linking economic development with social and environmental regeneration.

**Monkton Business Park: Great North Forest**

Monkton Coke Works was a large, derelict and contaminated site within South Tyneside, on the northern edge of the Great North Forest. When South Tyneside Borough Council was producing a Development Brief for the site, they invited the Great North Forest to contribute to the process, recognising the importance of linking economic development with social and environmental regeneration. The reclamation of the site, in accordance with the development brief, was funded by One Northeast, who also promoted the concept of a business park created in a community woodland setting. Monkton is in the process of being developed as one of the North East’s flagship economic investment sites and a gateway site to the Great North Forest. It is unique within the North East in so far as the development has been designed and implemented in a manner that has had a high degree of success in achieving integrated economic, social and environmental regeneration, in accordance with sustainable development principles.


5.47. The Penn Associates study also notes the recognition in several Regional Economic Strategies of the importance of image in promoting regional economies. For example, the two CFs in the North West region are identified in the RES, amongst other projects, as having a key role to play in helping to reposition the region’s image. The case study overleaf from the Mersey Forest illustrates how the North West RDA recognises the importance of the Community Forests within the region.

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European Funding Projects: Mersey Forest

Merseyside is eligible for European Structural Funds due to the fact that Gross Domestic Product here is less than 75% of the EU average. As identified in the North West development agency Regional Economic Strategy, environmental regeneration generally, and the Mersey and Red Rose Forests specifically, are seen as an important component in the economic development in the region. The Mersey Forest is recognised as having a key role to play in delivering aspects of projects funded through EU Structural Funds, and hence also in the economic and social regeneration of the North West, through improving the image and perception of the sub-region. By 2002, ten different projects had been funded leading to 600ha of new woodland, 100 ha of woodland managed, 20 new jobs created, 200 businesses assisted and 3 new businesses set up.


5.48. Several interviewees in the Penn Associates study felt that the CFP could play a greater role in economic development at a regional and sub-regional level in future. For example, potential for the CFP to become mainstreamed in regeneration programmes was cited. However, to capitalise on their potential, it was felt they would have to:

- Be more proactive e.g. through engaging with a wider range of partners, including regional bodies.
- Communicate more effectively the value of their approach and increase recognition of their role.
- Show a high level of innovation.
- Work beyond their boundaries.
- Prove that they are delivering regional outputs.

5.49. In future the CFs will therefore need to focus further efforts on promoting their role to the RDAs, stressing the important role that CFs are playing and can continue to play in delivering a high quality environment, which is essential in creating a successful base for attracting investment. In particular the CFs will need to demonstrate that they are delivering regional outputs. The CFs should seek recognition within Regional Economic Strategies as one of a range of delivery mechanisms for attracting investment. CFs should also work to promote their role amongst the business community more generally.

5.50. The CFP could undertake further research to quantify the effects that the CFs are having on inward investment, for example through surveying companies locating in the CF area to find out whether they are aware of the CF and whether the CF specifically, or the quality of the environment generally, were factors contributing to their location decisions.
Limiting factors

5.51. A lack of RDA support, as reported by Community Forest Directors, is held up as a factor limiting the achievement of the Community Forests in terms of creating public and private sector confidence in long-term prospects for Forest areas and providing a proper base for investment.

5.52. The CLA also noted that they felt that the CFs have not done enough in terms of promoting themselves more widely and raising awareness amongst businesses and developers.

OBJECTIVE 15: To sustain other local jobs by providing an outstanding environment as a comparative economic advantage over competitor areas.

Evaluation and commentary

5.53. There is little evidence available to judge the level to which this objective is being met i.e. the extent to which the Community Forests are sustaining local jobs in general due to the provision of a high quality environment.

5.54. Chapter 8 of this report, on value for money, indicates that monitoring reports show that direct employment rose from 11.5 jobs in 1990/1 to 72 jobs in 1999/2000, across all the forests. Over the ten year period, this accounts for over 400 man-years of employment.\textsuperscript{13} Using a standard multiplier of 1.2\textsuperscript{14}, one derives a figure of 86.4 jobs created indirectly or induced in the local economies of the twelve forests, for 1999/2000. In total, then, the employment impact in this sample year is 158.4 jobs. However, it is important to note that whilst CFs themselves may not directly create significant numbers of jobs, they create the environmental infrastructure in which others, such as RDAs, can work to promote their regions to investors, in part on the basis of the quality of the environment. If one considers the role of Community Forests in indirectly supporting local jobs, this figure is likely to be significantly higher (particularly in areas where the environment is degraded).

5.55. The outcome against this objective is strongly related to the previous objective (‘To give public and private sector confidence in the long-term prospects for the area and to provide a proper base for investment’), since it is also underpinned by the premise that the quality of the environment is a key to securing an economic advantage and retaining local jobs. As discussed above, there is a body of evidence which supports this view, but there is no evidence collected by the CFs or other bodies to support this objective or otherwise.

5.56. In terms of views obtained from interviews, several stakeholders noted that they felt that CFs are contributing to this objective, for example Darlington and Derwentside Local Authorities and Groundwork felt that work in the Tees and Great North

\textsuperscript{13} Data is missing for 1994/5.
\textsuperscript{14} 1.2 is a low standard multiplier used in economic impact assessments. 1.5 is a more common factor but 1.2 was used as a conservative and cautious estimate
Forests is contributing to this objective. The CLA however, in contrast, felt that the CFs generally have failed to draw people and businesses into the CF areas.

5.57. As discussed in relation to Objective 10, in future the CFs need to focus further efforts on promoting the role of CFs to the RDAs, stressing the important role that CFs are playing and can continue to play in delivering a high quality environment, which is essential to sustain local jobs by creating a comparative economic advantage over competitor areas. CFs should also work to promote their role amongst the business community more generally.

5.58. Examples of specific actions the CFs have undertaken to generate and sustain local employment opportunities are included under other related objectives (e.g. job creation in the new woodland industries (Objective 13, para. 5.34 above) and in the leisure industry (Objective 14 below)).

**Limiting factors**

5.59. As identified in relation to the objective above, a lack of RDA support, as reported by Community Forest Directors, is held up as a factor limiting the achievement of the Community Forests in terms economic regeneration. Lack of recognition amongst the business community is also a limiting factor to some extent.

**OBJECTIVE 11: To improve the environment near housing and local industry and to increase the value of properties and businesses.**

**Evaluation and commentary**

5.60. The CFP is achieving this objective to an *intermediate* level.

5.61. Again, this objective is strongly linked to the two previous objectives, as it is based on the fact that improving the environment should lead to economic benefits, in this case increasing the value of properties and businesses.

5.62. A range of research suggests that greenspace and woodland can enhance property values. Research by CABE Space\(^\text{15}\) presents evidence that well-planned, well-managed public space has a positive impact on the price of nearby domestic properties. For example, a study in the Netherlands found that a garden with a view of a park led to an 8 percent raise in house prices. Studies from America have made similar findings, for example, a study of Denver residents found that, in 1990, 48 per cent of residents said they would pay more to live near a ‘greenbelt or park’. A hedonic price model (HPM) study for the Forest of Dean (Garrod and Willis 1993) estimated that 20% general tree cover added approximately 7% to house prices. Another study found that a 20% premium to property values could be achieved by developing land in mature woodland settings\(^\text{16}\).

\(^{15}\) The Value of Public Space. How high quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value. CABE Space.

\(^{16}\) Does money Grow on Trees? CABE Space, 2005.

5.63. Specifically within Community Forests, Marston Vale CF has undertaken some research\(^{17}\) to investigate the relationship between well-wooded greenspace and property values, in order to inform discussions with developers in securing contributions to the forest. The research concluded that the aims of the CF will, over time, enhance the area and will consequently result in an increase in property values.

5.64. The CFP is undertaking a range of actions to contribute to this objective. For example, Watling Chase CF has worked with Hertsmere Local Authority to develop SPG which highlights the role of the CF and requires that developers must contribute towards CF aims, for example through planting trees in new developments. Red Rose Forest is working with Housing Market Renewal funds, through the ODPM Pathfinder scheme, to plant trees in areas with significant numbers of vacant houses in order to contribute to regeneration of the housing market. Similarly, the North East forest has significant numbers of empty and derelict houses and they see opportunities for using forestry for delivering housing renewal. CFs are frequently commenting on development briefs/planning applications. However, the Mersey Forest noted that there is an increasing role for CFs to play in proposing, delivering and managing planning obligations.

5.65. The case studies below illustrate how different CFs are working with developers and local authorities to inform masterplans for developments to ensure they include environmental improvements.

**Westpark: Tees Forest**

Darlington Westpark is a development of 700 new homes built around Darlington’s first new park in over a century. It will also be home to a new mental health hospital, school and rugby ground. The involvement of the Tees Forest in landscape and environmental improvements on the site is being used as a key selling point for the development. Tees Forest provided consultancy advice on the project masterplan as well as commenting on the green transport routes. The Forest is also playing a role in delivering the community woodland element of the West Park development. The planting of over 40,000 trees was completed in 2003 creating a new broadleaved woodland containing a variety of trees including oak, ash, birch, willow and hazel on eight hectares of former industrial land on the edge of Darlington. An important element of the scheme is the provision of green transport routes and features for informal community recreation, including connecting cycle routes, a BMX track, walking routes, meadow areas and sculptures. The CF is also aiming to build a visitor centre on the site, to act as a base for Ranger staff and to provide a centre for a range of activities including health walks, various outdoor sports and environmental education.

(Source: Interview with CF Director)

**Swindon Southern Development Area: Great Western Community Forest**

Swindon is a growing town, and one of the main roles of Great Western CF is to work in the ‘buffer zone’ around the town to secure landscape improvements. The Community Forest team has engaged a team of partners to draw-up a ‘vision’ and mitigation plan for a housing

\(^{17}\) Realising the value of well-wooded greenspace in the urban fringe. RPS on behalf of the Marston Vale Trust, 2004.
development to the south of Swindon, which has now been accepted by the developer and may attract £1 million of funding for its implementation.

(Source: Interview with CF Director)

**Van Dieman’s Land: Forest of Marston Vale**

Much of the Forest of Marston Vale area has been designated as ‘Strategic Development Corridor’ by the planning authorities. The Forest Team has been proactive in working with developers and the planning authorities to develop a landscape framework that can add value to existing and future development, by creating an attractive, healthy and productive woodland framework, which delivers public benefits as well as bringing environmental gains. One example of a project is on an area of former arable land which has been developed for as a large-scale distribution centre for major retailers. Keen to ensure that the development was constructed in a sympathetic and beneficial manner, the local planning authority signed a S106 agreement with the site developers which required them to allocate a proportion of the site for community woodland and to provide funding for its creation.


5.66. National stakeholders were positive with respect to this objective. The CLA interviewee felt that the CFP might well be delivering in terms of improving the environment near housing. Similarly English Nature and the NFU expressed agreement that the CFs are successfully working towards this objective.

5.67. However, some CF Directors and other interviewees noted that if environmental improvement leads to increased house prices, this could price local people out of the market. Therefore several stakeholders questioned the extent to which this is a valid aim.

**Limiting factors**

5.68. The relationship between Community Forests and Local Planning Authorities is important for securing improved settings for new development through planning obligations. Research by RPS18 for Marston Vale Trust highlights the fact that financial contributions to significant new tree planting from developers are only likely to be forthcoming if a requirement is set out in planning consents. However, some CF Directors noted that there is a lot of competition for planning gain.

5.69. A lack of recognition amongst developers of the benefits of contributing to tree planting and landscape improvements also limits the extent to which the CFP is meeting this objective.

**OBJECTIVE 14: To create jobs in the leisure industry developed in and around the Community Forest**

**Evaluation and commentary**

5.70. The CFP is achieving this objective to a **low** level.

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18 As reported in a presentation given by RPS on 19 March 2004 entitled Realising the value of well-wooded greenspace in the urban fringe (presentation supplied by Marston Vale CF).
5.71. The Community Forests represent a significant resource for recreation and leisure, and the CFs are becoming increasingly involved in leisure and tourism activities, but there is little evidence to suggest that CFs are having a significant influence in terms of indirect leisure industry employment.

5.72. Activities of the CFP could indirectly help to meet this objective, for example through identifying focal points of interest for visitors and promoting these (often termed ‘Gateway Sites’), and through development of Forest Centres (where jobs have been created) to attract visitors and provide facilities such as cafes and gift shops. Some CFs are moving more directly into provision of leisure opportunities e.g. through cycle hire facilities, which may lead to the creation of some additional jobs. The two case studies below illustrate how CF projects may create some employment opportunities.

### Shirebrook Valley: South Yorkshire Forest

This project has seen the transformation of a derelict sewage works into an award winning nature reserve and popular visitor attraction. Restoration of the derelict site has produced a much-loved and cared for community resource. A local, unemployed caretaker, who was provided with training and a new job with the Sheffield Countryside Conservation Trust, now plays a pivotal role in managing the site. The visitor centre, which is a popular destination along the Trans Pennine National Trail is staffed largely by volunteers.


### Summerhill: Tees Forest

The creation of a multi-user active recreation facility developed in a newly planted woodland park on the western edge of Hartlepool has led to local job creation. An immensely popular site for outdoor sports has been created, with rambling, cycling, horse riding, exercise and fitness, cross country, running orienteering, archery and rock climbing. The recreation activities occur within a 26 ha woodland in which over 65,000 trees have been planted. Approximately 30,000 - 40,000 people now visit the site every year, many from the local area, but also from all over the north west.

(Source: The North East Community Forests Good Practice Guide).

5.73. Local authority officers either ‘disagreed’ that the CFs were meeting this objective or ‘didn’t know’. It was commented that this should be an area of focus for the future.

5.74. Overall, although the CFs have not made significant in roads in relation to leisure industry employment to date, a number of the forests have developed leisure and tourism strategies. If brought to fruition these strategies have to potential to increase the CFs’ role in leisure industry job creation.

### WIDER OUTCOMES

**‘Selling’ the environment**

5.75. CFs have helped develop an understanding amongst other environmental organisations of the importance of being realistic about ‘selling the environment', i.e.
it is vital to sell the link between environment and economy in order to get funding for environmental initiatives.

The regeneration agenda

5.76. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister’s ‘Communities Plan’ Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (2003), recognises the potential role of Community Forests in helping to create livable cities and sustainable communities. Marston Vale Community Forest, for example, is playing a key role in developing Green Infrastructure in the south Bedford area of the larger Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area.

5.77. Community Forests also have clear links to some of the objectives set out in Regional Economic Strategies, prepared by the Regional Development Agencies. For example, a consultee at the North West Development Agency noted that Community Forests are contributing to two of the five key objectives in the Regional Economic Strategy relating to image and regeneration. However, as noted above there is further scope for CFs to more closely align themselves with RDA agendas in terms of delivering regional scale outputs to contribute to regeneration.

THEMES TO WHICH THE CFP IS CONTRIBUTING

5.78. In considering the performance of the CFP against its Priority Targets and objectives and its wider outcomes, it is clear that the Programme is contributing to targets for Government departments and Regional Development Agencies, the aims and indicators set by the Countryside Agency, and objectives for forestry set out in the England Forestry Strategy (see box below). Information on the way in which the CFP is contributing to PSA targets is provided in Chapter 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wider themes to which the CFP is contributing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSA targets</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defra 5. Deliver more customer-focused, competitive and sustainable food and farming as measured by the increase in agriculture’s gross value added per person excluding support payments; and secure CAP reforms that reduce production-linked support, enabling enhanced EU funding for environmental conservation and rural development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DfW&amp;P/HM Treasury 3. Demonstrate progress by Spring 2006 on increasing the employment rate and reducing the unemployment rate over the economic cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DWP 4. Over the three years to Spring 2006, increase the employment rates of disadvantaged areas and groups: lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50+, those with the lowest qualifications and the 30 LADs with the poorest initial labour market position, and significantly reduce the difference between their employment rates and the overall rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DCM&amp;S 3. Improve the productivity of the tourism, creative and leisure industries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of RDA targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• EEDA ‘A Shared Vision’ under its fourth goal ‘High quality places to live, work and visit’ identifies measures for developing and enhancing green spaces and infrastructure to support economic growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SEEDA RES includes an action to promote awareness and understanding of the environment as a key strength of the South East’s economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Yorkshire and Humber RES contains an action to transform the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods into sustainable communities by delivering regeneration programmes in targeted areas of deprivation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• The SWRDA RES includes actions to support the regeneration of disadvantaged rural communities e.g. through devising programmes that will assist in improving productivity and add value to tourism and agriculture; developing a land use strategy that will integrate food production, tourism, energy production, environmental management and countryside access.
• Advantage West Midlands RES includes an action of developing sustainable local economies and communities by improving the environmental, social and cultural infrastructure under the banner of regenerating communities.
• NWDA RES includes measures to tackle regeneration e.g. through developing and implementing co-ordinated approaches to the reclamation of derelict and underused land in and adjacent to urban areas including the development of regional park resources.

The Countryside Agency’s 20 indicator themes
• Community vibrancy
• Business health
• Market towns prosperity
• Employment characteristics
• Income levels and distribution

The Countryside Agency’s rural urban fringe vision: ten key functions for the rural urban fringe
• A productive landscape
• An engine for regeneration

The England Forestry Strategy
• Support strategic development of woodland resources
• Encourage diversification [of woodland industries]
• Support regional programmes

CONCLUSION

5.79. By disseminating information, such as on availability of grants, and in building confidence amongst farmers to diversify their enterprises, the CFs are helping to sustain the agricultural economy.

5.80. It was not the intention of the CFP to generate a significant supply of timber. However, CFs are undertaking a wide range of successful small-scale wood product related projects and contribute to the wood fuel market locally.

5.81. The CFP has also not performed particularly well in relation to attracting private sector support to implement CFs. This is an area where CFs will need to place greater emphasis in future. Linked to this is the need to align themselves more closely to the RDA agenda, in order to obtain regional level funding streams, which will require a demonstration that CFs are providing regional level outputs.

5.82. There was general consensus amongst consultees, however, that the CFP is helping to create the conditions, or ‘green infrastructure’, in which others, such as RDAs, can promote their regions to investors. In so doing, and in improving the environment near housing and local industry, there is some evidence of a positive impact of CFs on the value of properties and businesses.
6. ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LIFE LONG LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

6.1. This chapter assesses the performance of the CFP against its Priority Targets and objectives related to encouraging community involvement and life long learning. It also identifies the range of wider outcomes the CFP is delivering in relation to this topic. Through the efforts of the CFP to meet these targets and objectives and also deliver a range of wider outcomes, the CFP is also contributing to a number of other ‘key themes’ which are identified at the end of this chapter.

ACHIEVING PRIORITY TARGETS

6.2. First Order Priority 4 (‘Securing involvement in the Community Forest by a wide range of local communities, especially those socially excluded from their environment’) provides a useful measure of performance in relation to this topic area.

6.3. The number of community events (classified as events involving more than 10 people) has only been measured since 2000, but by 2003 the progress achieved was 5% above target. The target was achieved in 2001/02 and 2003/04 but fell short in 2000/01. Before 2000 only ‘community events’ and ‘events targeted at farmers’ were measured excluding school events, training events and information/interpretation/publicity events (which make up 56% of the 2000/01 figure) so a fair comparison cannot be made.

6.4. Table 6.1 details the targets set for securing community involvement and the actual number of events held.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000/01</th>
<th>2001/02</th>
<th>2002/03</th>
<th>Total to Date</th>
<th>2003-2005 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Events Held</td>
<td>9,466 12,210</td>
<td>12,955 12,210</td>
<td>16,029 12,210</td>
<td>38,450</td>
<td>24,420</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5. The cumulative target for the number of community events held involving more than 10 people for the period 2000-2005 is 61,050.

6.6. The following tables detail the number of events broken down into four types which were recorded across all the Community Forests in each monitoring year.
Table 6.2 a - d: Numbers of events by type per year

**Table 6.2 a: 2000/01**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Events</th>
<th>2000/01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement/action events</td>
<td>4063 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools events</td>
<td>3433 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information/interpretation/publicity events</td>
<td>1361 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training events</td>
<td>609 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,466</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. this excludes data for two CFs for which data was not available.

**Table 6.2 b: 2001/02**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Events</th>
<th>2001/02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement/action events</td>
<td>5353 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools events</td>
<td>4634 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information/interpretation/publicity events</td>
<td>2277 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training events</td>
<td>691 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,955</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Only events held in urban areas were recorded in some CFs.

**Table 6.2 c: 2002/03**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Events</th>
<th>2002/03</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement/action events</td>
<td>6863 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools events</td>
<td>5613 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information/interpretation/publicity events</td>
<td>2415 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training events</td>
<td>1138 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,029</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.2 d: 2003/04**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Events</th>
<th>2003/04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement/action events</td>
<td>6243 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools events</td>
<td>4976 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information/interpretation/publicity events</td>
<td>2465 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training events</td>
<td>1513 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,197</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES**

**OBJECTIVE 6:** To provide new opportunities for educational use of the area, and ensure the mosaic of habitats in the forest can be used for the full range of environmental education needs of the surrounding schools. Also to ensure that urban schools are not disadvantaged in meeting the needs of the National Curriculum.

**Evaluation and commentary**

6.7. Consultation has confirmed that the CFP is achieving this objective to a **high** level.
6.8. The majority of the Forest Teams have undertaken a considerable number of projects which, as well as placing specific emphasis on education, also contribute to a number of other objectives such as Objective 3 in terms of providing opportunities to access art and culture through events.

6.9. Taking just one example to reflect the range of educational initiatives undertaken as part of the CFP, the Forest of Mercia has:

- established a project to involve children who have been excluded from mainstream education system (see case study below);
- established Adult Education classes;
- become an accredited City and Guilds training centre, teaching NVQ Level II Forestry; and
- developed educational packs covering a range of subjects e.g. literacy, renewable energy and self-learn geography packs, including a soil testing kit, providing a practical, hands-on approach to learning.

6.10. The emphasis in the CFs is on project specific, hands-on learning within the forests themselves. Education Officer posts have been established within the Forest Teams at South Yorkshire, Thames Chase, Forest of Mercia, Tees Forest, Great North and Red Rose. As well as organising educational events and activities within the forests themselves the production of education packs has proven a popular means for disseminating educational material to supplement and complement the environmental requirements of the National Curriculum. Two educational programmes working alongside local schools are described in the case studies below.

### Reset Programme: Forest of Mercia

This is a programme for schoolchildren that have been excluded from mainstream education and therefore have few opportunities for engaging in environmental education activities. The Forest of Mercia worked with Staffordshire County Council to create and run a programme that was based around national curriculum activities, whilst also offering other methods of engagement with children who have generally rejected mainstream techniques. The Forest of Mercia Project Officer has devised a programme of activities based around woodland activities that meet national curriculum targets. Based at the Forest Office, the Project Officer works alongside teachers from the Education Authority. The programme is delivered to between 5-10 pupils per annum. (Source: Interview with CF Director)

### Black Poplar Project: The Tees Forest

Involving a range of partners (including the Countryside Agency, Darlington Borough Council and Durham Wildlife Trust) this project worked with local schools and community groups to record the location and numbers of black poplar trees and to collect cuttings. The project which was backed by Professor David Bellamy, involved schools and communities in the propagation of the native black poplar – Britain’s rarest native timber tree and a target species in the Durham Biodiversity Action Plan. Local schools, growing the cuttings, were matched with suitable planting sites. Scientific expertise has been provided by Durham University which has carried out genetic testing of the Darlington black poplar tree stock. (Source: Interview with CF Director)
6.11. Such events are often new to local people and a range of approaches has been used to reach a wide audience. In the early years of the CFP, such approaches were considered to be particularly innovative when few other organisations were seeking to provide such a hands on educational experience for children.

6.12. Generally the CFs tend to work with schools within the Forest area, rather than those in neighbouring towns or surrounding areas. There is clearly an opportunity for the CFP to broaden its geographical net in terms of education work.

6.13. Life-long learning is also central to CF activity, for example through the voluntary sector’s involvement in the CFP. Several CFs have dedicated ‘Forest Centres’ e.g. Thames Chase, Marston Vale and Mercia with information panels, leaflets etc. and staff to disseminate information on the aims and work of the CFs. In addition all the CFs have an extended network of centres, for example in country parks, promoting the forest image.

6.14. In addition to providing for more formal education, informal broader ‘outreach’ activities contribute significantly to the educational outputs and achievements of the CFP, including programmes of summer activities covering for example, arts and crafts, history and ecology. Educational events are planned throughout the year with many events programmed specifically to coincide with school holiday periods.

Limiting factors

6.15. Limiting factors include overlap with other organisations undertaking similar work, and difficulties in securing funding for long term Education Officer posts.

OBJECTIVE 9: To achieve a high level of local community commitment to the concept and involvement in its implementation.

Evaluation and commentary

6.16. The CFP is achieving this objective to an intermediate level.

6.17. The CFs have made considerable advances in involving communities and this is particularly evident in terms of working with local schools and establishing volunteer and ‘friends of’ groups. However, where the CFs are less successful is in terms of engaging the wider public, with many people being unaware of the CFs’ activities.

6.18. This objective ties directly with Priority 4 of the annual Monitoring Reports – ‘Securing Involvement by Local Communities’. Although the Monitoring Reports show that the CFs were down on their targets for the periods 2000-2001 and 2001-2002, they also reveal that the Forests exceeded their goals for community involvement during 2002-2003.

6.19. It is evident from consultation feedback that numerous measures have been implemented in order to develop and embrace community involvement. The Mersey Forest, for example, has one full time member of the forest team who coordinates local volunteers. Their approach is a flexible one - allowing people to vary their levels of involvement so that they do not feel pressured to commit to a degree of
participation that may prove unsustainable. The case studies below illustrate how volunteers are integral to the operation of the CFs.

**Friends and Volunteers: Forest of Marston Vale**

Many people wanted to be more formally involved with the Forest, contributing their time and skills. A volunteer recruitment exercise was initiated in 1999, which resulted in approximately 60 people volunteering. The Forest Volunteers are formally constituted, with administration co-ordinated by an appointed group. Volunteers are involved in as wide a range of Forest activities as possible, with training and career development opportunities provided. A recruitment and induction pack were produced, and a database established which records volunteers expertise, areas of interest, time availability etc. People who opt for ‘Friends’ status pay an annual subscription for which they receive free access to the Forest Centre and Country Park. The formation of the Forest Volunteers group has been to a large extent dependent upon the development of the Forest Centre and Country Park, which has provided a public-face for the Forest, and a focus for activities.

(Source: Community Forest Director and The National Community Forest Partnership: Examples of Good Practice. Penn Associates, 2002).

**Shore Forest Park: Great Western Community Forest**

This long-term project has involved around 10,000 volunteers planting trees over the past ten years to create a forest park for the local community. Following the tree planting, a planning application to build a football stadium on the site was blocked due to huge public opposition.

(Source: Interview with CF Director)

6.20. The development of a number of forest centres, at Marston Vale, Thames Chase and the Forest of Mercia for example, has aided community involvement - providing important points of focus, giving a face to the forests and an important facility to accommodate community events.

6.21. A number of consultees noted that CFs’ approach to community involvement is for the most part inclusive. Within the Red Rose CF, where there is a big ethnic minority population, the Forest Team has forged good links with the Black Environment Network. The case study below describes a community project in the Great North Forest designed to engage groups that are often underrepresented in countryside activities. However, some CF Directors were concerned that cultural differences are subtle and sometimes sensitive and that forest teams may not have the required skills to ensure information about the forests is presented in an appropriate manner.
Bridging the Gap: Great North Forest

As part of this community development project, two forest outreach workers worked with Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council Countryside Team and the Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council to identify representative community groups in Gateshead who are often excluded from countryside activities (disabled youth groups, women's groups and groups from local Jewish, Asian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities). The project workers negotiated and planned trips to countryside sites, recorded, monitored and evaluated the results and disseminated this to other groups working within the community and environmental fields.

(Source: Community Forest Director and North East Community Forest - Good Practice File).

6.22. CFs also undertake wide consultation on activities within the CFs to ensure people have adequate opportunities to express their views and ideas on the future of the CFs. The case study below from the Mersey Forest demonstrates the extensive networks of local people who are involved in managing the CF.

The Community Contracting Initiative: Mersey Forest

The Mersey Forest has created a formalised network and support structure for the Mersey Forest Friends groups, which enables them to be self-managing, whilst also providing them with the support they need to undertake the sustainable management of their local woodlands. The Community Contracting Initiative (CCI) network currently comprises 11 groups, which have formal committees of between 10 – 20 people, and a wider membership of many hundreds of people, who attend woodland management events. More groups are seeking to join the CCI.

(Source: Community Forest Director and The National Community Forest Partnership: Examples of Good Practice. Penn Associates, 2002).

6.23. Where the CFs have been less effective is in securing public commitment to the concept. This would appear, for the most part, to be due to a lack of awareness amongst the public and/or understanding of the Community Forests. Other factors, such as cultural and socio-economic issues, were also highlighted as obstacles to public participation in the programme. A local authority officer from St Helens Borough Council, for example, commented how a legacy of being surrounded by a heavily worked, degraded environment has affected peoples’ relationship with the environment, and as a result has reduced their confidence in, and connection to, the landscape. This in turn has affected people taking ownership and being truly involved in their local environment/Community Forest.

6.24. On the other hand, a number of local authority officers and a Wildlife Trust representative said that the CFs were meeting this objective very well, emphasising that they are generally better at developing links with community groups than local authorities.

6.25. It would be appropriate for Community Forests to focus future efforts on increasing publicity efforts to raise awareness of the programme and its benefits to the public.
WIDER OUTCOMES

6.26. The Community Forests are playing an important role in terms of raising the profile and relevance of countryside and greenspace among new audiences. For example, in terms of policy-making the CFP is a key player in the current debate about the role of ‘green infrastructure’ in new and existing development. For example, the Forest of Marston Vale has provided a significant input to Milton Keynes South Midlands Study through being the only local organisation on the Environmental Task Group.

6.27. At the local level education and ‘outreach’ work is an important component of the CFs’ work. To this extent Community Forests have succeeded in bringing the countryside closer to people. The forest areas are seen by many as a ‘stepping stone’ from the urban park to the wider countryside.

WIDER THEMES TO WHICH THE CFP IS CONTRIBUTING

6.28. In considering the performance of the CFP against its Priority Targets and objectives and its wider outcomes, it is clear that the Programme is contributing to targets for Government departments and Regional Development Agencies, the aims and indicators set by the Countryside Agency, and objectives for forestry set out in the England Forestry Strategy (see box below). Information on the way in which the CFP is contributing to PSA targets is provided in Chapter 8.

Wider themes to which the CFP is contributing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSA targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Office PSA 8 Increase voluntary and community sector activity, including increasing community participation, by 5% by 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Office PSA 9 Bring about measurable improvements in race equality and community cohesion across a range of performance indicators, as part of the government’s objectives on equality and social inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure Start 1 Achieve by 2005/6:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An increase in the proportion of young children aged 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An increase in the proportion of young children with satisfactory speech and language development at age 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of RDA targets

- The London Development Agency Economic Development Strategy includes an action to support the development of volcom training providers.

The Countryside Agency’s 20 indicator themes

- Public concern for the countryside

The Countryside Agency’s rural urban fringe vision: ten key functions for the rural urban fringe

- A classroom

The England Forestry Strategy

- Promote better understanding [amongst the public, children, etc. of benefits of trees and woodlands, and improve understanding of the economic benefits]
- Promote the environmental benefits of trees and woodlands
CONCLUSION

6.29. Encouraging community involvement and lifelong learning is a key area of activity for the CFP. It has exceeded targets in relation to numbers of community events held, and is performing well in relation to the objectives of relevance to this topic, particularly in terms of providing educational opportunities. The CFP is also drawing in a wide range of volunteers who are integral to project implementation. However, there remains some scope to raise the public's awareness of the role of community forestry, for example through more effective publicity.

6.30. On the other hand, there is evidence that CFP is playing an important role in raising the profile and relevance of countryside and greenspace among new audiences, notably the RDAs. This ties in with the current agenda on the provision of 'green infrastructure', particularly in the Government's Growth Areas.
7. PROCESS OUTCOMES

7.1. The previous chapters present and evaluate CFP in terms of achievements on the ground. For example, the amount of new woodland they have created, the extent to which they have improved landscapes and provided opportunities for people to use the countryside for sport, recreation and cultural events, etc. However, the way CFs operate means they have provided a range of benefits over and above what they have achieved in terms of outputs on the ground. For example, the CFP has had an influence on policy development and has also led to the establishment of strong local partnerships which have allowed them to operate very effectively. Of course there are also feedback loops between the way CFs operate and how this influences their effectiveness and hence outputs on the ground.

7.2. This chapter considers these less tangible benefits, or ‘process outcomes’, under the following headings:

• Influencing policy and promoting innovative approaches
• Strategic long term vision
• Governance and partnership working
• Independence, flexibility and dynamism.

INFLUENCING POLICY AND PROMOTING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

National forestry and woodland policy

7.3. Community Forests have been a key player in the development of the wider community forestry movement in England, which seeks to realise the potential of multi-purpose forestry that delivers environmental, social and economic benefits both directly and indirectly.

7.4. The Forestry Strategy for England A New Focus for England’s Woodlands (1998), which sets out the Government’s strategic priorities and programmes for forestry in England, represents a key milestone in the changing face of forestry policy away from primarily production driven aims to multi-purpose forestry, as advocated and demonstrated by the CFP. The strategy is founded on four guiding principles of quality, integration, partnership and public support. Its four key programmes focus on forestry for rural development, for economic regeneration, for recreation, access and tourism, and forestry for the environment and conservation.

7.5. The Strategy highlights the key role of Community Forests in creating new woodlands and access opportunities in and around towns and cities. The Director General of the Forestry Commission described this role at an international conference in 1999 (Community Forestry – a change for the better, Countryside Agency /Forestry Commission, 1999). He said that:
Community Forests are evidence of the way our thinking has changed…
For the first time we focused on society’s wider needs recognising that forestry can provide social, environmental and economic benefits. …the Community Forest Programme is leading the way.

7.6. As part of the consultation for this study, the Woodland Trust indicated that the CFP has contributed significantly to the achievement of the Trust’s objectives. In particular, they suggested that the CFP has addressed social exclusion, by making forestry relevant to a wider range of people, developed wider partnerships, and got ‘under the skin’ of local authorities far better that other forestry organisations have been able to do.

Timber officer: Forest of Mercia

The Forest of Mercia has a timber officer who is contributing to the aims of the Forestry Commission at the regional level. A number of CFs have officers in similar roles working to develop the woodland industries and this is seen as a potential future area of activity for the CFs.

Vision and policy for the rural-urban fringe

7.7. The CFP has played a role in influencing and defining policy for the rural-urban fringe. For example, Community Forests are flagged up as an approach to regeneration in the Government’s Rural White Paper (2000), which states that “the Government would like to see the approach [Community Forests] adopted more widely and will consider how it can be used to assist with the implementation of other regeneration, forestry and community-based initiatives”. In response to this endorsement the Countryside Agency established it’s REACT initiative, which aims to demonstrate how to integrate community forestry into existing Area Based Initiatives, for example Sport Action Zones, Health Action Zones, Strategic Regeneration Zones.

7.8. The Countryside Agency and Groundwork’s The Countryside in and Around Towns: A vision for connecting town and country in the pursuit of sustainable development (2005) sets out a shared vision of a ‘rural-urban fringe that is attractive, accessible, diverse and multi-functional. It serves the needs of both urban and rural communities, strengthens the links between town and country, and contributes fully towards sustainable development’.

7.9. Many consultees for this evaluation commented that this vision has much in common with the objectives (and achievements) of the CFP. Indeed, one of the CF directors consulted suggested that the document provides an accurate description of the role of the CFP. However, the document refers to Community Forests as one of a number of approaches to unlocking the potential of the rural-urban fringe.

Shaping green infrastructure for sustainable communities and Growth Areas

7.10. There is considerable current and emerging national policy on the provision of greenspace, or ‘green infrastructure’, within and around the Governments Growth Areas which are defined in The Deputy Prime Minister’s ‘Communities Plan’ Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (2003). The CFP has played a strong
role in influencing policy on green infrastructure in the Growth Areas through its work in relation to the rural-urban fringe, discussed above.

7.11. The Sustainable Communities Plan sets out the following policy directions for the countryside around towns:

“We will protect the countryside through a target for each region to maintain or increase the current area of land designated as Green Belt land on local plans.

We will use greenbelt and countryside protection tools to maintain the openness of the countryside around areas of growth and prevent urban sprawl;

We will enhance greenbelt land by encouraging local authorities to identify ways to raise its quality and utility, for example by improving its accessibility, biodiversity and amenity value;

We will promote more and better publicly accessible greenspace in and around our communities, for example through the creation of new country parks and networks of greenspaces within towns and cities. ‘Green wedges’ and ‘green corridors’ will be given further protection through the planning system;

We will encourage regional and local partners, especially in the growth areas and low demand pathfinders, to replicate the success of the 12 Community Forests around our major towns and cities.”

7.12. It can be seen that the Sustainable Communities Plan recognises the potential role of Community Forests in helping to create livable cities and sustainable communities. It encourages regional and local partners, especially in the growth areas and low demand pathfinders, to replicate the success of the Community Forests, stating that ‘these forests give communities access to green spaces and woodlands right on the urban doorstep, and help protect and improve the countryside. They also help boost economic confidence and investment.’

7.13. CFs have significantly influenced the Growth Area strategies. Marston Vale CF, for example, provided a significant input to Milton Keynes South Midlands Study through being the only local organisation on the Environmental Task Group (ETG) and being invited to speak at the Examination in Public. Subsequently the Joint Statement on Green Infrastructure produced by ETG emphasised the importance of the Forest of Marston Vale and the Inspector’s Report described it as a ‘green infrastructure resource of at least sub-regional importance’. Marston Vale CF sees this as a sign that it is maturing into a leader in the delivery of green infrastructure and creating a new niche for the CFP. Similarly, Thames Chase CF is playing a key role in the development of the Thames Gateway Growth Areas, through involvement in the Green Arc strategic initiative and Green Grid network in east London.

7.14. In order to support the provision of high quality development supported by green infrastructure in the Growth Areas the CA has produced a ‘cookbook’ of techniques for achieving high quality development and design, many of which draw on the
principles of community forestry. The techniques the CA are promoting are intended to set the standards for development throughout England. They include:

- choosing and understanding sites
- involving communities
- creating and accessing green space that delivers functional and cost effective benefits to regeneration and development.

7.15. Further details are provided in the ‘Cookbook’ on 20 techniques covering community planning, planning and local development, greenspace, access, control over use of land, delivery/regeneration bodies, local products.

**Spatial planning policy**

7.16. CFs are recognised in planning policy at the national, regional and local levels. At the national level, PPS7 Sustainable Development in the Countryside urges local authorities to secure environmental improvements and maximise a range of beneficial uses of land at the rural-urban fringe, whilst reducing potential conflicts between neighbouring land uses. The PPS recognises the role of CFs in improving public access and facilitating the provision of recreation facilities. Chapter 4 of this report provides considerable evidence to support this.

7.17. Regional delivery plans for Sustainable Food and Farming, Regional Environment Strategies, and Regional Economic Strategies have all been influenced by or refer to CFs in some regions. The North West Development Agency consultee said CFs were contributing to two of the five key Regional Economic Strategy objectives: image and regeneration. Contribution to RDA targets by each of the 12 CFs is discussed further in Chapter 8.

7.18. The CFP has been less successful at securing support for CFs in regional spatial planning policy. This presents a clear opportunity, especially given that Regional Spatial Strategies now form part of the development plan for an area, and Government funding is likely to be channelled through the regions to a greater extent in the future.

7.19. At the local level, the CFP has made a considerable impact on the statutory planning process – both forward planning and development control. Structure and local plans generally make reference to Community Forests (where they exist) and include policies with respect to them. In some areas the gap between the Forest Plan and the planning system has also been bridged by the use of supplementary planning guidance (SPG), which supplements policies and proposals in a development plan. The range of techniques is well documented in recent Countryside Agency research19. The key mechanisms include Framework Plans, advisory leaflets, policies in local plans, developers guides, and use of Section 106 Agreements.

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Influencing planning policy: Forest Examples

The Forest of Avon is currently developing SPG for new development. This will form an insert that will be included with the local plans of the four Local Authorities falling within the boundaries of the Forest.

The Forest of Mercia contributed to the preparation of the Countryside Area Profiles in the Borough of Walsall. This was developed as SPG. The aim of the Profiles is to steer appropriate development within the West Midlands Green Belt around Walsall and to provide a framework for improvements to the landscape.

Marston Vale CF has recently employed a full-time planning advisor to influence both development control and forward planning.

The Great Western Community Forest has engaged a team of partners to draw-up a ‘vision’ and mitigation plan for a housing development to the south of Swindon, which has now been accepted by the developer.

STRATEGIC LONG TERM VISION

7.20. Consultees for this study placed considerable emphasis on the success of the CFP in securing long term landscape and nature conservation, enhancement and interpretation at a strategic scale. The Forest Plans are unique documents with a long term (30 year) vision, which sets them apart from many other plans and strategies. Many of the CFs produced landscape character assessments early on, which provided a strategic framework for activity.

7.21. Nevertheless, the majority of Forest Directors agreed that, initially, the CFP was concerned with delivery of relatively small-scale, often piecemeal delivery on the ground, which was often opportunistic, for example on local authority land. There has been a perceptible shift to the delivering projects at the ‘landscape scale’, which considers the wider context of the forests within the wider sub-regional and regional framework.

7.22. Cross boundary working has been an important adjunct to integrated delivery. Typically, Community Forests extend across two or more local authority areas, thus ensuring that environmental enhancement is not confined by administrative boundaries. The involvement of Thames Chase CF and Forest of Mercia in the ‘Green Arc’ initiatives in London and Birmingham, respectively, which have sought to achieve strategic scale landscape change illustrate how CFs have played a major role in securing environmental enhancement at a strategic level, extending well beyond the boundaries of the forests themselves. Working beyond CF boundaries is also likely to be important in future for delivering regional objectives and therefore securing regional funding.

7.23. A key feature of the CFP’s success in achieving strategic vision has been the commitment and professionalism of the Forest Teams and, very importantly, the relatively slow turn over of staff, particularly those in leadership roles. This continuity is very valuable, particularly when staff turnover is high in local authorities.
GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Governance

7.24. Within the wider framework of the National CFP (and since 2003 the coordinating framework provided by the Countryside Agency), Local Forest Partnerships support freestanding Forest Teams that bring together and co-ordinate the policies, partners, resources and actions required to create their Community Forest. Non-statutory but Government-approved Forest Plans\(^{20}\) outline the framework and approaches to delivering the Community Forest. Implementation of each Forest Plan is carried out by the local Forest Partnerships and is funded from a wide variety of sources.

7.25. Approaches to governance within the CFs are evolving; CFs are exploring a range of approaches, including the establishment of charitable trusts to help deliver the Forests. Marston Vale CF, for example, indicated that a change of status to charitable trust has enabled them to attract greater variety of funding because they are perceived as being ‘arm’s length’ from local authorities. On the other hand, some consultees suggested that this approach might present problems of lack of accountability.

Partnership working

7.26. The CFP involves public and voluntary sector partnership working at all levels. Nationally, it represents a partnership between two major Government agencies, the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission. There are also partnership arrangements with Groundwork and BTCV. The national co-ordinator in place since 2003 has also been very valuable, according to consultees, in securing closer, more integrated and efficient work in the CFs.

7.27. Regionally, the Community Forests are engaging with a range of partners, including the Regional Development Agencies and Wildlife Trusts. There is scope, however, for more productive partnerships at the regional level (e.g. with the Regional Development Agencies).

7.28. At the local level the community forests have formed partnerships with 58 local authorities and numerous voluntary sector organisations. The partnership arrangements between CFs and local authorities involve joint working with planning, leisure services, economic development and other local authority departments. With the Community Forests acting as broker and facilitator, this has help to secure more integrated delivery of local authority services. Partnerships with the private sector have been formed at the local level with local businesses, farmer and landowners.

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\(^{20}\) The Advice Manual for the Preparation of a Community Forest Plan (CCP 271, 1991) provided a framework for all Forest Plans
Partnership working: Red Rose Forest

An example of best practice of CF partnership working is the Red Rose Forest Community Network. The RRFCN links organisations and individuals that are working to provide easy, accessible and innovative ways for local people to get involved in the Forest. Over 150 individuals currently form the network including project officers, rangers, community development workers, wardens and health specialists from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

7.29. CF Teams work with their partners in a variety of ways. Whereas some CFs play a purely facilitating/coordinating role and rely entirely on their partners for delivery of the Forest Plan on the ground, others undertake much of the delivery themselves. The only exception to this model of governance is Watling Chase CF, which now has no dedicated project team but rather the delivery of the Forest Plan is vested in the local authorities which are signatories to the plan as well as other groups/agencies (e.g. Hertfordshire Countryside Management Service, Groundwork Hertfordshire).

7.30. The impact of this partnership approach has been significant and groundbreaking. Many consultees suggested that the Community Forests provide a model of integrated, area based, working between the public, private and voluntary sectors. One of the challenges for succession, however, is to ensure that genuine integration, rather than duplication of activities occurs.

INDEPENDENCE, FLEXIBILITY AND DYNAMISM

7.31. The consultation revealed that CFs are regarded by landowners and the agricultural community as being independent from local authorities, which helps to engender trust and good working relations. A study undertaken by ERM notes the benefits of the ‘arms length approach’ of CFs from local authorities.\(^{21}\)

7.32. Although working towards a common set of objectives, as set out in the Advice Manual for the Preparation of a Community Forest Plan, the Forest Teams have sought to reflect the particular circumstances, characteristics and needs of the local environment and local communities, and over time they have had increasing freedom to do so, reflecting the fact that the CFP, whilst being national in coverage, has always sought to encourage diversity across the programme to reflect local circumstances. This flexible, diverse approach has allowed the Community Forests to develop and evolve their own unique character and a strong sense of identity, based on the strengths and interests of the Forest Teams and local partners.

7.33. The consultation process highlighted that CF Teams have been remarkably flexible and adapted to changing circumstances, such as fluctuations in funding streams, and alterations to national partner involvement and place-specific, socio-economic circumstances of the surrounding area. To this extent, the CFP’s Objective 17 ‘to remain flexible in the light of changes, such as in the leisure market’ (which

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is a form of process outcome, and which has not been addressed in chapters 3 to 6) is being achieved to a **high** level.

7.34. It is apparent that one of the key strengths of CF Directors and their Forest Teams is to adapt, to recognize and unlock potential as and when funding streams become available and to take calculated risks whilst ensuring the 30-year vision remains in sight.

**CONCLUSION**

7.35. The achievements of the CFP extend beyond their physical outputs on the ground, to include a range of ‘process outcomes’. The lessons learned through the operation of the CFP, which have been monitored and disseminated by the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission, have exerted a strong influence on the development of national forestry and woodland policy.

7.36. The experience of the CFP is also central to the emerging policy for the rural-urban fringe. These lessons have influenced the policies and approach of the Countryside Agency itself, and the Agency’s and Groundwork’s recently published vision for the countryside in and around towns, which incorporates many of the principles of community forestry.

7.37. The direction of spatial planning, both forward planning and development control, has been strongly influenced by the success of the CFP. In particular, the achievements of CFs are strongly influencing policy and approaches to green infrastructure in the Government’s Growth Areas.

7.38. Further features of the CFP’s operation which have added to its success include:

- The pursuit of a long term, strategic vision for each CF through the development of 30 year plans, which has led to improvements at the strategic landscape scale.

- Governance and partnership working, which has led to the creation of strong links between different organisations at the local level, which may well provide benefits for other initiatives.

- Independence, flexibility and dynamism, which have meant that the CFs are well placed to respond to the circumstances, characteristics and needs of the local environment and local communities, and to tap into new funding opportunities as they become available.
8. VALUE FOR MONEY

INTRODUCTION

8.1. The assessment of value for money focuses on the outputs and outcomes of the CFP in relation to the Regional Tier 2 and 3 targets set by the Government to evaluate investment performance in the English Regions. These targets, which are managed by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), provide appropriate ‘benchmarks’ for the CFP, and will provide an important indicator in the consideration of future funding for the Programme.

8.2. In order to demonstrate the role of the CFP in providing both direct economic and social contribution, as well as delivering Strategic Added Value in the Regional economy, the following areas were reviewed:

- Jobs created
- Woodland planting
- Land reclamation
- Learning opportunities provided.

8.3. The chapter also considers the historic and potential future impact of the CFP on the achievement of the Public Service Agreement (PSAs) across Government departments.

8.4. The evaluation also seeks to demonstrate ‘additionality’, through an assessment of the CFP’s ability to use its initial investment to lever additional support and funding from a range of sources, including the private sector.

8.5. It should be noted that throughout the evaluation, it proved difficult to obtain robust data to assess the value for money of the CFP because of:

- The geographic spread of community forest activity
- The location of each activity and the variety of landscapes covered
- The varied management and organisational structures employed across the 12 CF partnerships
- The limitations of the Annual Monitoring Reports, which do not provide robust data relating to CFP projects, nor sufficient detail for comparisons to be made with other programmes.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE REGIONAL TIER TARGETS

Jobs created

8.6. The annual monitoring reports record direct jobs created by the Community Forest programme for 1990-2000. This direct employment rose from 11.5 jobs in 1990/1 to
72 jobs in 1999/2000, across all the forests. Over the ten year period, this accounts for over 400 person-years of employment.  

8.7. These jobs can be directly linked to CFP operations. By applying the standard multiplier of 1.2, it is estimated that 86.4 jobs were created indirectly or induced in the local economies of the twelve forests, in 1999/2000. In total, then, the employment impact in this sample year was 158.4 jobs.  

8.8. The jobs created range from those operating within the CF structure, such as the employment of a Woodland Energy Co-ordinator as part of the management of the South Yorkshire Wood Energy Network to those created in the external business environment. Some specific examples of the latter can be quoted. For example Greenwood has supported the setting up of a charcoal burning co-operative which has created five jobs, South Yorkshire can identify the delivery of new jobs in the woodland industries such as woodcrafts, a joint programme between Mersey and Red Rose has delivered 53 jobs through their Timber Industries Project, and the opening of a new Visitor Centre has produced two jobs in Thames Chase.  

8.9. Based on core partner expenditure for the year 2000/1, the cost per job is estimated at approximately £36,700. This figure compares unfavourably with job creation costs generally associated with mainstream economic development programmes, where a range between £10-£15k is expected. However, it should be noted that this is a relatively imprecise measurement, and to some extent dependent on the type of funding available, its mix, e.g. including ERDF Objective 2 or private sector, the type of job developed and its duration. In this study, the aggregated quantitative result does not take account of the type of job created or its social benefit. Neither does it demonstrate the intrinsic value derived from the activity of the Project Management team.  

8.10. Direct job creation is not a primary purpose of the existing programme, where much of the expenditure will be related to social and environmental activities, with a heavy reliance on partnership from the voluntary sector and volunteer labour. However, we believe that the figures identified from published data are an underestimate of effectiveness in this area and this may be a lost opportunity for the CFP to demonstrate its overall impact.  

**Woodland planting**  

8.11. The annual monitoring reports record areas of woodland planted in each forest from 1991-2003. In total, over 10,000 hectares of woodland were planted in this period. As Figure 8.1 shows, over a third of the planting achieved during this time took place in the first five years, from 1991-6.  

8.12. No figures are provided in the monitoring reports for the cost of overall woodland planting, although figures are given for the value of Woodland Grants and planting achieved under the Woodland Grant Scheme, from 1990-2000. From these we have estimated the cost per hectare of woodland planting under the scheme, although it  

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22 Data is missing for 1994/5.  
23 Data is missing for 1999/2000.  
24 This includes planting under the Woodland Grant Scheme and all other planting.
should be noted that these values might be an overestimate, since some Woodland Grant may have been spent on activities other than planting. The figures, aggregated across all 12 Forests, are summarised in Table 8.1.

**Figure 8.1: Woodland Planting**

![Woodland planting (ha)](image)

**Table 8.1: Cost of planting under the woodland grant scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area planted under the Woodland Grant (ha)</th>
<th>Value of Woodland Grant (£1,000)</th>
<th>Cost/ha, £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990-4</td>
<td>245.00</td>
<td>258,978.00</td>
<td>1,057.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/5</td>
<td>337.57</td>
<td>616,700.00</td>
<td>1,826.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/6</td>
<td>431.20</td>
<td>789,400.00</td>
<td>1,830.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/7</td>
<td>500.00</td>
<td>916,000.00</td>
<td>1,832.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997/8</td>
<td>446.40</td>
<td>1,166,000.00</td>
<td>2,612.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998/9</td>
<td>527.40</td>
<td>1,024,000.00</td>
<td>1,941.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999/2000</td>
<td>464.60</td>
<td>1,250,159.50</td>
<td>2,690.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,952.17</td>
<td>6,021,238.50</td>
<td>2,039.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Average cost per hectare is calculated on the basis of the total annual value of the Woodland Grant (across all CFs), divided by total hectares planted (across all CFs).

8.13. As shown in Table 8.1 the average cost of woodland planting under the WGS, taken across all Forests for the period 1990-2000, was £2,039.59 per hectare. It was not possible to determine a comparative schedule of activity which related to these costs (i.e. whether the figures include site preparation and ongoing maintenance). However, actual data from the Red Rose Forest showed an area cost of £1962 per ha
for tree supply and planting and a cost of £1773 per ha for South Yorkshire’s
Wincobank site.

8.14. While this appears to compare unfavourably with published data for planting schemes
associated with other major projects, where a figure of c. £1500 per hectare is
used, this comparison relates purely to grant aid available tree supply and planting.
Therefore the costs of other operations, including those of a commercial company
engaged in land restoration following its mineral extraction operations were also
examined. Here a figure of £5000 is applied per hectare but this is calculated on a
three-year programme, which includes at least one year of site preparation and some
early maintenance. This company applies an average cost of £8000 per hectare, taken
over a six-year cycle and including a three-year maintenance plan. The actual cost of
materials and planting is a small part of the overall cost, as trees are purchased in
volume. Interestingly a comparative figure of £4755 per ha was recorded by the
South Yorkshire CF for their Silverwood Colliery restoration and planting scheme.

8.15. On this basis, and provided the data recorded represents a full programme of work
undertaken, including site preparation, the CFP activity compares favourably. In
making this type of comparison it must be recognised that there is no consistent
pattern of activity across the programme, with some Forests working with small
planting schemes (eg Forest of Mercia where a scheme could constitute 2-3 ha) and
others working with much larger individual schemes of say 60-70 has. Thus no
consistent economies of scale can be applied. Also CFs tend to have higher costs
because of the circumstances in which they work; for example planting taking place at
the urban fringe.

Land reclamation

8.16. The cost of land reclamation is difficult to calculate, as the Annual Monitoring Reports
do not provide consistent data. The cost of land reclamation provided for the three
Pathfinder Forests for 1990-1994 varies widely from £35,891 per hectare for the
Great North Forest, to £7,469 per hectare for Thames Chase, for the four year
period. The average figure for the three Forests over the first four years is
£15,051.50 per hectare.

8.17. Figures are also available for the cost of land reclamation for 1994/5 and 1997/8; years
in which grant aid, and reclamation grant aid from English Partnerships was available.
This yields two further figures for the cost per hectare of land reclamation, which was
£22,251.31 in 1994/5 (when only two Forests reclaimed land with grant aid), and
£8,111.41 in 1997/8 (across seven Forests).

8.18. Again, it is difficult to make direct comparisons with any recognised benchmark, as
costs will vary depending on the site and the type of remediation required. While the
monitoring reports do not record the detail of restoration, we know that individual
Forests have been involved with major reclamation schemes of different types. For
example, in Greenwood Community Forest, the Brierley Forest Country Park has

25 Interviews with Forestry teams
26 National Forest Planting Grant www.nationalforest.org.uk
27 UK Coal Estates Department 2004
been created from the reclamation of a former colliery spoil heap providing trees, ponds and wildflower meadows; in Thames Chase, Kennington Park has been created through restoration and planting on the low grade restoration of former sand and gravel pits; and in the Red Rose area the creation of community woodlands has taken place on brownfield industrial sites.

8.19. Planting and restoration within CFs has taken a number of forms, and this must be taken into account when benchmarking average restoration or reclamation costs. However, while a general health warning must be issued in relation to these figures, it would appear that the costs of work undertaken by the CFP compare favourably with those identified from similar programmes elsewhere, with average capital costs of £25,000 per hectare identified for general woodland planting with foot/cycle and bridlepaths and £36,000 per hectare for the introduction of biodiversity and ecological features.28, 29

8.20. Again the general reporting does not contain sufficient detail for capital and revenue costs of schemes to be clearly separated. Annual maintenance costs of between £2,000-£6,000 per hectare can generally be applied to the types of scheme identified above and it is unclear how well this has been factored into individual costs over the period of the programme. The accurate estimate of the revenue costs of maintenance will clearly be an important element of any future funding calculation.

Learning opportunities

8.21. Each Forest programme has a commitment to promoting opportunities for lifelong learning, although these can take a variety of forms from general leisure learning to the provision of programmes to the delivery of programmes forming part of the national curriculum for the Education Authority, or the provision of specific vocational skills or capacity building programmes. One such programme is the Red Rose woodland management programme offered to workers in health and social care with the objective of helping them to determine how best to use woodland facilities in their own programme development. A similar programme has been developed for volunteers in Marston Vale.

8.22. The CFP has also encompassed the delivery of specific vocational skills. For example, the Forest of Mercia has run an NVQ Level 2 course in Forestry as part of the New Deal programme and is an Accredited Training Centre under the City and Guilds programme. Some 100 students took part in this 26-week course, with around five of them finding work in the sector as a result.

8.23. The promotion of educational programmes with schools and colleges is a common theme, although some forests are no longer able to support specific Education Officer posts, and some such as Watling Chase have passed this activity on to other partners, in this case Groundwork Hertfordshire. In other Forests the provision of support to educational programmes remains as priority, for example South Yorkshire has funded an Educational and Environmental co-ordinator post.

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28 Landscape and Sustainability Spons 2000
29 East London Green Grid Parks and Open Spaces October 2003 /River Nene Regional Park Feasibility Study 2004
8.24. Most Forest Partnerships have developed schools educational packs, and most have continued to identify education as a major project activity. There are a number of good schemes in this area. For example, Greenwood has recently opened the Bestwood Country Park outdoor educational facility and Thames Chase has a special educational resource centre. The Great Western Forest runs a series of programmes for schools and colleges linked to National Learning Weekends and has also developed the ‘Woodland Story Sack’ project which allows teachers and students to build up their own learning resource bank around woodland facilities, and the Forest of Mercia is working with Staffordshire County Council on a range of educational projects, including literacy packs for mainstream education and a re-engagement project for students from Years 10 and 11 who have been excluded from school.

**Leverage of funds**

8.25. As discussed in chapter 2, the CFP has been successful in levering in high levels of private and voluntary sector support. In summary, over the period 1990-2003, the total amount levered in totalled £42.9m.

8.26. The Programme has also been successful in levering in a range of other grant funding sources, including Rural Challenge funding, Rural Development Commission, Lottery funding, SRB, Single Pot, English Partnerships, European funding and Landfill Tax. For example, Red Rose has identified c. £30m of funding raised over the life of the programme. However, it is equally clear that at present, the Project teams expend considerable effort in putting together even relatively small financial packages. This issue is illustrated by the funding package which made up the Forest of Mercia’s Walk and Talk scheme. With a total budget of £27k, seven different funders, ranging from the Countryside Agency and the Coalfield Regeneration Trust to the local Town Council, supported this programme.

8.27. A number of forests operate with funds from the current ERDF programmes with for example South Yorkshire administering £3.2m from the South Yorkshire Objective 1 programme. However, this funding is not universally available to the CFP, with some having support withdrawn in the latest round of investment, e.g. Forest of Mercia.

8.28. One area where Community Forests have been less successful, according to the Community Forest Directors themselves, is in attracting regional level funding, in particular funding from RDAs.

8.29. Monitoring returns give figures for the value of core partner spend on the 12 Forests for the years 1990-4, and 2001-3. From these figures, we can calculate the strength of leverage for those years, using the data given above for the value of private and voluntary sector contributions and grant funding. This is shown in Table 8.2, below.
Table 8.2: Funds levered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Core partner funding</th>
<th>Private and voluntary sector funds levered in, per £ of partner spend</th>
<th>Grant funds levered in, per £ of partner spend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990-4</td>
<td>3,376,300.00</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000/1</td>
<td>5,813,089.00</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/2</td>
<td>6,098,613.00</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/3</td>
<td>3,786,502.00</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.30. Table 8.2 shows that, on average across the years for which data is available, 27 pence of private and voluntary sector funds were levered in for every pound of partner spend. For the years 2000-2003, on average £1.48 of additional grant funding was levered in for every pound of partner spend. However, it should be noted that this latter figure varies between £2.13 (2000/1) to 93p (2001/2). This makes it difficult to identify any clear patterns in the short time period for which data is available, but these figures clearly identify that in recent years the CFs appear to have been less successful in leveraging in all forms of additional funding, although it has not been possible to isolate any one common reason for this.

8.31. In comparison to the early SRB schemes, the overall leverage of private sector funds has been modest – the National Interim Evaluation\(^{31}\) of early SRB Rounds showed an average leverage for each SRB of £2.22 private funding. Leverage of grant funding, however, appears in line with the national figure of £1.52 of other public funding for every £1 of SRB Programme spend. It should be noted however that in some later schemes these trends have been reversed with private sector funds levered for some projects ranging from 24-48p per pound of public investment and grant funding recorded at an average ratio of 1:232.

8.32. However, we are conscious that this level of quantitative analysis may not reveal the total picture. In making these generic comparisons, the range of management and operational structures in place across the partnerships has to be taken into account. Some CFP partners have taken on charitable status or formed Trusts to enable them to access a wider range of funding or to take on a more commercial approach to delivering services.

8.33. Each partnership has developed a different modus operandi for leveraging funding, particularly from the private sector. For example, all Forests have a sponsorship arrangement with Timberland UK for the creation of a specific forest walkway, as a result of a national campaign. Others have been successful in attracting local support, for example Greenwood has received sponsorship from East Midlands Electricity for a tree nursery. Mersey Forest has been particularly successful in obtaining direct private

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\(^{30}\) Source: Community Forest Monitoring Reports

\(^{31}\) SRB Interim Evaluation, University of Cambridge, 1998

\(^{32}\) Burton Community Partnership SRB6 Programme Investing in Inclusion
8.34. In Marston Vale, which has set itself a target of becoming self-sustaining, the Project team has recorded a return of £20 for each £1 invested locally in the last financial year. In this case the approach has been to move away from sponsorship and match funding, to creating additional value through project work and delivering specialist consultancy to external organisations. Similarly, the Mersey and Red Rose forests have entered into an agreement with the Local Authority to participate in the delivery of major regeneration schemes, such as Newlands in Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire forest is working with Corus to support the regeneration of derelict steelworks sites, and the Forest of Mercia has worked with Staffordshire County Council to provide and support the Council’s business development through the establishment of a business innovation centre and specialist managed workspace.

8.35. Some CFs are also becoming influential in supporting Local Authorities in the determination of S106 agreements, which can provide additional finance or support in kind for the delivery of reclamation schemes or a range of community forest programmes and services.

8.36. Although there is considerable variation in performance, overall the interviews conducted with CFP stakeholders confirmed the positive performance of the CFs in accessing a range of funding sources, including those from the private sector. This was equally recognised by stakeholders and considered to be a major benefit of the programme to the local delivery.

CONTRIBUTION TO WIDER MEASURES – PSA TARGETS

8.37. The potential scale and scope of CFP impacts is naturally large and diverse, owing to the unusually broad range of activities supported under the Programme. The evaluation therefore considered the potential for the CFP to contribute towards a range of PSA targets set across all Government Departments. A schedule of the targets is provided in Appendix 5 and chapters 3 to 6 of this report make reference to the performance of the CFP in this context.

8.38. The availability of published quantitative data relating to CFP initiatives proved hard to obtain. The following paragraphs identify a selection of projects and activities, which are considered to make a significant contribution to make to the achievement of the PSA targets.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

8.39. By providing opportunities to learn outside the classroom, in non-traditional environments, and by linking learning to vocational opportunity, the CFP has the opportunity to encourage disengaged young people to participate in education. As identified earlier, CFs provide a range of educational and learning opportunities in partnership with Local Education Authorities and FE Colleges. Generally these support mainstream education but there are some examples of specialist projects such as the CAST project developed by the Greenwood Forest, which offers the
opportunity for excluded young people to re-engage with education through an introduction to fishing.

8.40. ‘Sure Start’, designed to support the development of young children, is a major programme for the DfES. By 2005/6, the Sure Start Unit is committed to achieving:

- An increase in the proportion of young children aged 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age
- An increase in the proportion of young children with satisfactory speech and language development at age 2.

8.41. Greenstart, a Sure Start project, is one of seven national demonstration projects run through the Countryside Agency’s REACT programme to explore ways in which a community forestry approach can be integrated into more mainstream regeneration initiatives. It does not receive financial support from the CFP but has received a contribution in kind through the availability of facilities and staff resources and is a good example of the services and facilities provided by the CFP being utilised by the wider community to deliver educational and social benefit.

8.42. Greenstart is operating in West Durham with a link to the Great North Forest. The project focuses on the role the natural environment can play in prompting learning and play in very young children, and is recognised as having made a substantial contribution to improving the social skills, confidence and emotional wellbeing of children involved in the project and in raising the awareness and confidence of parents, particularly fathers undertaking early childcare. The project has a secondary aim to improve parental health and awareness of health issues.

8.43. To date over 300 families have been involved. Although improvements to parent’s health have not been formally monitored the project has succeeded in encouraging ‘hard to reach’ groups of parents into outdoor exercise.

Department of Health (DoH)

8.44. Interest in the improvement of general health has been raised by the publication of the White Paper ‘Choosing Health’ with its focus on enabling individuals to take charge of their own health and wellbeing. The White Paper also places emphasis on the benefits of exercise and healthy eating and this is an area where, although there are no health-related objectives, the CFP has already begun to make a contribution.

8.45. Health organisations, in particular Primary Care Trusts, therefore become key partners for the CFP, which has great potential to contribute towards the DoH targets. By providing easily accessible countryside on the urban fringe, the Programme encourages urban residents to access outdoor exercise. All forest programmes include activities which encourage visitors to take more exercise, for example through offering guided walks, some particularly focused for older people or women and CFs are now planning specific activities, for example in South Yorkshire an application has been submitted for Objective 1 funding for a programme called ‘Healthy Living in the Outdoor Environment’. It should be noted that this scheme was developed without input from the PCT, while conversely the Red Rose ‘Walking the Way to Health’ initiative was developed jointly with Bolton PCT. The
introduction of sponsorship from Timberland UK across the CFP has been significant in promoting this activity.

8.46. CFP programmes also promote ‘green exercise’ – taking part in physical activities while at the same time being directly exposed to nature, which has been demonstrated to impact upon both physical and mental health.\(^{33}\) Moreover, there is evidence that even without exercise, access to nature, trees and lakes promotes a drop in blood pressure and stress reduction. The CFP provides a range of opportunities in this area but the most significant may be the availability of ‘Green Gyms’ which are recognised by the NHS as an alternative method of providing rehabilitation for cardiac patients and those recovering from long term debilitating illnesses.

8.47. Again, by locating opportunities for outdoor exercise on the urban fringe, accessible to deprived urban neighbourhoods, the CFP may contribute towards reducing health inequalities. In some CFs the programme directly support projects aimed at this objective, for example encouraging ethnic minority women to access the countryside.

8.48. Some CF Partnerships have begun to take an interest in the wider health agenda by promoting local foods and supporting the introduction of local foods into schools and hospitals. The Greenstart project in West Durham also facilitates the Tindall Crescent Community Garden in Bishop Auckland. Here the community has reclaimed a disused council allotment and is in the process of transforming it into a community garden, growing vegetables and flowers and providing a story place for children. The North East Community Forest is a partner in a campaign to get more local produce used in school meal production.

8.49. A major project supported by the Red Rose forest\(^{34}\) has created four community tree nurseries in the inner city areas of Bolton, Wigan, Salford and Trafford, all urban districts that score poorly in terms of health. The tree orchards have created a much-valued source of free, fresh fruit for the community groups that now manage the orchards.

8.50. In addition to the introduction of active health-related schemes, the CFP has a major contribution to make in delivering passive health gains through providing a cleaner and greener environment on the doorstep of most urban areas.

8.51. While all forests can be seen to be making some contribution in this area, delivery is mixed, as is the connection with local PCTs. This is clearly an area where the principles and objectives of community forestry could be much more influential and this has been recognised by the Partnerships themselves. A recent meeting, facilitated by Mersey Forest, was held with representatives from all the partnerships to determine a future agenda and to determine how to make a cohesive and universal approach to gain support from the health sector.


\(^{34}\) Penn Associates Good Practice Report, 2002
Department for Transport (DfT)

8.52. The PSA targets set by the Department for Transport are designed to reduce congestion and increase the use and reliability of the public transport network. By providing access to the countryside on the urban fringe, the CFP reduces the need to travel by car to access leisure and recreation opportunities. Moreover, some CFs support direct action to encourage travel by public transport. For example, the Great North Forest operated a Public Transport Initiative providing high quality information to generate user confidence in countryside recreational opportunities that can be accessed by bus and metro. A marketing strategy was implemented to raise user confidence and trust in public transport to take them to countryside destinations safely and conveniently. Infrastructure improvements were also carried out to relevant bus and metro stations.

8.53. Evidence from a survey carried out to assess the project shows that the proportion of respondents visiting the countryside for leisure who used public transport to do so increased from 26% to 36% over the project’s lifetime, resulting from modal shift from car use to public transport.35

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

8.54. Defra shares with the DfT the objective to improve air quality by meeting National Air Quality strategy objectives for carbon monoxide. While the effects on car use described above are likely to be marginal, the CFP can also contribute to carbon sequestration by forest planting and protecting woodland and peatland from development.

Energy

8.55. With the DTI, Defra shares the responsibility to ensure the UK ranks in the top three most competitive energy markets in the EU and G7 in each year. It also has responsibility to maintain energy security, to achieve fuel poverty objectives, and improve the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources, including through the use of energy saving technologies, to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% from 1990 levels and moving towards a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.

8.56. In support, each region now has a regional energy policy designed to provide a framework for operation. Renewable energy is clearly a key theme and the CFP has the potential to contribute towards this objective through cultivation of energy crops and involvement in renewable energy projects. A number of the Forest Partnerships have already undertaken a leading role in this area. Notable schemes include South Yorkshire which has been instrumental in developing the South Yorkshire Wood Energy programme, Avon who established the Timber Station venture (now a separate company) to work with biomass and biomass crops, Red Rose and Mersey who are working closely with GONW on a Regional Biomass Needs Analysis, and the Greater Manchester Renewables Initiative, the Great North Forest with an interest in biofuels, and Greenwood and the Forest of Mercia with the development of efficient wood burning heating schemes for public buildings.

Biodiversity

8.57. Another PSA target for DEFRA is to care for our natural heritage, make the countryside attractive and enjoyable for all, and preserve biological diversity.

8.58. The CFP has a strong track record in this area. The programme clearly contributes towards the target for the provision of open space, by protecting and encouraging biodiversity on the urban fringe, and by encouraging sustainable land management.

8.59. Biodiversity is a key theme for the CFP which could become a major delivery vehicle, particularly in support of the urban fringe areas. CFs frequently work with partners in the local Wildlife Trusts to deliver key projects; for example the South Yorkshire forest’s joint project with English Nature and the Sheffield Wildlife Trust to protect South Yorkshire Heathland.

8.60. Some Forest Partnerships have already introduced schemes which can be used as exemplars within the Region. For instance Mersey has developed its own BAP and employs a fulltime ecologist, Greenwood has established biodiversity targets in its three-year business plan, Marston Vale has developed its seed collection programme for ancient woodland species, and all Partnerships have contributed to the National Wildflower programme.

Land Management

8.61. All CFs have programmes of delivery and support for the countryside, mainly supporting farmers with Countryside Stewardship programmes, agri-environment proposals and farm diversification. While farming remains a priority sector in some CF areas, such as the Mersey Forest area where 50% of the Forest area is agricultural land, or South Yorkshire, in others farm diversification has become a priority.

8.62. The CFs have developed a range of support programmes, including the South Yorkshire Forestry Resources Grant designed to assist with all aspects of woodland development, Great Western Forest supporting farm diversification to tourism projects, Watling Chase offering a Land Management Advisory Service, and Forest of Avon working as a member of the SW Rural Enterprise team.

Protecting and Developing Heritage

8.63. Delivery of the objectives of the CFP programme should enable the CF’s to demonstrate a capability to make a significant contribution to this target, which overlaps with targets set by the DCMS. Two good examples can be cited to illustrate the potential offered by the CFP.

8.64. Thames Chase has been a partner in the creation of Mardyke River Valley Heritage Information Project. The Mardyke River Valley, which is located near Tilbury docks has an interesting mix of industrial heritage and picturesque countryside. However it was rarely visited and little was known of its history or ecology. The Heritage Information Project was set up to increase awareness and use. The project has created an archive of historical written and oral information about the valley, a number of public awareness events and a heritage interpretation display.
8.65. A similar project has been developed in South Yorkshire with 'Fuelling Revolution: The Woods that Founded the Steel Industry'. This project is designed to increase access to an area of ancient woodland containing artefacts, archaeological and historic remains. The South Yorkshire forest prepared a management plan for the site, which was in need of protection, and funds and Education and Environmental Co-ordinator to manage the project.

**ODPM**

8.66. One of the key PSA targets of the ODPM is to achieve a better balance between housing availability and the demand for housing in all English regions while protecting valuable countryside around our towns, cities and in the Green Belt.

8.67. CFs are already influential in this area, with Marston Vale working closely with Bedfordshire County Council to develop a Landscape Character Assessment for growth areas and Great Western establishing a partners group to draw up a vision and mitigation plan for a controversial 4000 home development resulting in a £1m contribution for community investment.

**Home Office**

8.68. Home Office targets include a commitment to:

- Protect the public and reduce re-offending by 5% for young offenders and for adults sentenced to prison or community service.

- Increase voluntary and community sector activity, including increasing community participation by 5% by 2006.

**Work with Young Offenders**

8.69. Several CFs work in partnership with the Probation Service to provide opportunities for remedial work by young offenders. Evidence shows that this may have a high impact. While we are not aware of any data on re-offending rates within the CFP, similar schemes\(^{36}\) have been estimated to reduce re-offending to 8% from the national average of 70-80% within two years of release.

**Voluntary and Community Activity**

8.70. All the CFs support voluntary and community activity based around the Forest environment and in many cases have successfully stimulated and increased local community involvement. As an example the Thames Chase forest have recorded over 3000 community events and some 3000 days of volunteering per year.

8.71. Community activity is either organised through the ‘Friends of policy or by direct support for partners delivering community programmes such as the Local Authorities or BTCV. However, the CFPs can also demonstrate that they can encourage and increase community participation either through a direct involvement in tree planting schemes, for example Great Western’s Shore Forest Park scheme where some

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\(^{36}\) For example the National Grid Transco programme [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)
10,000 volunteers took part in a tree planting initiative after the refusal of a controversial planning application, through the creation of innovative projects such as the delivery of an oral history programme relating to the brickmaking industry in Marston Vale or the introduction of public art programmes (Forest of Avon).

8.72. Two specific examples of a CF project designed to support increased community engagement are the Kibblesworth Environment Centre\(^{37}\) and the Hertsmere Health Work programme. Both demonstrate the importance of the CFP in delivering a cross-over agenda in support of a number of PSA targets, in this case those related to health.

8.73. The Kibblesworth Environment Centre is a voluntary organisation managed by a Community Environment Worker part-funded by the Great North Forest. The centre provides a wide range of activities and projects funded through grant aid sourced by the project worker. These include a food co-operative targeted primarily at the elderly, which provides once-a-week supplies of fruit and vegetables at low cost and from local producers, and guided health walks and talks, jointly promoted with Gateshead Community Health Team (within the local authority) to target specific groups, including people referred by their GP. This project is a good example of CFP activity making a contribution to a number of PSA targets and these activities have been successful in attracting users from across the Gateshead borough.

8.74. The Hertsmere project is a £150k scheme, with funding from ODPM, and promoted by Watling Chase with the local PCT and Hertsmere Council to encourage more walkers from all parts of the community. The project identifies a series of walks and visits and trained a volunteer walk leader. The project target is to establish some 60 walks with 60 volunteer leaders to match activity undertaken in a neighbouring area.

8.75. Engaging with ethnic minority groups remains a recognised area requiring improvement, although some notable projects have begun to emerge such as the Palm Grove Project in the Forest of Avon which involved member of the African-caribbean community in a major tree planting event.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

8.76. The second PSA target for the DCMS is to increase significantly the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by new users aged 20 and above from priority groups.

8.77. To date delivery from the CFP has been largely concentrated on informal recreation or the delivery of facilities to encourage walking. However recently there has been a greater awareness of the potential to contribute towards this target by providing new outdoor recreational opportunities on the urban fringe.

8.78. Some good examples have already been recorded, such as the Gateway Wheelers club in the Tees Forest, which was established to enable people with disabilities to enjoy cycling in the area. The Tees Forest has provided a number of safe and accessible locations to enable riders to enjoy the countryside, and in 2003 the club held a total of 106 events for 3,056 participants. Overall, participants are reported to

\(^{37}\) Source: Impact of Community Engagement in the NECF, SQW 2004
have improved their performance, year on year, by 30-70%, suggesting a significant increase in the fitness levels of disabled participants.

8.79. Other Partnerships plan or have developed similar programmes. For example Greenwood developed the Multi-Activity in Country Parks programme to encourage more people from deprived backgrounds to take part in sport and introduced their Break Free programme of walks specifically aimed at people with special needs.

8.80. These types of projects are also supported by the specific festivals and events which form part of the CFP annual calendar, with Forest Fever run by Red Rose and Merseyside a good example of the CFP making provision to introduce the wider community to a variety of specialist sports such as archery.

8.81. The CFP has also begun to develop arts programmes which support the aim of increasing interest and take-up in cultural events. One good example of this is Green Heart, a short-term project established to commission and install five major sculptural works at strategic gateway sites throughout the Great North Forest. Green Heart was run in conjunction with a community education programme designed to target local communities close to the gateway sites and to explore the role of artists in communicating the aims and objectives of the forest to a wider audience. The project involved the arts, libraries or culture and heritage teams, community arts groups and local communities. Unfortunately, the impact on visitor numbers was not monitored or tracked.

**Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)**

8.82. A key target of the DWP is to increase the employment rates in disadvantaged areas and target groups such as lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50+, or those with the lowest qualifications. Many projects supported by the CFP contribute towards capacity building, confidence building and self-esteem, as well as informal (and in some cases formal) skills development for the target groups, which can clearly assist with developing employment ‘readiness’. Although there is no quantitative data available, anecdotally, these projects have led to an increased take-up of employment opportunities by beneficiaries.38

**THE FUTURE DELIVERY POTENTIAL OF THE CFP**

8.83. The preceding section demonstrates the role of the CFP in contributing to the delivery of national and regional targets, and inlevering a cocktail of funding to aid this delivery. However, this evaluation clearly shows that the linkages between the programme, while potentially strong, are not delivered consistently and, most importantly, are not universally recognised by regional partners and government agencies.

8.84. While the CFP has begun to develop initiatives across all the key public sector target areas, the delivery of formal programmes for sport and the closer integration of programmes for arts and culture remains an underdeveloped area. It can also be seen that although there are many health related initiatives, these have not always

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38 See pp.8-11, SQW (2004) Impact of Community Engagement in the NECF.
been developed collaboratively with the PCTs and this is a key area which should be explored further.

8.85. Our research and consultation suggests that for this to be achieved, the objectives and outputs of the CFP must become more closely aligned with priority targets both local and national. This has begun to be recognised by the CF Partnerships in their preparation of Succession Planning Frameworks, which set out their proposals for activity post-2007.

8.86. While true value for money of the CFP may be difficult to demonstrate quantitatively at the present stage of the programme, it can be shown that the CFP has the ability to contribute positively to the regional and national agendas. This has become of greater importance as the regional agenda has grown, and the sphere of influence of the Regional Assemblies and RDAs has increased, with the associated aggregation of funding sources. While this could be beneficial in providing a more strategic and robust funding stream for the CFP, it also highlights the need to demonstrate clear strategic fit with the major national and regional programmes.

8.87. Appendix 6 sets out the regional priorities of each RDA, which also clearly reflect the national policy priorities. It can be seen from Appendix 6 that there is synergy between these priority activities and the work of the CFP. The following common themes are particularly important:

- Regional infrastructure
- Transport
- Housing
- Delivering the Rural and Urban agendas
- Creating Sustainable communities
- Green infrastructure
- Quality of life issues
- Tourism
- Delivering Sustainable development
- Improving Image.

8.88. These key objectives must be set alongside the emerging initiatives for cross-regional working demonstrated by recent proposals for the Northern and Midlands Ways.

CONCLUSIONS

8.89. Direct job creation is not a primary purpose of the CFP, where much of the expenditure is related to social and environmental activities, with a heavy reliance on partnerships with the voluntary sector and volunteer labour. The monitoring reports show that direct employment rose from 11.5 jobs in 1990/1 to 72 jobs in 1999/2000,
across all the forests. When this is considered alongside indirect employment generated, the impact if the CFP is significant.

8.90. With regards to woodland planting, there is no consistent pattern of activity across the Programme and great variation in the scale of planting schemes. This made any comparison of costs unfeasible.

8.91. Similarly, in terms of land reclamation it was difficult to make direct comparisons with any recognised benchmark, as costs will vary depending on the site and the type of remediation required. However, the relative costs of CFP activity in this field appear to compare favourably with mainstream land reclamation schemes.

8.92. The evaluation highlights the very significant impact of the CFP on a wide range of Government PSA and regional targets, including those related to environmental, social and economic issues. Whilst not always measurable in precise terms, the scale and scope of these impacts, together with the extent of financial leverage achieved by the CFP, is testimony to its value.
9. **SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WAY AHEAD**

9.1. This final chapter summarises the conclusions of the evaluation. It also draws out the lessons that can be learned from the experience of the CFP to date and makes recommendations for the way ahead.

9.2. The chapter addresses the questions set for the evaluation under four main headings:

- Origins, objectives and inputs
- Outputs and outcomes
- Cost effectiveness and value for money
- The way ahead

**ORIGINS, OBJECTIVES AND INPUTS**

9.3. The CFP was established in 1989 as a 30-year programme. The principles of Community Forests and community forestry more widely have gained increasing acceptance over the 15 years of the CFP’s operation, largely brought about by the key role that the Programme has played.

9.4. The CFP has worked to a consistent set of objectives over the course of the programme. However, progress against these objectives has not been monitored, with the CFP assessed against a range of Priority Targets on which each CF must report annually.

9.5. National partner funding meets around half the costs of each of the CF teams, and also contributes towards project implementation. The CFP relies heavily on a range of other sources of funding, including: other public sector funding; private sector funding; European funding; Lottery money; Landfill tax revenue; and other grant funding.

9.6. The amount of grant funding has varied significantly during the life of the CFP; total grant funding over the period 1994 to 2002 exceeded £128m. Lottery Funding, Landfill tax and European funding have been the most significant sources of grant funding over the life of the CFP.

9.7. Overall the CFP has been successful in levering in high levels of private and voluntary sector support. In summary, over the period 1990-2003, the total amount levered in totalled £42.9m.

9.8. On average across the years for which data is available, 24 pence of private and voluntary sector funds were levered in for every pound of partner spend. For the years 2000-2003, on average £3 of additional grant funding was levered in for every pound of partner spend. These ratios generally compare favourably to other Programmes, such as returns from the Single Regeneration Budget.
9.9. In recent years, both grant funding and private and voluntary sector funding appear to have declined. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, although it considered likely to relate to the way in which such income has been spent over a number of years.

9.10. The CFP has also drawn heavily on a range of important non-monetary inputs, including: the original Community Forest Unit, now superseded by the Countryside Agency’s ‘Countryside Around Towns’ programme; high quality, dedicated CF teams; and a strong partnership approach with a range of other organisations.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

9.11. The following paragraphs draw out the main achievements of the CFP in terms of the Programme’s objectives and targets and the key factors affecting these achievements. Chapters 3 to 8 provide further information on the significance of these achievements in relation to the PSA targets of Government departments and Regional Development Agencies, the aims and indicators set by the Countryside Agency, and objectives for forestry set out in the England Forestry Strategy.

Increasing woodland cover and improving the environment

9.12. Overall, the CFP is performing well in terms of increasing woodland cover and improving the environment. The data from annual monitoring reports indicates that the CFP has successively met targets for woodland creation, and non-woodland habitat creation and creation/restoration of hedgerows.

9.13. The CFP’s core environmental objectives - regenerating the environment of the Green Belt, improving the landscape of the area, and protecting sites of nature conservation importance – are generally being met. Protecting areas of high quality landscapes and archaeological sites is not a priority for the CFP, because this falls within the remit of a range of other organisations. Interestingly, however, the CFP is involved in protecting and promoting industrial landscapes, which are less well served through traditional structures.

9.14. The CFP is also contributing to a range of wider environmental outcomes, including climate change mitigation, wise use of resources, renewable energy through development of energy crops and use of wood for energy, and also reducing the need to travel through development of greenways and networks.

Providing for access, recreation, culture and the arts

9.15. The CFP is performing particularly well in terms of providing opportunities for informal recreation, and in terms of opening up rights of way. It has performed less well in terms of the area of woodland opened up to public access, although where this has occurred the quality has been high. The CFs have made good progress in terms of providing links between urban parks and the wider countryside, but could extend their activities more comprehensively into urban areas. The CFP’s contribution to formal sports provision has been limited, although the forest areas provide attractive and popular settings for sports such as golf.
9.16. The CFP’s growing contribution to the public health agenda is an important wider outcome. Through forging links with Primary Care Trusts and Mental Health Care Trusts, a number of CFs are helping to address physical and mental health issues.

**Regenerating local economies**

9.17. The CFP has helped to sustain the agricultural economies within CF areas. Although the CFP has not led to a significant increase in jobs in the leisure or other service sectors, or in woodland industries, it has helped to create the conditions, or ‘green infrastructure’, in which others, such as RDAs, can promote their regions to investors.

9.18. The CFP has also not established a significant supply of timber. However, CFs have undertaken a wide range of successful small-scale wood product related projects and contributed to the wood fuel market locally.

9.19. The CFP has also not performed particularly well in relation to attracting private sector support to implement CFs. This is an area where CFs will need to place greater emphasis in future. Linked to this is the need to better align themselves to the RDA agenda, in order to obtain regional level funding streams, which will require a demonstration that CFs are providing regional level outputs.

9.20. There was general consensus that the CFP has helped to increase public and private sector confidence in the long-term economic prospects of CF areas. CFs have also improved the environment near housing and local industry, thereby increasing the value of properties and businesses.

**Encouraging community involvement and lifelong learning**

9.21. Encouraging community involvement and lifelong learning is a key area of activity for the CFP. It has exceeded targets in relation to numbers of community events held, and is performing well in relation to the objectives of relevance to this topic, particularly in terms of providing educational opportunities. The CFP is also drawing in a wide range of volunteers who are integral to project implementation. However, the CFP is performing less well in relation to achieving a high level of public commitment, which reflects the fact that CFs are not always widely publicised or recognised amongst local communities.

9.22. On the other hand, the CFP is also playing an important role in raising the profile and relevance of countryside and greenspace among new audiences, notably the RDAs. This ties in with the current agenda on the provision of ‘green infrastructure’, particularly in the Government’s Growth Areas.

**Process outcomes**

9.23. The achievements of the CFP extend beyond their physical outputs on the ground, to include a range of ‘process outcomes’. The lessons learned through the operation of the CFP, which have been monitored and disseminated by the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission, have exerted a strong influence on the development of national forestry and woodland policy.
9.24. The experience of the CFP is also central to the emerging policy for the rural-urban fringe. These lessons have influenced the policies and approach of the Countryside Agency itself, and the Agency’s and Groundwork’s recently published vision for the countryside in and around towns, which incorporates many of the principles of community forestry.

9.25. The direction of spatial planning, both forward planning and development control, has been strongly influenced by the success of the CFP. In particular, the achievements of CFs are strongly influencing policy and approaches to green infrastructure in the Government’s Growth Areas.

9.26. Further features of the CFP’s operation which have added to its success include:

- The strategic long-term vision provided through the development of 30 year plans and consistent staffing arrangements, which has led to improvements at the strategic landscape scale.
- Governance and partnership working, which has led to the creation of strong links between different organisations at the local level, which may well provide benefits for other initiatives.
- Independence, flexibility and dynamism, which have meant that the CFs are well placed to respond to the circumstances, characteristics and needs of the local environment and local communities, and to tap into new funding opportunities as they become available.

9.27. These outcomes are acknowledged in the England Forest Strategy, which notes that:

> Community Forests have demonstrated how the combination of a strategic vision, an integrated environmental planning approach and partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors can deliver significant benefits close to where people live over a long period of time.

### COST EFFECTIVENESS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

9.28. The following overall conclusions were drawn in terms of the inputs to the CFP and value for money of the outputs of the Programme.

9.29. Direct job creation is not a primary purpose of the existing programme, where much of the expenditure is related to social and environmental activities, with a heavy reliance on partnerships with the voluntary sector and volunteer labour. However, the value for money assessment identified the significant employment impact of the CFP – with around 160 jobs sustained in the 1999/2000 sample year.

9.30. With regards to woodland planting, there is no consistent pattern of activity across the Programme and great variation in the scale of planting schemes. This made any comparison of costs unfeasible.

9.31. Similarly, in terms of land reclamation it was difficult to make direct comparisons with any recognised benchmark, as costs will vary depending on the site and the type of
remediation required. However, the relative costs of CFP activity in this field appear to compare favourably with mainstream land reclamation schemes.

9.32. The evaluation highlights the very significant impact of the CFP on a wide range of Government PSA and regional targets, including those related to environmental, social and economic issues. Whilst not always measurable in precise terms, the scale and scope of these impacts, together with the extent of financial leverage achieved by the CFP, is testimony to its value.

THE WAY AHEAD

9.33. To inform the way ahead for the CFP, and taking account of reduced core funding, the evaluation summarised the current strengths and weaknesses of the CFP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses and threats</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multi-functionality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lack of cohesiveness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CFP’s multiple outputs and outcomes extend the range of potential participants and beneficiaries.</td>
<td>Whilst flexibility and dynamism is a key strength of the CFP, it has also resulted in a relatively diffuse programme with a lack of cohesion and common ground between the individual CFs and the CFP has not responded consistently to key and complementary national policies, such as those related to sustainable development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Poorly monitored</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CF Teams are aligned with, but independent from, local authorities. According to consultees this helps the CFs to engage with partners and the general public and enables them to be more risk-taking than other organisations.</td>
<td>The quality and consistency of performance monitoring has also been inadequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Longevity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unclear accountability</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The credibility of the CFP has increased over time and partners recognise value of long terms, strategic land management.</td>
<td>As noted above, at the national level, the monitoring has been inadequate and poorly reported. At the local level, the lines of accountability are unclear – particularly where charitable trusts take on a wider role in the delivery of CF activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inadequately marketed</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is evidence of the CFP’s influence over other agencies, extending beyond the forest boundaries.</td>
<td>The marketing and promotion of the CFP and individual CFs has been inadequate, resulting in a lack of recognition in some quarters (notably the general public and the private sector) of the contribution of the Programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneurial</strong></td>
<td><strong>Duplication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFs are generally good at identifying and obtaining new sources of funds. With a strong track record of financial leverage, they are perceived as a safe place in which to invest funding.</td>
<td>Other organisations, such as Groundwork, are also addressing the rural urban fringe agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrated</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The role of CFP in integrating environmental, social and economic concerns is widely acknowledged. CFs are ‘close to the ground’ in this respect and deliver action, rather than talk.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusive</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The CFPs’ inclusive approach to local involvement engages a wide cross section of the local community and helps create strong public and political support.</td>
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</table>
Lessons and recommendations

Policy-makers and funders

9.34. Lessons and recommendations for policy makers include:

- CFs provide a successful model of area based environmental regeneration involving a diverse range of public, private and voluntary sector partners.

- CFs provide an integrated framework for positive planning and management and the provision of green infrastructure at the rural urban fringe. There is potential, through the new planning system, to add weight to the role of community forestry through recognition in regional and local planning policy and definition of Action Area Plans.

- The long term approach and vision of the CFP helps to build confidence in rural urban fringe areas.

- The CFP has shown a remarkable ability to evolve and dovetail with changing policy priorities, whilst remaining faithful to the core vision of multipurpose community forestry.

- Core funding has been essential to the success of the CFP. Without it, CFs would have been less able to attract funding from external sources, both initially and in the long term.

Local authorities and local partners

9.35. Many of the lessons for policy-makers and funders also apply to local authorities and local partners. Other lessons for them include:

- Community forestry is an effective tool for engaging local communities.

- The CFs’ capacity and reputation as independent intermediaries can assist in achieving a range of objectives.

- Partners can make use of the CF ‘product’, in order to deliver their own agendas (e.g. health, biomass).

Community Forest Programme

9.36. The evaluation’s findings for the CFP are generally positive. The consultation revealed considerable support from national and local organisations for the succession of the CFP.

9.37. Functionally, where they exist CFs are seen to provide an important ‘stepping stone’ between the urban park and the wider countryside around towns and cities. There is clear potential for CF activity to be applied more widely.

9.38. However, the evaluation highlights the need for the CFP to evolve further, to adapt to changing circumstances and make the most of the opportunities available. The key areas for improvement are set out below.
**Vision, aims and objectives**

9.39. The overall Vision of the CFP is sufficiently all encompassing and focused on the key issues. Consideration should also be given to the need for strategic aims, possibly based on the four main topics used in the evaluation (see paragraph 2 of this summary).

9.40. The list of 17 CFP objectives should be reduced to a shorter list of objectives that focus on the key delivery areas of the CFP. A balance needs to be struck between having a wide remit, whilst not losing focus on the things that CFs do well and where they have most influence. Consideration should also be given to the distinctive features of the CFP, to ensure that it is not seen to duplicate the objectives of other organisations (e.g. Groundwork). The objectives should be accompanied by measurable indicators.

**National coordination**

9.41. The national future of the CFP needs to be embedded in the wider future of community forestry. To ensure that CFs are a major structural component of this, the development of the CFP should be supported by national guidelines. These could be structured around the revised strategic aims and objectives.

**Monitoring**

9.42. There is a need for more robust monitoring against a set of agreed indicators. Such indicators should relate closely to national and regional targets and cover the main areas of CF activity: Increasing woodland cover and improving the environment; providing for access, recreation, art and culture; regenerating local economies; encouraging community development and lifelong learning. The most appropriate way for data to be managed would be through the production of a published Annual Report.

**Integration with national, regional and local policy objectives and targets**

9.43. Better integration with national, regional and local policy objectives and targets is the key to sustaining and realising the potential of the CFP. Such integration would help to secure funding from a wider range of sources. The incorporation of CFP objectives in statutory plans and strategies will also help to ensure greater accountability.

9.44. Integration with the regional agendas will be particularly important, as increasing emphasis is placed on regional governance and diversity. The CFs should seek recognition within Regional Economic Strategies as one of a range of delivery mechanisms for attracting investment.

9.45. The new planning system at the local level is also a key area of opportunity; for example, as noted above, by incorporating community forestry in Core Policies and Area Action Plans within Local Development Frameworks. This would help to secure incorporation of CF objectives into development proposals and planning obligations.
**Marketing and promotion**

9.46. The CFP should communicate more effectively the value of its approach and increase recognition of its role in relation to stakeholder interests. This in turn would raise the profile of the CFs and open opportunities for funding from a wider range of sources.

9.47. In future the CFP should focus further efforts on promoting the role of CFs in economic regeneration, stressing the important role that CFs are playing and can continue to play in delivering a high quality environment, which is essential in creating a successful base for attracting investment. In particular the CFs will need to demonstrate that they are delivering regional outputs. CFs should also work to promote their role amongst the business community more generally.

**Further research**

9.48. As noted above, better integration with national, regional and local policy objectives and targets is the key to sustaining and realising the potential of the CFP. To this end, the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission should seek to demonstrate, based on this evaluation, how community forestry can deliver in relation to the targets of Government departments and the RDAs. This could then be communicated to Government departments and the RDAs in a series of advice notes, including case studies.

9.49. Further research should also be undertaken to quantify the effects that the CFs are having on inward investment, for example through surveying companies locating in the CF area to find out whether they are aware of the CF and whether the CF specifically, or the quality of the environment generally, were factors contributing to their location decisions.

**OVERALL CONCLUSION**

9.50. In conclusion, the evaluation found that the CFP is contributing positively to a range of outputs and wider outcomes, including national and regional targets, in the following key areas:

- Increasing woodland cover and improving the environment.
- Providing for access, recreation, art and culture.
- Regenerating local economies.
- Encouraging community development and lifelong learning.

9.51. The evaluation also found that the CFP has contributed to strategic, long term vision in the Forest areas, influenced policy at all levels, and provided a model of successful partnership working.

9.52. In consideration of these factors, as well as the inputs to the CFP, the Programme represents good value for money.
Appendix 1

Literature review list
COMMUNITY FOREST PROGRAMME: RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Annual Monitoring Reports


Research and Other Monitoring


COMMUNITY FOREST PLANS

A Forest Now and for The Future. Great Western Community Forest Plan 2002 – 2027 (Hard Copy)


Forest Plan Executive Summary - Forest of Mercia 2000 – 2005 (Hard Copy)


Great North Forest – Forest Plan 2003 (Hard Copy)

Red Rose Forest – the forest plan and supplementary review 2000 (CD-Rom).

Strategic Plan for Greenwood – guiding the creation of Nottinghamshire’s Community Forest 2000 (Hard Copy).

The Forest of Mercia – Forest Plan 1993 (Hard Copy)

The Mersey Forest Plan 2001 (Hard Copy).

The Tees Forest – Forest Plan 2000 (CD and Hard Copy).
The Thames Chase Plan 2000 (Hard Copy)

Watling Chase Community Forest – Forest Plan 1995 (CD-Rom).

Watling Chase Community Forest – Forest Plan Review 2001 and Landscape Supplement

COMMUNITY FOREST REPORTS AND BUSINESS PLANS

A Landscape Ecology Approach to The Mersey Forest. Nicola Hope 9The Mersey Forest) (Presentation)

A Natural Partnership – Forest of Marston Vale (booklet).


Croal Irwell Regional Park Project Proposal – Creating a green artery from the centre of Manchester to the West Pennine Moors: June 2003. Red Rose Forest, Bolton Metro, Bury Metro, Salford City Council.


Green Tips – from landfill to woodland. Red Rose Forest.


Invest in the Success of The Forest of Marston Vale – a guide for developers, landowners and planners, July 2002.

Off Road Motorcycling – A Greater Manchester Approach. Red Rose Forest.


Policy GEN6: Mersey Forest (extract from Cheshire Structure Plan)


The Mersey Forest. The First 10 Years (Presentation)

Watling Chase Community Forest – Forest Plan Review 2001 (on CD).

Watling Chase Community Forest – Landscape Supplement (on CD).


ARTICLES AND PRESS RELEASES


Article on Community Forest Programme taken from Countryside Agency website. www.countryside.gov.uk

Conservation Planner (magazine). RSPB, March 2004. (Features articles on sustainable communities and bringing nature into urban areas).

OTHER SOURCES


General information taken from National Community Forest Website. www.communityforest.org.uk


Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future. ODPM.


The Value of Public Space: How high quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value. CABE Space.


WEBSITES
http://enquire.hertscc.gov.uk/cms/wccf/default.htm
www.communityforest.org.uk
www.countryside.gov.uk
www.countryside.gov.uk/CountrysideForTowns/countrysideAroundTowns/CF.asp
www.forestofavon.org.uk
www.forestofmercia.co.uk
www.forestry.gov.uk
www.forestweb.org.uk
www.greatnorthforest.co.uk
www.greenwoodforest.org.uk
www.marstonvale.org
www.merseyforest.org.uk
www.redroseforest.co.uk
www.syforest.co.uk
www.teesforest.org.uk
www.thameschase.org.uk
www.woodland-trust.org.uk
Appendix 2

Stakeholder consultations
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

The following national organisations were interviewed:

- English Nature (Keith Kirby, Terrestrial Wildlife Team – working with woodlands)
- Country Land and Business Association (Judith Webb, Forestry and Woodlands Advisor)
- National Farmers Union (Andrew Clarke, Rural Development and Countryside Advisor)
- Woodland Trust (Norman Starks, Woodland Operations Director)

The table below sets out the consultation undertaken with regional and local organisations, including the CFs themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORTH EAST</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clive Davies (Head of NECFs)</td>
<td>North East Community Forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Scoffin (Director of Great North Forest)</td>
<td>Great North Forest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Singleton</td>
<td>Derwentside District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Tees Forest</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Glenn McGill (Director of The Tees Forest)</td>
<td>The Tees Forest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob George</td>
<td>Darlington Borough Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremy Garside</td>
<td>Tees Valley Local Wildlife Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Watson</td>
<td>Groundwork Tees Valley</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NORTH WEST</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hunter</td>
<td>North West Regional Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Hill</td>
<td>North West Regional Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Mersey Forest</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Nolan (Director)</td>
<td>The Mersey Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Ferguson</td>
<td>St Helens Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Red Rose Forest</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony Hothersall (Director)</td>
<td>Red Rose Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Barlow</td>
<td>Manchester City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Rosen</td>
<td>Yorkshire Forward (Regional Development Agency)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>South Yorkshire Forest</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Walker (Director)</td>
<td>South Yorkshire Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Missen</td>
<td>Sheffield City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WEST MIDLANDS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Forest of Mercia</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graham Hunt (Director)</td>
<td>Forest of Mercia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigel Senior</td>
<td>Staffordshire County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewee</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EAST MIDLANDS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Greenwood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean Skrabania (Director)</td>
<td>The Greenwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Smith</td>
<td>Ashfield District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EAST OF ENGLAND</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Brown</td>
<td>Government Office for the East of England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest of Marston Vale</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>James Russell (Head of Project Delivery)</td>
<td>Forest of Marston Vale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clive Beckett</td>
<td>Bedfordshire County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thames Chase Community Forest</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Meehan (Director)</td>
<td>Thames Chase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Swift</td>
<td>Barking and Dagenham Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Starkey</td>
<td>Barking and Dagenham Primary Care Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watling Chase Community Forest</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Rees (Director)</td>
<td>Watling Chase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Davidson</td>
<td>Hertfordshire County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTH WEST</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest of Avon</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim O'Shaughnessy (Acting Director)</td>
<td>Forest of Avon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Murtagh</td>
<td>Bath and North East Somerset Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Great Western Community Forest</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Evans (Director)</td>
<td>Great Western Community Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Stanford</td>
<td>Swindon Unitary Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryl Buck</td>
<td>Environment Agency (local)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

Size, location and context of the Community Forests
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Location</th>
<th>Approximate Size</th>
<th>Landscape, Access and Recreation Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Great North Forest  
Located across south Tyne and Wear and north-east Durham. | 249 sq km | The majority of the forest area is under some form of agricultural management, mainly arable cultivation. The legacy of coal mining is also apparent. At its inner boundary the forest connects with the green corridors and open spaces that permeate the urban fabric but is less well defined at its outer edge where it merges with the surrounding wider rural landscapes. |
| The Tees Forest  
Located in the Tees Valley surrounding the urban areas of Darlington, Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees and stretching to the coastal settlements of Redcar, Hartlepool and Loftus. | 567 sq km | The majority of the forest area is an intensively farmed countryside interspersed with modern industry, transport routes and housing. The local landscape affords attractive views of the North York Moors but also intrusive features like power stations and transmission lines and abrupt edges to housing developments. There is an extensive urban fringe where developments and utilities infrastructure intermingle with agriculture and relics of high quality landscape. |
| Red Rose Forest  
Covers a large area of Greater Manchester. | 756 sq km | Covering the broad, flat basin of the Mersey floodplain, the forest area is pre-dominantly urban. It is a largely flat, densely populated area with a multiplicity of development types and a comprehensive transport infrastructure. |
| South Yorkshire Forest  
The Forest includes the South, East & North of Barnsley, takes in most of Rotherham & the north south and east of Sheffield. | 518 sq km | The forest area is a mix of open spaces, woodland, wetlands, farmland, meadows, urban areas, industry and housing. 7.8% of the land within the area is neglected or degraded as a result of mineral extraction. |
| The Mersey Forest  
Takes in the nine local authorities of Merseyside as well as North Cheshire. | 1101 sq km | The Forest area has a clear functional identity based around the Mersey Estuary at its core and the large-scale industrial conurbation that has grown up around it. The urban fringe landscape reflects the areas industrial past with there being a significant amount of derelict land some of which is unsuitable for hard use. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Location</th>
<th>Approximate Size</th>
<th>Landscape, Access and Recreation Context</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Greenwood</td>
<td>417 sq km</td>
<td>The forest covers a mixture of urban and rural areas. Landscape features include densely settled industrial areas characterised by mining settlements and peat heaps, gently undulated agricultural land, well-wooded areas and low-lying alluvial meadows with remnant wetland vegetation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Located in</td>
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<td>Nottinghamshire</td>
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<td>stretching from</td>
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<td>Nottingham in the</td>
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<tr>
<td>south to the</td>
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<tr>
<td>countryside beyond</td>
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<td>Mansfield in the</td>
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<td>north and joining the</td>
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<tr>
<td>historic Sherwood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest in the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest of Mercia</td>
<td>238 sq km</td>
<td>Nearly 70% of the forest area is in agricultural use; mostly arable crops and temporary grassland and pasture. Much of the rest is land formally used for mining and its associated developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Located in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Staffordshire and parts of the West Midlands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest of Marston Vale</td>
<td>158 sq km</td>
<td>Although 70% of the Forest is farmland, Marston Vale has a semi-industrial character due to a legacy of clay extraction for brick making reflected in prominent visible features including the vast opencast clay extraction pits (some now domed landfill sites), large scale machinery and striking chimney stacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Located between</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bedford in the north and Milton Keynes in the south.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watling Chase</td>
<td>187 sq km</td>
<td>The Forest contains several sizeable settlements but is predominantly rural. All of the rural areas within the community forest area are classified as Green Belt. Gently undulating valleys and low hills dominate the landscape. Due to its proximity to London, it includes a significant amount of countryside under considerable development pressure. The landscape is fragmented by the four Motorways and other major roads as well as the rivers and railways that transect it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Located in south Hertfordshire around the towns of Barnet, Potters Bar, St Albans, Bushey and Borehamwood.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thames Chase</td>
<td>104 sq km</td>
<td>The Forest is located on Green Belt land and comprises woodlands, country parks, open spaces and nature reserves. Although surrounded by large centres of population, few settlements fall within the forest area and many of the scattered farmsteads no longer serve agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straddles Essex and East London. Centred on Upminster between the Thames Estuary at Rainham Marshes and Brentwood and straddling the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and Location</td>
<td>Approximate Size</td>
<td>Landscape, Access and Recreation Context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater London boundary and the M25.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Western Embraces Swindon and its environs, stretching from Wootton Bassett to Faringdon and from the Marlborough Downs to the River Thames.</td>
<td>363 sq km</td>
<td>The Great Western Community Forest is a mixture of woods, farmland, open spaces, towns and villages. The main urban area, Swindon, is one of the fastest growing towns in England putting the surrounding area under considerable development pressure. Much of the land has become degraded and environmentally less rich in recent years as the area has become increasingly urbanised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest of Avon Surrounding the city of Bristol, the boundary of the Forest broadly follows the green belt around Clevedon, Nailsea and Thornbury, meeting with the Cotswolds AONB to the east. The forest has no inner boundary, intending to permeate to the heart of the adjacent towns.</td>
<td>572 sq km</td>
<td>Mining for coal to the north of Bristol ceased over 30 years ago but quarrying for building stones and aggregates continues today. Agricultural land dominates the Forest areas outside the towns but the Forest is also characterised by industrial sites, major transport corridors, designated landscapes as well as historic sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total area:</strong> 5230 sq km</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Appendix 4

Urban fringe issues and initiatives
THE CHARACTER OF THE RURAL-URBAN FRINGE

Defining the rural-urban fringe

The Countryside Agency has recently undertaken extensive research into the characteristics of the rural-urban fringe, including a study on Overcoming the Barriers to Better Planning and Management in the Urban Fringe\(^{39}\) and Urban Fringe - Policy, Regulatory and Literature\(^{40}\). Amongst other things, the research seeks to describe the character of the rural-urban fringe.

The BK study notes that George Wehrwein formulated the concept of the ‘rural-urban fringe’ in 1942 as “the area of transition, between well recognised urban land uses and the area devoted to agriculture”. The Countryside Agency’s definition describes the rural-urban fringe as:

‘that zone of transition which begins with the edge of the fully built up urban area and becomes progressively more rural whilst still remaining a clear mix of urban and rural land uses and influences before giving way to the wider countryside’.\(^{41}\)

The report by CURE for the Countryside Agency on Sustainable development in the countryside around towns\(^{42}\) distinguishes between countryside types based on the following hierarchy:

- Urban greenspace: larger or strategic areas of open space or open land within urban areas and settlements;
- Urban edge: the boundary between any built-up areas and open land, together with land parcels immediately adjoining;
- Inner fringe: open land or open space, predominantly in mixed or non-rural uses, in larger metropolitan areas, or surrounded on more than one side by built up areas or urban infrastructure;
- Outer fringe: open land or countryside around freestanding settlements, predominantly in rural uses, but significantly affected by urban pressures, depending on the size of settlement.

CFs generally lie at the urban edge or inner fringe. As such, they provide a ‘stepping stone’ between urban greenspace and the countryside in the outer fringe.

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\(^{39}\) Overcoming the Barriers to Better Planning and Management in the Urban Fringe, BK, March 2003

\(^{40}\) Urban Fringe – Policy, Regulatory and Literature Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, July 2004

\(^{41}\) This definition was set out in a number of project commissioning documents by the Agency in 2002. The definition has two further elements: “areas of protected or residual green space and agricultural land which continues the countryside into or between otherwise built up areas, perhaps as green corridors following rivers and canals”; and “areas with statutory green belts as well as non-green belt areas”.

\(^{42}\) Sustainable development in the countryside around towns, Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology University of Manchester, 2002
Principal characteristics of the rural-urban fringe

The UCL study starts from the premise that:

‘...urban fringes represent a unique type of landscape. But equally, no two fringes are identical. They are the products of complex interactions between the urban centre itself and its outlying countryside. Fringe areas represent the outcomes of a complex and highly dynamic relationship between town and country. As such, they pose significant management challenges and a need to grapple with both urban and rural concerns in a single setting’.

Due to its complexity and diverse nature, the rural-urban fringe has been described as the ‘key battleground of planning’ and ‘planning’s last frontier’. The UCL study indicates that the rural-urban fringe accommodates a broad mix of land uses. None occurs exclusively in the urban fringe but urban fringe areas do tend to contain a higher concentration of these elements than other parts of the environment, like the town, the countryside or the coast. They fall into a number of categories:

- Service functions, such as sewage works, rubbish tips, car-breaking yards, gasholders, railway marshalling yards, motorway interchanges;
- Commercial recreation facilities, such as go-kart tracks, quad-bike tracks, golf courses, private fishing and water-sports lakes, nurseries, garden centres, football stadia and golf courses;
- Noisy or unsociable but non-recreational uses which depend on the presence of a large urban population, such as catteries and kennels;
- Allotments, travellers’ encampments and caravan sites;
- Mental hospitals, although many of these have closed in recent years as part of ‘Care in the Community’ with the sites redeveloped mainly for residential or commercial use;
- Certain types of retail establishment, notably farm shops, nurseries, garden centres, superstores, retail complexes and shopping malls;
- Factories, offices, business parks, warehousing;
- A growing number of educational institutions and district hospitals, as the institutions involved have sold valuable city-centre sites and moved to cheaper land affording them more space in the urban fringe;
- Farmland, often scruffy and under-managed, but by no means always so;
- Equestrian centres and land given over to horse grazing;
- Country parklands – the core areas of usually privately owned landed estates;

43 Description provided by a consultee to the BK study
• Unkempt rough land, which may cover land which cannot be developed because it is too steep or too contaminated, or which has come to cover land whose developed function has gone into disuse, or it may be awaiting development.

‘Hope value’, whereby landowners retain land and often manage it poorly in the hope that the land will be allocated for development in future, exerts a significant influence on the urban fringe. In a comparative study of urban fringe land use change in the 1980s, Mori found that the multiplier between agricultural and urban uses ran at 50 to 200 times, or even higher in the areas surrounding expanding English cities\textsuperscript{45}.

**CURRENT RURAL-URBAN FRINGE INITIATIVES AND POLICIES**

**Green Belt**

The policy most closely associated with the urban fringe is Green Belt, which covers around 15,000 km\(^2\) of England. Green Belt is probably the most well known and widely supported planning policy in the UK.

Current policy on Green Belts (PPG2: Green Belts (1992)) emphasises that the principal purposes of Green Belts relate to controlling the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In addition to these formal purposes, PPG 2 indicates that land designated as Green Belt also has a role to play meeting a number of positive objectives:

- Providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population
- Providing opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas
- Retaining attractive landscapes, and enhancing landscapes, near to where people live
- Improving damaged and derelict land around towns
- Securing nature conservation interest
- Retaining land in agricultural, forestry and related use.

There is some concern in some quarters, however, about the principle of Green Belts in the context of sustainable development. Such concerns relate to the implications of continued restriction on development in Green Belts, in terms of amongst other things, restricting towns and cities in their ability to satisfy demand for housing and associated infrastructure locally, and inducing longer-range commuter development beyond the Green Belt\textsuperscript{46}.


\textsuperscript{46} The Effectiveness of Green Belts, Department of the Environment, 1993
Responding to these concerns, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) amongst others has called for a review current Green Belt policy. It advocates the need for a universal strategic role for Green Belts, which forms an integral part of the (regional) settlement strategy with the over riding principle being an effective spatial planning tool. Emphasis should be placed on policy being stated in terms of key principles to be satisfied, moving towards a plan-led approach to development control in Green Belts.

Regional Parks

The River Nene Regional Park (RNRP) initiative is recognised by Government as a flagship strategic environmental infrastructure project (greenspace), potentially capable of national recognition, to balance the proposed development in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area.

The RNRP is the first of a potential new generation of Regional Parks to be established in England. The Lee Valley and the Colne Valley Regional Parks, which were established in the 1960s, provide a mosaic of countryside areas, urban green spaces, heritage sites, country parks, nature reserves and lake and riverside trails. The Regional Parks involve extensive partnership working with local authorities, Groundwork, government agencies, private companies and local groups. The aims of the Parks include maintaining and enhancing the landscape, resisting urbanisation, conserving resources and providing accessible facilities and opportunities for countryside recreation.

Country Parks

The 1968 Countryside Act introduced the concept of Country Parks, by empowering local authorities (and private land owners) to purchase land and manage it, with Countryside Commission grant aid, for the purposes of recreation. Country Parks were to be created in locations where they would take pressure off sensitive countryside areas such as the farmed countryside, the National Parks and other popular beauty spots by providing people with an alternative, easily accessible recreation resource. Country Parks were initially designed to meet a perceived need for family-based, car-orientated leisure facilities in the countryside.

By the late 1970s priorities shifted to creating Country Parks closer to urban populations that were accessible by public transport. There are now around 270 Country Parks in England, covering around 39,000 hectares. Many Country Parks fall within Community Forests. The Countryside Agency has recently launched a new initiative to revitalise Country Parks and make them relevant to today's needs.

REACT (Regeneration through Environmental Action)

The Countryside Agency’s REACT initiative stems from a desire expressed in the Rural White Paper (2000) that: ‘the Government would like to see the approach [Community Forests] adopted more widely and will consider how it can be used to assist with the implementation of other regeneration, forestry and community-based initiatives’.

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47 Modernising Green Belts-a discussion paper Royal Town Planning Institute, 2002
46 Sustainable Communities Progress Report “Making it Happen” (31 July 2003)
The aim of the REACT initiative is to demonstrate how to integrate community forestry into existing Area Based Initiatives, for example Sport Action Zones, Health Action Zones, Strategic Regeneration Zones etc. It aims to deliver a more rounded programme of action that meets the needs of local people and business and creates an improved environment and accessible greenspace.

This approach is consistent with the Modernising Government Agenda, which wishes to see greater co-ordination between and within existing Area Based Initiatives. By concentrating on existing initiatives it is envisaged that community forestry can build on what they already have to achieve. The REACT programme consists of seven projects, which came on stream between April 2002 and January 2003, with match-funding from the CA and the local project partnerships for 3 years.

**Growth Areas ‘Cookbook’**

The Countryside Agency is seeking to ensure all development in the ODPM Communities Plan Growth Areas is of a high quality so that it brings positive benefits, ‘net gain,’ to the area. The CA launched a ‘cookbook’ of techniques for achieving high quality development and design in 2004 at a series of events within the Growth Areas. The techniques the CA are promoting are intended to set the standards for development throughout England. They include:

- choosing and understanding sites
- involving communities
- creating and accessing green space that delivers functional and cost effective benefits to regeneration and development.

Further details are provided in the ‘Cookbook’ on 20 techniques covering Community Planning, Planning and Local Development, Greenspace, Access, Control over use of land, Delivery/Regeneration bodies, Local Products.
Appendix 5

Relevant PSA Targets
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>How the CFP can contribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>By 2004 reduce school truancies by 10% compared to 2002, sustain the new lower level and improve overall attendance levels thereafter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reduce substantially the mortality rates from the major killer diseases by 2010, including from heart disease by at least 40% in people under 75.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reduce congestion on the inter-urban trunk road network and in large urban areas in England below 2000 levels by 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfT with DEFRA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Improve air quality by meeting National Air Quality strategy objectives for carbon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>monoxide.</td>
<td>contribute to carbon sequestration by protecting woodland and peatland from development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODPM</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Achieve a better balance between housing availability and the demand for housing in all English regions while protecting valuable countryside around our towns, cities and in the greenbelt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODPM</td>
<td></td>
<td>The CFP protects greenbelt land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Office</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Protect the public and reduce re-offending by 5% for young offenders and for adults sentenced to prison or community service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Office</td>
<td></td>
<td>Several CFs work in partnership with the Probation Service to provide opportunities for remedial work by young offenders. Evidence shows that this may have a high impact – while we are not aware of any data on re-offending rates within the CFP similar schemes have been estimated to reduce re-offending to 8% from the national average of 70-80% within two years of release.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Increase voluntary and community sector activity, including increasing community participation by 5% by 2006.</td>
<td>All the CFs support volcom activity based around the Forest environment and in many cases have successfully stimulated and increased local community involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTI with DEFRA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensure the UK ranks in the top 3 most competitive energy markets in the EU and G7 in each year, whilst on course to maintain energy security, to achieve fuel poverty objectives; and improve the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources, including through the use of energy saving technologies, to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% from 1990 levels and moving towards a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTI with DEFRA</td>
<td></td>
<td>The CFP has the potential to contribute towards this objective through cultivation of energy crops and involvement in renewable energy projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Care for our natural heritage, make the countryside attractive and enjoyable for all, and preserve biological diversity by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reversing the long term decline in the number of farmland birds by 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bringing into favourable condition by 2010 95% of all nationally important wildlife sites and</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Opening up public access to land by end 2005.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td></td>
<td>The CFP clearly contributes towards this objective by protecting open space and biodiversity on the urban fringe, and encouraging sustainable land management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCMS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Increase significantly the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by new users aged 20 and above from priority groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCMS</td>
<td></td>
<td>The CFP has the scope to contribute towards this objective by providing new outdoor recreational opportunities on the urban fringe. For example, in the Tees Forest, a club called Gateway Wheelers was established to enable people with disabilities to enjoy cycling in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Over the three years to Spring 2006, increase the employment rates of disadvantaged areas and groups: lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50+, those with the lowest qualifications and the 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Many projects supported by the CFP contribute towards capacity building, confidence building and self-esteem, as well as informal (and in some cases formal) skills development. Anecdotally, these projects have</td>
</tr>
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52 For example the National Grid Transco programme [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)
<table>
<thead>
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<td></td>
<td>LADs with the poorest initial labour market position, and significantly reduce the difference between their employment rates and the overall rate.</td>
<td>in some cases led to increased take-up of employment opportunities by beneficiaries.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sure Start | Achieve by 2005/6:  
• An increase in the proportion of young children aged 0-5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age  
• An increase in the proportion of young children with satisfactory speech and language development at age 2. | Greenstart is a Sure Start project which has received indirect support (no funding) from the CFP through a link to the Great North Forest has contributed substantially to the social skills of children involved in the project, confidence and emotional wellbeing. The project also focuses on hand/eye coordination and sensory development – outdoor play in particular is essential for children’s development in these areas.54 |

53 See pp.8-11, SQW (2004) Impact of Community Engagement in the NECF.
Appendix 6

Relevant RDA Targets
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RDA/RES title</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Goals/Strategic objectives</th>
<th>Priorities/actions supported, where relevant to CFP</th>
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</table>
| EEDA ‘A Shared Vision’ | “A leading economy, founded on our world-class knowledge base and the creativity and enterprise of our people, in order to improve the quality of life of all who live and work here” | 1 – A skills base that can support a world-class economy 2 – Growing competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship 3 – Global leadership in developing and realising innovation in science, technology and research 4 – High quality places to live, work and visit 5 – Social inclusion and broad participation in the regional economy 6 – Making the most from the development of international gateways and national and regional transport corridors 7 – A leading information society 8 – An exemplar for the efficient use of resources. | Under Goal 4:  
Developing and enhancing green spaces and infrastructure to support economic growth:  
- Develop strategic networks of green infrastructure for the region, such as Thames Gateway South Essex green grid, and the governance and capacity to manage them effectively  
- Invest in and enhance key environmental assets and develop high quality and accessible urban-rural fringe  
- Develop mechanisms to maximise the benefits for the region from the CAP  
Developing culture, heritage and leisure assets for residents and visitors:  
- Protect, conserve and enhance key cultural, heritage and leisure assets to maintain their intrinsic value and increase their sustainable economic contribution  
- Use the skills of heritage, environment and built environment professionals to promote development which respects and enhances the natural, rural or urban environment  
- Ensure that the leisure and cultural needs of existing and growing communities are taken into account in planning and delivering development.  
Enabling renaissance and regeneration of the region’s communities:  
- Promote the use of sustainable construction techniques, technologies and materials through regional exemplar projects. |  
<p>| SEEDA, RES | “A prosperous economy” | 1 – Competitive | Priority 9: Urban renaissance – achieve an urban |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>
| Yorkshire and Humber RES | “To be world-class, prosperous, self-reliant and sustainable, with...” | 1 – Grow the region’s businesses, focusing on key clusters, to create a radical improvement in... | 3 | E Build on the potential of tourism to contribute to the region’s economy:  
    • (i) Research the economic drivers of and benefits... |
<table>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>from tourism in the region</td>
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<td>• (ii) Enhance the assets, environments and infrastructure on which tourism is based.</td>
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<td>4B Improve educational attainment and vocational skills amongst labour market entrants:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• (iii) Strengthen links between schools and business.</td>
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<td>5A Transform the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods into sustainable communities:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• (i) Deliver regeneration programmes in targeted areas of deprivation.</td>
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<td>5B Mainstream prevention of crime and health inequalities into regeneration activities:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• (ii) Mainstream action to tackle health issues and inequalities in regeneration activities.</td>
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<td>5D Stimulate social enterprise:</td>
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<td>• Support agencies that can deliver long term regeneration.</td>
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<td>6F Protect and enhance the region’s environment:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• (i) Harness potential of the environmental economy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• (iii) Address the impacts of climate change.</td>
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<td>2.2 Support the regeneration of disadvantaged communities: Address the changing needs of rural economies:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Devise programmes that will assist in improving productivity and add value to tourism and agriculture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Develop a land use strategy that will integrate food production, tourism, energy production, environmental management and countryside access.</td>
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<td>3.3 Conserve and enhance the region’s physical and cultural capital to provide major benefits to tourism and the wider economy:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Develop high quality cultural projects that enhance the region’s artistic, cultural and environmental heritage</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Undertake strategic environmental projects that develop the South West as a sustainable region.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

"An economy where the aspirations and skills of our people combine with the quality of our physical and cultural environment to provide a high quality of life and sustainable prosperity for everyone."

1 – Raise business productivity
2 – Increase economic inclusion
3 – Improve regional communications and partnerships.
<table>
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</table>
| LDA, Economic Development Strategy, Developing London’s Economy | “To develop London as an exemplary sustainable city based on three balanced and interlocking elements – strong and diverse economic growth, social inclusivity and fundamental improvements in environmental management and use of resources.” | Places and Infrastructure:  
- Support the delivery of the London Plan to promote sustainable growth and economic development  
- Deliver an improved and effective infrastructure to support London’s future growth and development  
- Deliver healthy, sustainable, high quality communities and urban environments.  
People:  
- Tackle barriers to employment  
- Reduce disparities in labour market outcomes between groups  
- Address the impact of concentrations of disadvantage.  
Enterprises:  
- Address barriers to enterprise start up, growth and competitiveness  
- Maintain London’s position as a key enterprise and trading location  
- Improve the skills of the workforce  
- Maximise the productivity and innovation potential of London’s enterprises.  
Marketing and promotion:  
- Ensure a coherent approach to marketing and promoting London  
- Co-ordinate effective marketing and promotion activities across London  
- Maintain and develop London as a top international destination and principal UK gateway for visitors, tourism and | Support the development of volcom training providers.  
Ensure disadvantaged young people are able to participate fully in society.  
Counter negative perceptions of London. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>
| Advantage West Midlands (AWM) 2004-2010 | The West Midlands will be recognised as a world-class region in which to invest, work, learn, visit and live, and the most successful in creating wealth for the benefit of all its people | • DEVELOPING A DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC BUSINESS BASE  
• PROMOTING A LEANING & SKILFUL REGION  
• CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH  
• REGENERATING COMMUNITIES | Regenerating communities  
• Supporting communities so that they can be properly equipped to make a contribution in their own areas  
• Developing sustainable local economies and communities by improving the environmental, social and cultural infrastructure |
| Emda RES2003-2010      | By 2010 the East Midlands will be widely acknowledged in the UK and beyond as one of Europe’s ‘Premier League’ Top 20 regions | • A VIBRANT ECONOMY  
• A HEALTHY SAFE, DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY  
• A QUALITY ENVIRONMENT  
Delivered by 12 strands of activity:  
• ENTERPRISE  
• ENTERPRISING COMMUNITIES  
• EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS  
• INNOVATION  
• INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INWARD INVESTMENT  
• ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
• SITE PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT  
• TRANSPORT  
• INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES  
• TOURISM AND CULTURE  
• RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
• URBAN REGENERATION | Enterprise  
• Stimulate and enterprise culture through the introduction of activities aimed at stimulating creativity and entrepreneurial attitudes into the school curriculum and in higher education  
• Improve the contribution of minority business sectors  
Enterprising communities  
• Increase the level of economic activity within disadvantaged communities  
• Influence mainstream funding to target disadvantaged communities  
• Encourage micro and social enterprises to start-up and survive  
• Support the economic development of the voluntary sector  
• Increase the economic impact of the delivery of public services in disadvantaged communities  
Employment, learning and skills  
• Develop comprehensive approaches to employment, learning & skills issues at the community level  
• Develop initiatives to increase the recording of non-qualification based skills in the workplace  
Economic growth and the environment  
• Develop a more resource efficient business community  
• Increase the electricity generated from renewable resources  
Tourism and culture  
• Establish clear links between arts, sports and economic regeneration  
• Establish the region as a world-class environment that attracts major investment  
Rural development  
• Diversify the agricultural base |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RDA/RES title</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Goals/Strategic objectives</th>
<th>Priorities/actions supported, where relevant to CFP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| NWDA RES 2003-2006 | To transform England’s Northwest through sustainable economic development | Business development  
- Regeneration  
- Skills and employment  
- Infrastructure  
- Image  
- Optimise regional resources | Regeneration  
- Support the regeneration of the most deprived areas and wards by strengthening the wider economic base  
- Develop and implement co-ordinated approaches to the reclamation of derelict and underused land in and adjacent to urban areas including the development of regional park resources  
- Develop social enterprises including community businesses  
- Encourage the public and private sector to employ people from disadvantaged backgrounds and community groups  
- Enable individuals to compete for job opportunities by equipping them with appropriate skills, developing employment initiatives, encouraging equality of opportunity for learning and addressing barriers to work  
- Image  
- Develop interventions to improve tourism potential  
- Develop events strategy to attract more business and leisure visitors to the region  
- Regional opportunities  
- Assess how the regions natural resources should be maintained and developed to maximise their contribution to the regions economy and quality of life |