

NORTH WEST
**NORTH WEST
GREEN ARC**

**DRAFT
RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT**

**Prepared for the
Green Arc Steering Group
by
Land Use Consultants**

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I. INTRODUCTION

- I.1. This report provides recommendations on developing the Green Arc approach in the North West of London. The report builds on work undertaken to date, including the launch of the initiative in September 2005 and subsequent discussions on management structure and funding opportunities.
- I.2. Most recently, a workshop was held in March 2006 with the aims of increasing stakeholder support and involvement and determining the next steps for the project. The outputs of this workshop were presented in a report¹ which identified key conclusions in relation to the four key questions addressed. These are set out in **Figure I.1.**
- I.3. This report takes account of the findings of the workshop and LUC's wider experience of strategic environmental initiatives. It also reflects the outcomes of the Green Arc 'All Quadrants Meeting' held at City Hall on 16 May 2006.
- I.4. The report provides recommendations in relation to six key areas:
 - Developing the Green Arc concept, both regionally and to the North West of London, including consideration of vision, aims and objectives (Section 2).
 - Developing the evidence base on the characteristics, threats and opportunities within Green Arc area (Section 3).
 - Identifying priorities for Green Arc investment and management (Section 4).
 - Adopting appropriate mechanisms for implementation of Green Arc aims (Section 5).
 - Resource requirements (Section 6).
 - A one year action plan (Section 7).

¹ Outputs of the consultation on 2nd March 2006 (Land Use Consultants, May 2006).

Figure 1.1 Key Conclusions of NW Green Arc Workshop (March 2006)

Question 1: Why is a strategic environmental initiative (Green Arc) to the North West of London needed?
Key conclusions from workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To achieve cross-boundary working• To respond to developmental pressures on green infrastructure• To address strategic issues that cannot be dealt with at the local level• To take advantage of a supportive planning policy context• To recognise and protect the natural system functions of green infrastructure and the countryside around London• To encourage positive use of Green Belt land, and to provide protection for all green land• To create links between areas of recognised ecological value
Question 2: What should be the key elements of the Green Arc's vision and strategic aims?
Key conclusions from workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To work together to protect Green Belt and other green land• To work proactively with the planning system• To support farming activity• To integrate with the other Green Arcs• To link with other agendas such as health, conservation and agri-environment schemes• Secure community support
Question 3: Where should efforts be focussed?
Key conclusions from workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robust methodology for identification of priorities for Green Arc investment• River corridors• Importance of existing strategic environmental assets• Strategic approach to allocation of planning benefits• Application of the 'Countryside In and Around Towns' Approach• Green buffers• Tranquillity mapping• Recognise the value of brownfield land• Quick wins i.e. significant benefits with limited financial and time investment• Use of landscape character assessment
Question 4: How would the Green Arc be implemented?
Key conclusions from workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green Arc should be a partnership• Working with the agricultural sector• Ensure support at a regional and national level e.g. GOs, RAs• Recognise potential for significant development schemes to provide funding through planning benefits• Working towards a Green Arc SPD• Progress and learn from previous Green Arc work elsewhere• Incorporate the CIAT and CABA Space approaches to Green Infrastructure• Recruitment of dedicated staff and securing resources• Public consultation• Specific support from workshop participants

2. DEVELOPING THE GREEN ARC CONCEPT

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. This section makes the following recommendations on developing the Green Arc concept:
- The vision and ten key functions of the Countryside In and Around Towns developed by the Countryside Agency and Groundwork should provide the context for developing the Green Arc approach
 - A strategic working group should be established to oversee and co-ordinate the Green Arc initiatives
 - A single vision and strategic aims should be developed for the Green Arcs, supplemented by additional sub-region specific aims
 - The relationship between the Green Arc and Green Belt policy should be clarified
 - The partnership arrangements for the North west green Arc should be simplified
 - The promotion, marketing and development of a corporate identity of the Green Arc should only take place once the Vision, aims and objectives are agreed and a Framework Plan has been prepared

A CONSISTENT AND COHESIVE APPROACH BETWEEN GREEN ARC INITIATIVES

- 2.2. The vision and ten key functions of the Countryside In and Around Towns developed by the Countryside Agency and Groundwork provide a useful context within which the Green Arc concept can be developed. Green Arc projects have the potential to demonstrate how many of these functions can be realised.
- 2.3. There are a number of benefits to be derived from a consistent and cohesive approach between the London Green Arc initiatives, facilitated by the establishment of a strategic working group. The recent discussions between Green Arc representatives and 'strategic partners' highlighted the following benefits of such a co-ordinated approach:
- promote all as parts of a wider picture – clearer Green Arc concept
 - common objectives better packaged and providing consistency between quadrants
 - forum for sharing information, learning and supporting the establishment of quadrants
 - better promotion and coordination between quadrants, including branding and communication to stakeholders
 - support for funding and influencing national stakeholders
 - resolving boundary issues

- 2.4. LUC concurs with these points and would also suggest that a strategic approach is likely to be more 'marketable', both in terms of influencing national and regional policy and the public's perception of the Government's approach to planning and management of the countryside around London. The notion of 'Zone 7 as the gateway to the big outdoors', which featured in early discussions on the North West Green Arc, could have considerable resonance in this respect.
- 2.5. A common approach would also help to ensure that the Green Arc concept is better integrated with other Government programmes, notably the CIAT initiative.

VISION, STRATEGIC AIMS AND 'SMART' OBJECTIVES

- 2.6. For simplicity, and on the basis that all the countryside around London faces similar pressures, we recommend that a single vision and strategic aims are developed for the Green Arc approach. These should be supplemented by additional aims and objectives that are tailored to reflect the characteristics and needs of each Green Arc area. To achieve this integrated approach will require clear lines of communication between the strategic working group and the Green Arc project representatives.
- 2.7. The agreed vision and strategic aims for the North East London Green Arc provide a good starting point for an agreed approach, as these have been subjected to most scrutiny. These are:

Vision

Bringing the BIG OUTDOORS closer to people through the creation and protection of an extensive, attractive and valued recreational landscape of well-connected and accessible countryside around London, for people and wildlife.

Strategic aims

- Promote positive uses for the Green Belt that realise the potential to improve the quality and accessibility of the land while maintaining its strategic objectives
 - To improve the contribution of the Green Belt to the quality of life of Londoners, local residents, visitors and people beyond the outer boundary
 - To conserve and enhance the biodiversity value
 - To improve the linkages between existing and potential accessible open land for people and wildlife
 - To create attractive destinations for daytrips and holidays, for visitors, tourists and the local population
 - To support initiatives that contribute to sustainable development, including renewable energy, floodwater retention and water gathering areas
 - To provide burial space 'green' or 'woodland' burials in natural environments
- 2.8. These strategic aims differ from those developed to date for the North West Green Arc (see workshop report) in a number of respects:

- Fuller coverage of environmental, social and economic issues.
- Improving the evidence base does not feature as an aim, as this is more about ‘how’ aims will be achieved. The need to improve the evidence base is discussed in Section 3 of this report and included in the action plan in Section 7.
- Engendering a consistent and coherent approach between Green Arc initiatives is now a key principle underpinning the Green Arc concept (see above).
- Working within the planning system to secure the aims for the Green Arc is a key implementation mechanism discussed in Section 5.

Recommended Additional Strategic Aims for NW Green Arc

- 2.9. In relation to the NW Green Arc it is recommended that two additional strategic should be included. These are:

“Create/maintain a natural buffer between London and the Chilterns AONB and around other important cultural landscapes and/or areas of conservation importance (e.g. Burnham Beeches)”.

“Compensating for loss of green space and reduction of rural character resulting from development and land use change, notably related to the expansion and increased use of Heathrow Airport”.

Green Arc and Green Belt

- 2.10. A key issue raised at the workshop was the perception in some quarters (e.g. City of London and, reportedly, the London Green Belt Council) of the Green Arc as a potential threat to the Green Belt. This is a legitimate concern given the Government’s recent indication that, while the overall amount of Green Belt land will be maintained or increased, there may be a need to adjust the boundaries of Green Belts to accommodate development. The Royal Town Planning Institute and the town and Country Planning Associations have also produced policy papers on the future of green Belts. The role of the Green Arc in helping to shape the future boundaries of the Green Belt should therefore be considered.

‘SMART’ Objectives

- 2.11. To assist monitoring and evaluation, each Green Arc project should develop ‘SMART’ objectives. The term ‘SMART’ refers to objectives that are:

Specific – The objectives should specify what they want to achieve.

Measurable – There should methods available for measuring whether the objectives are being met.

Achievable – The objectives should be achievable and attainable.

Realistic – The objectives should be realistically achievable given the resources available.

Time-orientated – A time period should be specified within which the objectives will be met.

2.12. SMART objectives should set out what each Green Arc aims to achieve over a reasonable period of time (say 5 years) and be subject to monitoring and review. Examples of SMART objectives could include:

- To increase accessible green space by 20% by 2010
- Proportion of green space lying within 200m of 200 dwellings by 10% by 2010
- To increase visitor numbers to x and y green spaces by 10% by 2010
- To increase the area of woodland pasture by 5% by 2010
- To provide a new visitor facility at z by 2010

BOUNDARY ISSUES

Use and application of the boundary

2.13. Although an established boundary helps to give the Green Arc a clear identity, it should not be applied in a hard and fast way. There is a need to recognise linkages to areas on edge of boundary e.g.

- Links to the South West and North East Green Arcs (see para. 2.6, above).
- Link to Chilterns AONB.
- Where there are strategic corridors or initiatives that cross boundaries e.g. rivers, areas of Green Corridor which fall outside the boundary.
- Where housing, economic or infrastructure development is taking place in close proximity indirectly affecting the Green Arc e.g. around Maidenhead.

PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

2.14. The current partnership arrangements and organisational structure involves four main elements, as set out in the table below.

Champions	Steering Group Members (key decision makers)	Partners (who wish to influence the key decisions)	Wider network (who wish to be kept informed)
Countryside Agency	Buckinghamshire County Council	Sustrans	<i>undefined</i>
English	City of London	Harrow Council	

Nature			
	Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust	South West London Green Arc	
	English Nature	South Buckinghamshire District Council	
	Countryside Agency	Wycombe District Council	
	Chilterns Society	London Parks Forum	
	Hertfordshire County Council	Dacorum Borough Council	
	Greater London Authority		
	Chiltern Conservation Board		
	Groundwork Thames Valley		

2.15. Taking account of the discussion above of the need for strategic approach to London's Green Arc, we recommend that these roles are rationalised as follows:

- The strategic partners working group should replace the 'champions' and comprise Natural England, the Greater London Authority and the Regional Assemblies for the South East and East of England.
- The Steering Group should be referred to as 'Project Partners', who will be responsible for overseeing the production of the Green Arc Framework Plan. In so doing, the aim should be achieve consensus amongst the Project Partners on the visions and aims of the Green Arc.
- The Project Partners should break out into Sub-area groups, covering specific geographic areas (e.g. Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and London). In this way, more detailed attention can be focussed, particularly at the implementation stage, on local issues and concerns.
- The Partners and the 'wider network' should be amalgamated into a 'stakeholder group', which comprises the District Councils and delivery bodies (e.g. Sustrans and Groundwork)

CORPORATE IDENTITY AND PROMOTION

2.16. The promotion, marketing and development of a corporate identity of the Green Arc should only take place once the Vision, aims and objectives are agreed and a Framework Plan has been prepared. As noted earlier, there are likely to be significant advantages of promoting the Green Arc concept as a single, unified entity, rather than as four separate initiatives around London. Within this overall concept,

there would be scope to draw attention to the particular geographic opportunities that exist in the different quadrants of London.

3. DEVELOPING THE EVIDENCE BASE

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. This section makes the following key recommendations about developing the evidence base:
- A wide-ranging data review exercise should be undertaken and central database established.
 - Consideration should be given to filling any data gaps and improving data over time.
 - A monitoring framework should be established, linked to the NW Green Arc strategic aims and SMART objectives.

BENEFITS OF AN IMPROVED EVIDENCE BASE

- 3.2. A good evidence base will help to:
- Improve understanding of the NW Green Arc area.
 - Highlight pressures and opportunities to those involved and organisations in a position to help achieve the Green Arc aims.
 - Inform the prioritisation method discussed in Section 4.
 - Show trends over time, including the difference that any initiatives are making.
- 3.3. Establishing a sound evidence base is also a key element of the new planning system and will therefore be important when utilising planning mechanisms to assist implementation.

COMPILING A CENTRAL DATABASE

- 3.4. **Table 3.1** give an indication of the range of data sets and hosting authorities as a result of initial review of data availability.

DATASET	DATA SOURCE	DATA HOLDER	FORMAT
Aerial Photos (1999)	BCC	BCC	GIS file
AVDC BOUNDARY	BCC GIS	BCC? AVDC?	GIS Arc View shape file
1:10,000 Contour maps	BCC GIS	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file
Geology	British Geological Survey	BGS	GIS Arc View shape file
Woodland area and distribution	National Inventory of Woodland & Trees (NIWT) BCC GIS:	FC BCC	GIS Arc View shape file

DATASET	DATA SOURCE	DATA HOLDER	FORMAT
Woodland Inventory	BCC GIS	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file
Stewardship/ESA information	BCC GIS	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file
Agricultural land grade (1&2 / 3&4)	BCC GIS	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file
Floodplains	BCC GIS	EA	GIS Arc View shape file
Ancient Woodlands (semi-natural & planted)	Ancient Woodland Inventory	EN	GIS Arc View
Habitat information	SSSI	EN	GIS Arc View
	RIGS	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file
	County Wildlife Sites	BCC/	GIS file & Access database
	Local Nature Reserves	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file
	Biological Notification Sites	BCC/ERC	GIS Arc View shape file
	North Bucks Grassland Survey	BCC	Paper maps
	Upper Thames Tributaries ESA	DEFRA	GIS Arc View
Priority species	Environmental Record Centre	ERC	GIS file
Historic Environment Interest	Scheduled Ancient Monuments	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file
	Areas of Archaeological Interest		GIS Arc View shape file
	Registered Parks & Gardens		GIS Arc View shape file
	Historic Landscape Character		GIS Arc View shape file
	Ridge and Furrow maps/field names		Paper copy/GIS file
Rights of Way	Definitive Maps	BCC/OCC	GIS – BCC Paper - OCC
Promoted routes	BCC	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file
Local Nature Reserves	BCC	BCC	GIS Arc View shape file

3.5. These data sets understandably focus on environmental issues. However, there is a need to review the availability of a wider range of data sets in relation to people's interaction with the environment. This will help to inform a more robust

methodology for identifying areas of need and priorities for action. The review should also highlight any existing data gaps.

3.6. Additional data might include the following:

- Land ownership
- Levels of multiple deprivation
- Access to green space
- Access to sustainable transport
- Agricultural census data
- Landscape character
- Tranquil areas

3.7. It is recommended that all data is compiled into a central database under the ownership of the project steering group and held by one of the lead partners such as Buckinghamshire County Council.

IMPROVING DATA OVER TIME

3.8. Initially, the significance of any gaps highlighted in the data review should be considered in terms of the importance of the data and the cost and time implications of obtaining it. Consideration should also be given to the value of obtaining additional primary data, for example, through surveys of different groups including farmers, landowners, and recreational users.

3.9. Reviewing data needs and availability should be seen as an ongoing objective, however, to help improve understanding, prioritisation and monitoring as new and improved data becomes available.

MONITORING

3.10. A good evidence base will also help to monitor trends over time, including the difference any initiatives within the Green Arc project are making. Data to be used for monitoring should be developed within a framework that links to the strategic aims and 'SMART' objectives of the North West Green Arc.

3.11. The Countryside Agency has established a national monitoring and evaluation framework to support its work in regions implementing the Vision for the Countryside In and Around Towns initiative. The monitoring framework should take account of the CIAT annual monitoring and evaluation report when available.

4. IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. This section makes the following key recommendations about identifying priorities within the Green Arc area:

- The spatial priorities identified at the workshop should be investigated further
- Three potential methods for identifying priorities should be explored

POTENTIAL METHODS AND APPROACHES

4.2. Spatial priorities for the Green Arc were considered at the workshop. The suggestions included:

- Areas where there are existing environmental / green space initiatives, such as the Clone Valley Regional Park and Watling Chase Community Forest
- Key environmental assets that are under pressure, such as Broxbourne Woods National Nature Reserve, South Bucks Heaths and Commons, and Windsor Great Park
- Areas facing significant development pressures, such as the Maidenhead
- River corridors, such as the Thames and Jubilee Rivers

4.3. It is recommended that these broad ranging suggestions should be investigated further. In recognition of the limitation on resources and the need for a clear evidence base, it is recommended that a robust methodology should be developed to identify spatial priorities for Green Arc investment and management. A variety of potential methods could be adopted; each would necessarily include the definition of appropriate criteria or objectives for prioritisation.

4.4. Three potentially inter-related methods are proposed for further consideration. These are:

- Responding to established green space needs
- Establishing priority indicators based on Green Arc aims
- Establishing priority indicators based on the Countryside In and Around Towns (CIAT) approach

Responding to established green space needs

4.5. This would involve reviewing data generated by local authorities for their Open Space Strategies, as required by Planning Policy Guidance 17. It could also involve application of English Nature's Accessible natural green space in towns (ANGsT) method, which indicates that an urban resident should be able to enter a natural green space of at least 2 hectares within 0.5 kilometres of their home and provision

should be made for Local Nature Reserves in every urban area at the minimum level of 1 hectare per thousand population.

- 4.6. A potential problem with applying this approach is the incomplete or inconsistent application of open space strategies within the Green Arc area. It is also unlikely that data for the ANGsT method will be available for the entire Green Arc area.
- 4.7. A key limitation of this approach is that it only addresses one aim of the Green Arc – relating to access to green space. The approach would therefore need to be complemented by other methods that take fuller account of the range of Green Arc aims.

Establishing priorities based on Green Arc aims

- 4.8. Initially, this would involve characterising the Green Arc area in terms of the extent to which the aims are currently being met. In order to do this, suitable indicators should be determined for each objective. For example, the indicators for the aim ‘To create attractive destinations for daytrips and holidays, for visitors, tourists and the local population’ could be ‘high’, ‘medium’ or ‘low’ attractiveness for daytrips and holidays, for visitors, tourists.
- 4.9. It would then be possible to assess potential projects as they come forward in terms of whether they would contribute positively to a particular aim, or not.

Establishing priorities based on Green Arc aims and the Countryside In and Around Towns (CIAT) approach

- 4.10. A further approach would be to link the Green Arc aims with the CIAT approach. The CIAT document identifies ten key functions that the ‘countryside in and around towns’ should perform. Table 4.1 below sets out these functions alongside the aims of the Green Arc. Further information is provided on the specific functions and potential implications, based on the CIAT document and wider policy aspirations. A number of potential indicators are also identified. These indicators are designed to prioritise sites which:
 - Currently **fulfil** the function;
 - Have **potential** to fulfil the function;
 - Are located in an area where there is a **need** for the function.

Table 4.1 Potential indicators of Countryside Agency’s functions of the ‘countryside in and around towns’

CIAT FUNCTIONS	RELATED GREEN ARC AIMS	SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS AND POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS	POTENTIAL INDICATORS
I. A nature reserve	To conserve and enhance biodiversity value	To maximise the biodiversity potential of the Green Arc areas.	Existing areas of high biodiversity value

	To improve linkages between existing and accessible open land for people and wildlife		Areas where there is potential/need for habitat enhancement and restoration
2. A bridge to the country	To improve quality of life for local residents, London residents and other visitors To improve linkages between existing and accessible open land for people and wildlife	Provision of sustainable access routes linking urban and rural areas.	Extent of rights of way, cycle paths, bridleways and promotion of these. Gaps in rights of way Potential for creation of additional RoW where required. Continuous green corridor.
3. A gateway to the town	To improve quality of life for local residents, London residents and other visitors To promote positive uses that realise the potential to improve quality and accessibility while maintaining the purpose of the Green Belt	A clear, well-defined and attractive transition from town to country	Attractive existing gateways (rail, road, RoW) Key gateways (rail, road, RoW) with potential for landscape/environmental improvements Unattractive gateways with a need for improvements
4. A health centre	To promote positive uses that realise the potential to improve quality and accessibility while maintaining the purpose of the Green Belt	Provision for a range of informal recreation opportunities close to where people live	Presence of existing recreation sites and opportunities. Potential/need for additional creation/enhancement of areas for recreation
5. A classroom	To promote positive uses that realise the potential to improve quality and accessibility while maintaining the purpose of the Green Belt	Provision for environmental education, other education	Need for environmental education schemes
6. A recycling and renewable energy centre	To support initiatives that contribute to sustainable development	Land which could fulfil functions such as flood storage, energy production, pollution absorption (i.e. woodland)	Flood storage areas, renewable energy sites, woodlands, Areas which show potential as the above (e.g. areas of land which are currently not economically beneficial such as low grade

			agricultural land) Land suitability for biomass cropping, wind turbines
7. A productive landscape	To support initiatives that contribute to sustainable development.	Economically viable farming and other sustainable use of agricultural land around towns (e.g. energy crops, woodland management, opening farms to the public, organic and local produce markets, diversity of land use)	Agri-environment schemes, diversification opportunities, productive areas of the landscape (e.g. farms) Agricultural land classification
8. A cultural legacy	To create attractive destinations for day trips and holidays for visitors, tourists and the local population	Maintain heritage within the landscape and provide interpretation on the history of the area	Historic sites, areas historically used by the public as green space (e.g. commons, historic parks). Other cultural parts of the landscape, e.g. archaeology, conservation areas, industry
9. A place for sustainable living	To support initiatives that contribute to sustainable development	To ensure all development is sustainable in terms of location, infrastructure, design etc.	Sustainable transport, recycling facilities, green infrastructure. Proposed areas for new communities (and potential to influence sustainable development)

- 4.11. Although it would need to be developed further, this approach has a number of advantages, not least the link across to CIAT functions. Potential issues which will need to be overcome include the likelihood that for some CIAT functions there is a lack of information available in order to identify the target areas for this function. These functions include the 'gateway to the town', 'health centre' and 'classroom' functions.
- 4.12. In addition, there is potential conflict between the functions of the countryside in and around towns, as identified in the CIAT document, and purposes of Green Belt policy. For example, functions such as 'a classroom' and 'a health centre' may require basic infrastructure associated with encouraging the public into the countryside, including toilets and cafes.

5. IDENTIFYING MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. This section makes the following key recommendations about mechanisms for implementation:
- Investigate the most effective ways of engaging with farmers and landowners for the benefit of the Green Arc aims.
 - Undertake a survey of delivery partners to establish their responsibilities and how they may help to implement the Green Arc aims.
 - Undertake a review of relevant funding sources, policy documents and regulations to establish the range of mechanisms available to support implementation

HOW WILL THE GREEN ARC VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES BE IMPLEMENTED?

- 5.2. Fundamental to the ability of the Green Arc initiative to achieve its objectives will be the effective use of a range of implementation mechanisms.
- 5.3. However, the Green Arc should not itself try to operate as an implementation body. Implementation will be reliant on project partners signing up to the vision, aims and objectives and working towards putting them into practice. The aim should be for the day-to-day work of policy makers, delivery bodies, farmers and landowners to be shaped and influenced by the priorities identified for the NW Green Arc.
- 5.4. Appropriate mechanisms will range from the use of “softer” mechanisms such as influencing national and regional government to more tangible funding of individual projects.

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

- 5.5. A review of policy, land management mechanisms, regulations and funding streams should be carried out to establish the availability and suitability of different mechanisms. This might include:
- Working with farmers and landowners
 - Maximising the use of tools within planning system
 - Public and private sector funding
 - Use of other statutory duties and responsibilities
 - Land acquisition

Working with Farmers and Landowners

- 5.6. As custodians of significant areas of land within the NW Green Arc, farmers and landowners are key delivery agents for achieving the Green Arc vision and aims. Consideration should be given to how best to engage positively with farmers and landowners in order to secure their support. Defra's rural development funding priorities and negotiating environmental agreements with Local Authority tenants are two potential mechanisms.

Maximising the use of tools within the planning system

- 5.7. Although improved land management and environmental enhancement cannot be achieved through the planning system alone, it provides an important mechanism to influence the location and form of future development.
- 5.8. The NW Green Arc straddles three regions – Greater London, the South East and the East of England. Regional and local policy has a fundamental bearing on physical change in the Green Arc. It will therefore be important to establish the Green Arc vision and objectives within Regional Spatial Strategies, as well as individual Local Authority Local Development Frameworks. An effective way of influencing local development could be through the development of a separate Supplementary Planning Document for the Green Arc.
- 5.9. Planning authorities can enter into agreements with developers to achieve local benefits in return for the granting of planning permission. There is potential for Local Authorities to use these powers more widely to work towards the Green Arc Vision. There may be potential for establishing a central Green Arc fund for combining S.106 monies and distributing the funds to meet Green Arc objectives.

Public and Private Sector Funding

- 5.10. A review of relevant public sector funding sources should be undertaken, including the amount of funding available, bidding processes and priorities. Relevant funding streams might include Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) funding for green infrastructure and Defra funding for rural development schemes.
- 5.11. There is also potential to attract private sector investment within the Green Arc. This might include the establishment of an endowment scheme by local businesses or attracting inward investment in the area. Such private sector funding would be used to secure the protection and management of Green Belt land. Experience could be taken from existing examples e.g. the endowment schemes to protect open space established by London First and in Milton Keynes.

Use of other statutory duties and responsibilities

- 5.12. The Green Arc initiative represents a coming together of a number of Government Agencies, each with specific responsibilities, statutory or otherwise. There may be potential for more proactive use of these responsibilities for the benefit of the Green Arc. For example, English Nature's duties in relation to SSSIs and NNRs, Forestry Commission approval of woodland planting schemes.

Land acquisitions

- 5.13. Publicly owned Green Belt land can often be maintained to higher standards and experiences fewer of the problems normally associated with the Green Belt such as fragmentation and degradation of landscape. It is recommended that a strategic approach is adopted to purchasing land within the Green Arc area to provide a greater degree of influence over its management. This would include targeted purchasing of land in close proximity to and between existing initiatives.

6. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1. The estimated resources for project planning, implementation and review in **Table 6.1** should be used as the basis for developing a more detailed funding bid to the Countryside Agency.

ESTIMATED RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

- 6.2. **Table 6.1** sets out estimated resource requirements for project planning in line with the one year action plan (Section 7), and for implementation and review.

Table 6.1: Estimated Resource Requirements for Project Planning, Implementation and Review

Project component	Explanation and assumptions	Estimated resource requirement
Project planning		
Develop a Framework Plan	Framework plan contains all elements set out in this report	£40-60K in year one
Implementation and review		
Project Director	Project Director appointed to oversee implementation of the Framework Plan	£45K per annum, including overheads
Chairs of sub-area groups	Three (one for each sub-area) Secondment of existing partners for 15-20% of time, including four meetings per year	£5K per annum per chair/£15K per annum total
Green space advisors	Three (one for each sub-area) Call-off contracts	£10K per annum per advisor/£30K per annum total

- 6.3. More detailed cost estimates should be developed for a funding bid to the Countryside Agency and will be dependent on detailed assumptions made including factors such as:

- The availability of data and costs of compiling a central database
- The type of methodology used to develop and implement a prioritisation method
- Design and printing costs for the Framework Plan
- Recruitment costs, availability of staff and overheads

7. ONE YEAR ACTION PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1. The actions and work programme set out in **Figure 7.1** should be adopted by the project steering group.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- 7.2. **Figure 7.1** brings together and prioritises the recommended actions from this report into a one year work programme. This begins with the preparation of a funding bid to the Countryside Agency and appointment of consultants and finishes with the development of a Framework Plan and appointment of a Project Director.

Action 1: Prepare funding bid to the Countryside Agency to progress the NW Green Arc

- 7.3. The initial priority should be to develop a bid to the Countryside Agency's Countryside In and Around Towns initiative to help develop and strengthen the NW Green Arc over the next year. The bid should highlight the success of the stakeholder workshop and be based on the cost of implementing the recommendations presented in this report with assistance from external consultants.

Action 2: Appoint consultants

- 7.4. It is envisaged that consultants would be appointed at an early stage to undertake the majority of the work to implement the recommendations of this report, with direction from the project steering group and support from project partners.

Action 3: Develop the evidence base

- 7.5. A review of the evidence base and establishment of a central database will underpin future tasks to identify priorities, implementation mechanisms and a Framework Plan. It is therefore recommended that this is undertaken as an early task, within the first three months, although updating and reviewing data should continue throughout the project lifetime.

Action 4: Develop and implement prioritisation method

- 7.6. The prioritisation method will be informed by an improved evidence base. The prioritisation exercise will involve an analysis of opportunities for green space protection, creation and enhancement as well as opportunities for multi-functional benefits to be realised.

Action 5: Identify implementation mechanisms

- 7.7. A review of relevant implementation mechanisms would take place and be informed by a clearer evidence base and a better understanding of where efforts should be focussed.

Action 6: Develop Framework Plan

7.8. The Framework Plan would bring together all elements of the NW Green Arc developed to date, including:

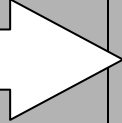
- Vision
- Strategic aims
- SMART objectives
- Characterisation of opportunities and threats
- Priority areas and sites
- Implementation mechanisms
- Organisational arrangements
- Monitoring framework

7.9. There will be a need to develop and refine the SMART objectives based on the evidence base, priority areas and implementation mechanisms and linked to this; a monitoring framework will need to be established. It is recommended that a summary version of the Framework Plan is produced towards the end of the year initially for consultation with stakeholders and subsequently for marketing and promotion purposes.

Action 7: Resource requirements

7.10. The main priority should be to appoint a Project Director to oversee implementation of the Framework Plan. As part of this process, the Director should be charged with appointing chairs for sub-groups early in year two.

Figure 7.1 North West Green Arc One Year Work Programme

Actions	Months											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Prepare funding bid to Countryside Agency	█	█										
2. Appoint consultants to progress recommendations		█										
3. Develop the evidence base		Data review		Database		Ongoing review 						
4. Develop and implement prioritisation method				█	█	█						
5. Identify mechanisms for implementation						█	█					
6. Develop Framework Plan								█	Consultation			█
7. Resource requirements									Appoint Project Director			█

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