



Workington Nature Partnership

Evaluation and Future Direction

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Executive Summary

Workington Nature Partnership Now

Workington has an extensive open space network, including some sites that are green gems where wildlife flourishes.

- ❖ Workington Nature Partnership has successfully managed and improved key sites for both wildlife and people.
- ❖ Having a skilled and dedicated member of staff has allowed carefully planned and managed habitat improvements to take place that are appropriate to each of the sites.
- ❖ Allerdale Borough Council and Workington Town Council should be commended for their approach.

Extending the Reach of Workington Nature Partnership

The Partnership is currently operating at capacity and there is a threat from the increasing pressures on local authority budgets in future. There is also a desire expressed by the Partnership to extend its role.

- ❖ The Workington Nature Partnership approach could be applied more widely to the green network within, and possibly beyond, Workington, and it could build on its success to engage a wider range of people, subject to securing additional resources.
- ❖ Connectivity is a key element in the sustainability of wildlife habitats; and green routes can also encourage people to walk, run and cycle. There is great potential in Workington for linking sites to each other, to local communities and to the town centre along green corridors. A circular route linking key sites would be an easy first step towards this.
- ❖ Blue spaces, such as rivers, streams and ponds are also important features, providing links to the coast and to the industrial and cultural heritage.
- ❖ Workington Nature Partnership could extend its remit to include built and cultural heritage where they are associated with the green and blue network.
- ❖ Extending the Partnership's work will require additional resources. This needs careful consideration in the context of current and planned projects and funding applications, especially the restoration of Workington Hall Parklands and Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Pollinator Project, which are both the subject of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) applications.

Engaging More People

It is widely accepted that urban green space provides wide-ranging benefits for both wildlife and people. Of particular relevance to Workington are the benefits for physical and mental health, for children and young people, and for families to encourage an active lifestyle as part of making healthy choices.

- ❖ The results of the online survey show that the sites are highly valued for their wildlife and heritage, but also for the benefits they provide for people's health and wellbeing. One respondent described Harrington Nature Reserve as 'balm to the soul' and others mentioned contemplation, serenity and space to think.
- ❖ There are good opportunities to engage a wider range of people, particularly young people and families, subject to securing additional resources.

- ❖ Engaging with volunteers provides benefits, both for the councils in terms of value for money and ensuring good management of the sites, and for the volunteers themselves. Currently volunteers contribute over 420 days per year, valued at over £20,000. There is a regular group of volunteers who are local residents who work once or twice per week; and larger groups are brought in, often from other organisations, for bigger tasks.
- ❖ There are opportunities to engage more volunteers if additional staff and resources can be secured. They may be from local communities working on nearby sites, interested people from a wider area, groups that engage young people and others, or trainees under a structured training programme.

Engaging More Partners

National policies and guidance documents, such as those from Natural England, highlight the value of urban and coastal green spaces and the importance of partnership working.

- ❖ Potential partners include Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Sustrans, Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Youth Alliance. These organisations were invited to, and played an active part in, the workshop that was organised as part of this review
- ❖ Of particular note is the Pollinator Project currently being developed by Cumbria Wildlife Trust, which will have a direct impact on sites in Workington, providing opportunities for volunteering and the potential to attract further match funding.

Governance and building resilience

Workington Nature Partnership is well managed, being limited mostly by its resources.

- ❖ The current management arrangements between Allerdale Borough Council and Workington Town Council are effective and should continue.
- ❖ To broaden involvement it is proposed that an advisory group with wider representation and interests, including health and well-being, children's services, police, environment and community interests, be developed. The development of the group could be the subject of a funding application if needed and it could be the catalyst for a wider programme and partnership funding application.

Recommendations

Effective Partnership

The partnership between Workington Town Council and Allerdale Borough Council works well and current management arrangements are appropriate. Its work would benefit from the engagement of a wider group of partners.

- An advisory group with members signed up to a Memorandum of Understanding would assist in expanding the work of Workington Nature Partnership and could help to secure funding. Friends and volunteers should also be part of this wider group. Advisory meetings or workshops should be held at least twice a year and could be topic-based.

Workington Nature Partnership meetings are constructive and informal. Some small improvements could improve efficiency:

- Invitations can be extended to other staff as required, such as for input on health
- The Partnership Officer should circulate a short report on progress before the meeting
- Action points should be noted at the meeting and reviewed at the next one
- The budget and spend of the Partnership should be clearly reported

The three key sites have management plans intended to direct works on the ground but they are unwieldy and are not regularly used. They are due for review.

- Shorter and more user-friendly management plans should be developed, which would help volunteers to take more control of the required management schedules.
- Some key indicator habitats or species could be identified for the sites and a brief annual report produced that can be circulated widely. More regular recording and reporting on the condition of sites would help to demonstrate the success of Workington Nature Partnership and raise awareness of its work.

Engaging People

There are opportunities to engage more people that would result in benefits for the people involved, for the sites and for the Partnership. Resources are currently a limiting factor.

- It is recommended that Workington Nature Partnership develops a volunteering policy which sets out who it wants to involve and why and is clear about the processes involved.
- The Partnership can trial some events and activities, such as fun runs, guided walks from the leisure centre or the museum, or children's activities as part of an organised summer playscheme. This would help to identify where there is good potential and could inform future funding bids.

Green Infrastructure Plan

A Green Infrastructure Plan to map and prioritise sites and routes within the green network, and links where communities can become more engaged, is needed to direct the expansion of the Nature Partnership's work. Those involved in the Workington Nature Partnership already know a

great deal about the value and potential of sites and routes in Workington. The workshop held as part of this evaluation engaged others in drawing up some proposals on a map.

- Workington Nature Partnership should set aside some time to develop the Green Infrastructure Plan, engaging external help where required. It should include community engagement proposals if possible. A small funding application may be required to complete the work and produce a document.
- The Green Infrastructure Plan can be used by Allerdale Borough Council's planning department to develop further as Supplementary Planning Guidance to provide better protection for the sites.

Current Opportunities

- A circular route exists, linking the Sustrans route to England's Coast Path, which could easily be improved and signposted as a first 'green routes' project. A 'Workington Nature Trail' should be developed with signage and interpretation. Funding may be available through Allerdale Borough Council's Tourism and Culture work and/or from external grants, such as Awards for All from the Big Lottery.
- Working with other partners will help to co-ordinate actions to benefit wildlife and people and attract funding. West Cumbria Rivers Trust is looking to develop an apprenticeship scheme and it would benefit both parties to work together on the proposal.
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Pollinator project has now been given approval from HLF for the development phase, which will take place in 2018. It directly affects sites in Workington and provides opportunities for joint working, especially with community engagement and volunteering. Trialling activities as part of the project development could provide evidence for extending the work of Workington Nature Partnership in future. It is important that the Partnership and the Trust develop a good working relationship and the two projects work together.
- The restoration of Workington Hall Parklands provides an opportunity to establish a practical operational and educational base for use by Workington Nature Partnership. It can also provide a base for extending the approach and outreach activities of the Partnership across the town, engaging the community in green infrastructure and wildlife, and realising health and wellbeing benefits.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Workington Nature Partnership commissioned Shirley Muir Associates and ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) to evaluate the current operation of the Partnership and to explore and inform its future direction. Funding for the commission was provided by Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under its 'Resilient Heritage' programme. A SWOT analysis had already been undertaken by the Partnership, which informed the approach taken.

Shirley Muir has a background in urban biodiversity planning, partnership working and project evaluations. ACT is the rural and community development organisation for Cumbria with expertise in supporting communities and helping groups to explore different organisational models.

1.2 Methodology

The focus of our methodology was on stakeholder engagement including:

- Informal face-to-face interviews with stakeholders directly involved in Workington Nature Partnership, including councillors and staff from Allerdale Borough Council and Workington Town Council and the Workington Nature Partnership Officer;
- Observing and taking part in Workington Nature Partnership Steering Group meetings;
- Face-to-face interviews with volunteers working at Harrington Nature Reserve;
- Attending meetings of the three Friends Groups;
- Interviews in person or by telephone of other environmental stakeholders, including Natural England, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Sustrans, Butterfly Conservation Cumbria, Solway Coast AONB and West Cumbria Rivers Trust;
- Face-to-face interview with the Policy Manager (Health Improvement and Inequalities) at Allerdale Borough Council;
- Telephone interviews with other stakeholders including schools, West House and Cumbria Youth Alliance; and
- An online survey of the wider community with 120 responses.

We organised a visioning workshop on 26th April 2018 which was attended by 22 people including representatives of the stakeholders mentioned above.

We provided a range of options on future governance for the Workington Nature Partnership to consider, identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each for the operation of the Partnership.

Finally, we reviewed our findings with the Workington Nature Partnership Steering Group and drew conclusions and recommendations.

1.3 Structure of the Report

The first two sections of the report consider the issues under the headings of *Heritage* and *People and Communities*, reflecting HLF outcomes. The next section explores the ways that Workington Nature Partnership can become a more resilient organisation. Some case studies of other projects are then provided to give context and ideas for the future of the Partnership. Finally, the options are summarised in section 6 and recommendations are made in section 7.

2. Heritage

This section sets out the current situation for the wildlife sites in Workington and the way they are managed and protected, providing details of current policies and practices. It draws conclusions, makes recommendations to be implemented in the short-term and identifies opportunities for the future direction of Workington Nature Partnership.

2.1 Current situation

Workington Nature Partnership is a partnership between Allerdale Borough Council (ABC) and Workington Town Council (WTC). It appoints and supports a Workington Nature Partnership Officer, hosted by Allerdale and part funded by both ABC and WTC. The post is held at present by Raegan Blacker.

A steering group directs the work of the Partnership. Its members are: an Executive elected member of ABC (currently Michael Heaslip); the Chair of the Environment Committee of WTC (currently Denise Rollo) and officers: Julian Smith, Parks and Open Spaces Officer with ABC, Chris Bagshaw, the Workington Town Clerk and Raegan Blacker, the Nature Partnership Officer.

When Workington Nature Partnership was established in 2013, its purpose was described as to “better manage and conserve the natural environment within the civil parish of Workington”, initially concentrating on the following priority sites:

- Siddick Pond Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Harrington Reservoir LNR and Ellerbeck
- Workington Hall Park
- Oldside partially reclaimed coastal brownfield land
- Derwent Howe partially reclaimed slagbanks with coastal open access
- Bankfield urban park
- Salterbeck reservoir
- Small areas of community woodland

The Nature Partnership Officer’s role profile highlights Workington’s key nature sites as Siddick Pond LNR, Harrington Reservoir LNR and Workington Hall Parkland. Workington Nature Partnership is also looking at ways to establish a more joined-up network of heritage sites through the establishment of nature corridors. The scope of the Nature Partnership is currently confined to the parish of Workington.

2.2 Wildlife value

“You saw a kingfisher and an otter on the same day in Workington? No way! Are you sure you didn’t dream it?”

Comment from a colleague to the author after a day of site visits

2.2.1 Siddick Ponds SSSI and Local Nature Reserve

The wildlife value of Siddick Ponds is recognised in its SSSI designation as being of national nature conservation importance because of its variety of overwintering and breeding bird species. It was previously also declared a Local Nature Reserve by Allerdale Borough Council in 1977. Its management plan¹ describes it as “an important site due to its unique habitat that supports a

¹ Allerdale Borough Council (2012) *Siddick Ponds LNR Five Year Management Plan 2012-2017*

variety of wildlife, including reed warbler, pochard, kingfishers, otters and over sixteen species of butterfly". It is also the northernmost site in the UK for bittern visiting in winter.



Siddick Pond

The management plan goes on to describe the habitats and species:

"A large freshwater pond to the east of the reserve and a smaller brackish pond to the west are the two principal features of this site..... Both ponds are of importance as feeding grounds for passage and wintering birds, with a well-developed combination of inter-related habitats that support over 155 species of bird for which the site is of national significance. In particular the freshwater pond supports a range of breeding birds, including reed warbler which is at the northern extremity of its range in the British Isles and pochard which is nationally rare as a breeding species. Whooper swans, sand martins and goosanders are also common visitors to the freshwater pond".

The presence of such a large area of reedbed habitat with easy reach of urban populations is quite remarkable. The area is popular with local birdwatchers and is a good site for beginners and those with a developing interest because of the variety of species, some of which are rare or infrequent in the area. As an example, the bittern is at its northernmost limit at Siddick Ponds; its UK conservation status is amber and it is protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981).

Otters (also protected by the Act and more recent legislation) can be seen on Siddick Ponds. Otters almost disappeared from England during the 1970s due to pollution of the rivers and loss of habitat. While they are still rare, they are now more widespread and the population is slowly increasing.



Bittern

2.2.2 Harrington Reservoir Local Nature Reserve

Harrington Reservoir was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 1993. The reserve includes the reservoir, meadows, and the narrow wooded valley of Ellerbeck; and there is a more formal park area next to the Reserve.

As the management plan² describes, “the rich and varied habits are linked together by a series of paths, steps and bridges with seating areas and viewpoints located at strategic resting points throughout the reserve”. The herb-rich grasslands are described as “the only quality examples of their type” in the area and as “important both in the local and regional context”.

The valley bottom “supports a continuous stretch of high quality, species-rich neutral grassland including common spotted orchid, devil’s-bit scabious, sawort, water avens, betoney, knapweed and meadow vetchling, whilst the unimproved grasslands on valley slopes contain species such as common-spotted orchid, lesser butterfly orchid, wood anemone, bitter vetch and greater burnet. The woodland areas at the reserve are also ecologically important...



the site is important for breeding birds including willow, sedge and grasshopper warblers, redpoll, linnet, reed bunting, dippers, mute swans, moorhens, mallards and kingfishers. It is also an important site for dragonflies, toads and butterflies”.

The site is varied and has good access for people. The management plan described one of the biggest threats to the reserve as the rate of siltation to the reservoir. It is currently (April 2018) undergoing a substantial de-silting operation to restore its habitats alongside the installation of weirs to reduce the silt entering the pond.



Kingfisher

As is often the case with Local Nature Reserves, the value of Harrington Reservoir lies with its use and appreciation by local people as well as its intrinsic value for wildlife. Since 2002 there has been an active ‘Friends of Harrington Nature Reserve’ group and there are currently regular work parties with local volunteers organised by the Workington Nature Partnership Officer. Likewise, there has been a ‘Friends of Siddick Ponds’ group since 2004 and a team of volunteers – often the same ones as at Harrington – carry out conservation work on the site. More details on community engagement are given in Section 3.

2.2.3 Workington Hall Parklands

Workington Hall Parklands includes the grounds of Workington Hall, Curwen Park and Mill Field. The landscape is varied, including formally designed and landscaped Georgian woodland and deer park, meadows, rough grassland and a mill stream, and it is bordered by the River Derwent.

This provides a variety of habitats that support a range of birds, butterflies, damselflies and dragonflies. Red squirrels and bats are regularly seen; and otters can be spotted along the river and stream, which form part of the River Derwent & Tributaries SSSI. Other than bordering onto the SSSI, there are no nature conservation designations on the site.

² Allerdale Borough Council (2011) *Harrington Reservoir LNR Five Year Management Plan 2011 – 2016*

It is, however, one of the largest green spaces in Workington, it is a Grade II registered park and garden and its origins are strongly based in the industrial and cultural heritage of the town.

The Workington Hall Parklands Management Plan³ includes an objective to “to manage the site for the benefit of fauna, with particular emphasis on Biodiversity Action Plan priority species such as (but not limited to) Red Squirrels, Bats, Otters and Owls”.

In 2014 a ‘bioblitz’ took place to record as many species as possible in a 24 hour period. This one day increased the number of recorded species at the park from 107 to 424. The main limiting factor on some species groups is disturbance.



Mill Stream bordering Workington Hall Park

A ‘Friends of Workington Hall Parklands’ group was established following the flood in 2009 and continues to meet on a regular basis.

Workington Hall Parklands is different to the other Nature Partnership sites in that much of it is a large formal park. Allerdale Borough Council is in the process of developing a project and HLF application for the Workington Hall Parklands, managed by Groundwork NE & Cumbria. In summary, the outline suggestions⁴ include:

- Conserve Workington Hall and setting
- Explore options for the redevelopment of the Curwen Centre and walled garden
- Improve the model railway and building
- Improve the boundaries of the park at Ramsey Brow
- Raise the profile of the historic entrances on Ramsey Brow, Cuckoo Arch and Stainburn
- Refurbish the Ramsey Brow Skate Park
- Improve the old carriageway from Ramsey Brow
- Upgrade the Workington Lodge entrance
- Upgrade Low Park sports pitches
- Biodiversity enhancement at:
 - Hall Bank Woodland and Drive
 - Horse Close Woodland
 - Hall Park Lodge and Scale Beck
 - Meadows

Groundwork will carry out further consultation and develop the proposals for a first round application to HLF in August 2018. An operational base for the Workington Nature Partnership, incorporating environmental educational facilities, is under consideration for inclusion as part of the mix of facilities proposed for the walled garden.

³ Allerdale Borough Council (2013) *Workington Hall Parklands Five Year Management Plan 2013-2018*

⁴ Groundwork NE & Cumbria (2016) *Workington Hall Parklands Feasibility Study Appendices*

2.2.4 Oldside, ex-steelworks site and Small Blue butterflies

Oldside is not an unusual site in terms of urban nature conservation. It is reclaimed ex-industrial land, part of which is now a windfarm, and which, in amenity terms, does not have wide appeal other than for its views from the coast. It is, however, important for wildlife and consists of a variety of habitats supporting a range of species. Of particular note is that it is part of one of only four key sites for Small Blue butterflies in the north of England. Small Blue butterflies are found mainly in the south of England but populations are declining in most areas. Another of the four key Cumbrian areas, also in Workington, includes an ex-steelworks site next to the new Persimmon 'Solway View' housing development.



Small Blue butterfly

Steve Doyle, of the Cumbria Branch of Butterfly Conservation, has led and worked with Workington Nature Partnership volunteers to protect and improve habitat to encourage the successful breeding of the Small Blue butterfly at these sites. The sole food plant of the butterfly larvae is kidney vetch – the caterpillars live on the flower heads and feed on developing anthers and seed. The butterflies tend to live in small colonies now in West Cumbria but Steve has advised that small fragmented colonies without viable connectivity routes will lead to decline because of inbreeding and eventual genetic weakness. Larger or 'core' colonies are necessary for them to survive and allow movement to smaller satellite sites. The smaller satellite sites are unlikely to survive on their own in the long term.

Steve has led practical works with the volunteers and has also lobbied Natural England and Allerdale Borough Council for better protection of the sites. An area where habitats had been improved on the Oldside site was damaged some years ago by work on the windfarm development. Part of the site is now allocated in the Local Plan for development as a travellers' site, which, without careful planning, could seriously damage the habitat. Butterfly Conservation understands the economic need for development, particularly of brownfield sites, but believes that, with careful planning, damage to the most valuable habitats can be avoided. Butterfly Conservation has prepared a report⁵ that provides details of the current status of the Small Blue in Cumbria and provides realistic recommendations on protecting sites to ensure that suitable mitigation methods are adopted if development goes ahead.

The Small Blue is only protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which prevents its sale. It is, however, a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan; and Butterfly Conservation lists it as a high priority in the Regional Action Plan for North West England.

2.2.5 Other Workington Sites

"Visitors? Why would anyone come to Workington?"

Comment from a fisherman enjoying Workington beach

The sites described above in this section are of particular nature conservation interest but the Workington Nature Partnership also helps to manage and conserve other sites:

⁵ Dr Sam Ellis (2017) *Status of the Small Blue Butterfly Cupido minimus on the West Cumbria Coast Butterfly Conservation Report No S07-35*

- Derwent Howe partially reclaimed slag banks with coastal open access
- Bankfield urban park
- Salterbeck reservoir
- Small areas of community woodland, such as Siddick Woods

There is a lot of potential at these sites to enhance wildlife and engage local people, but the main limiting factor is the time available from Workington Nature Partnership Officer, Raegan Blacker, and volunteers (see also section 3.4).

Regular work parties were undertaken with groups of volunteers from West House at Bankfield but their good work was regularly undone by local youths using the site for drinking, leaving litter and broken glass behind. Raegan is planning further work and community engagement at the site.

Salterbeck reservoir has recently come back under local authority ownership and Raegan is planning improvements to the site with local residents.

Derwent Howe is a large open area with good potential for wildlife and access. There is little information available about its current ecological status.

2.2.6 Green Network

Workington is blessed with a great deal of open green space, often linked along green corridors, as shown on the following map from the Allerdale Local Plan consultation. Allerdale Borough Council commissioned an Open Space Strategy and a Green Infrastructure Topic Paper to inform the preparation of the current Local Plan. The Allerdale Open Space Assessment⁶ provided detailed information about current provision and demand; and the subsequent Open Space Standards Paper set out an approach to securing quality open spaces as part of the development process.

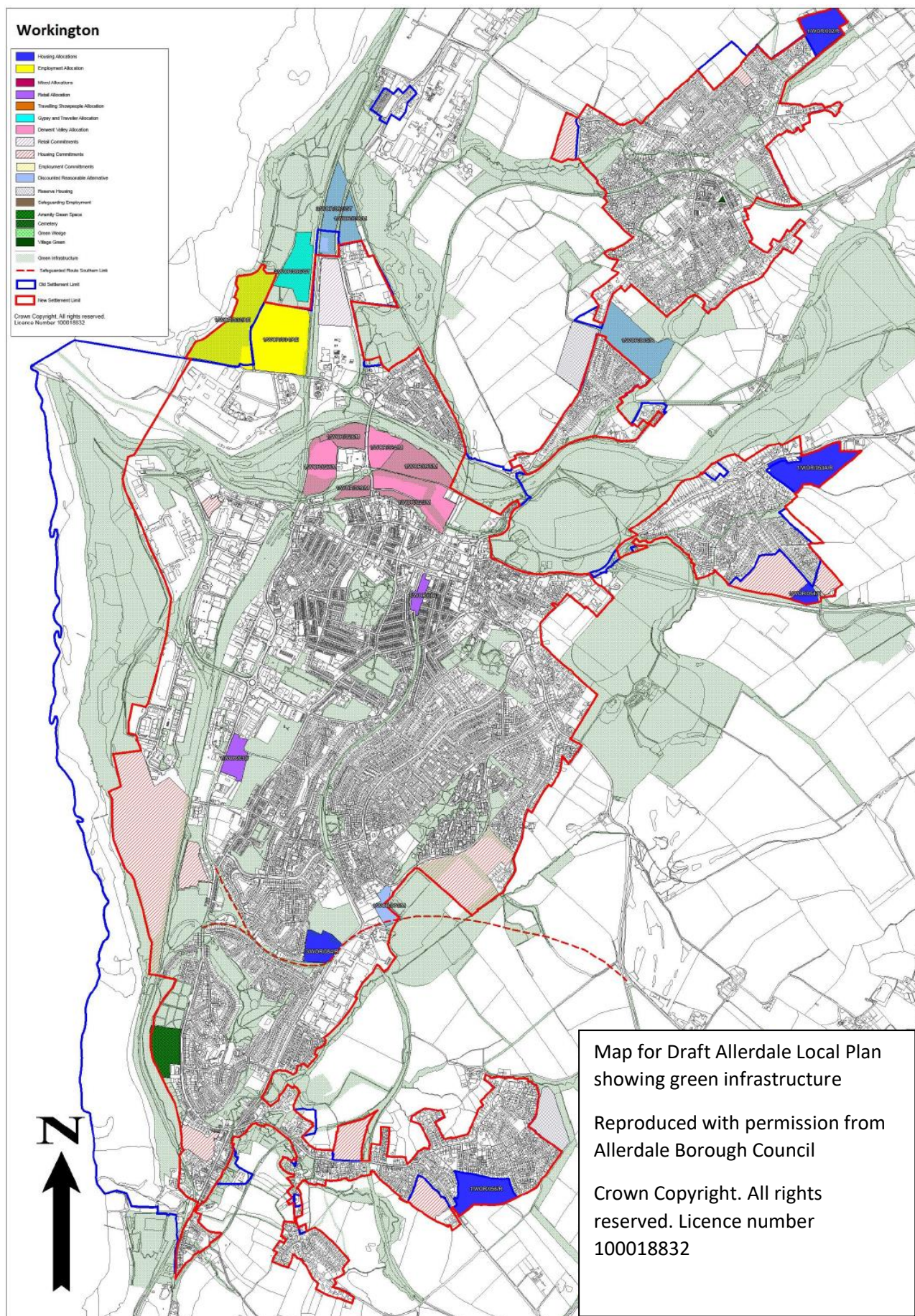
The Open Space Assessment examined the provision of a hierarchy of open spaces across the district. For Workington, it showed that there is accessible natural or semi-natural open space within fifteen minutes walking time of all residents, demonstrating that Workington has no shortage of open space.

Connectivity is a key element in the sustainability of wildlife habitats; and green routes can also encourage people to walk, run and cycle. There is great potential in Workington for linking sites to each other, to local communities and to the town centre along green corridors. The Sustrans C2C National Cycle Route (71) runs through the area, linking Siddick Ponds and Harrington Local Nature Reserves with the town centre and out into the countryside. A circular route exists, linking the Sustrans route to England's Coast Path, which could easily be improved, for example by improving the link under the railway line between Siddick Ponds and Oldside.

In addition to green space, blue space is an important factor in Workington, mentioned during the course of this project by Councillor Michael Heaslip among others. Water is a key wildlife link between some sites, providing riparian habitats, and the coast is an important feature, recognised nationally by the development of England's Coast Path by Natural England. Workington's beaches can provide a varied and interesting visitor experience with views of the sea and sky, often across to Scotland.

Blue spaces are mentioned in the Allerdale Local Plan and areas elsewhere in the country have developed programmes to improve them. As an example, there is a programme called the Black Country Blue Network in the midlands, where waterways are a key feature of the landscape. It is a partnership between the City of Wolverhampton Council, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, the Environment Agency, Canal and River Trust and Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust.

⁶ Knight, Kavanagh &Page (2014) *Allerdale Open Space Study Open Space Assessment Report*



Each partner is delivering projects and the whole programme is funded by the European Regional Development Fund. It aims to create a high quality ecological network with a diverse range of habitats, centred on the area's historically important waterways and associated green spaces. The project summary says:

“As well as helping the Black Country's plants and animals flourish, it is also building better access, encouraging healthy lifestyles and active recreation for people using the footpaths and towpaths that make up the Black Country Blue Network.”

Another important linkage mentioned in interviews with Workington Nature Partnership staff and members is the relationship between the natural and the built and cultural heritage of the area. The distribution of the green and blue network is closely related to the industrial heritage of Workington. Harrington Reservoir, for example, was created for the local ironworks; and the coast was a key factor in the development of the iron and steel industry in the area. Indeed the coast has literally been shaped by it – the slag forms part of the coastline. The influence of the Curwen family, for example, is not only evident at Workington Hall but throughout the growth and development of the town.

Built and cultural heritage is not currently within the remit of the Workington Nature Partnership, but there is great potential to tell the story of industrial and cultural heritage of the town as allied to the green and blue network.

2.3 How the sites are managed

2.3.1 Site Management and Condition

The site maintenance programme is organised by Workington Nature Partnership Officer, Raegan Blacker, including weekly management work at Siddick Ponds and Harrington Nature Reserve and work at other sites as needed, carried out with the help of volunteers. This includes strimming, cutting back vegetation, planting, fencing, litter-picking and minor works such as small wooden bridges and steps. Workington Nature Partnership is reliant on Raegan for organising and delivering practical management work.

Raegan's role sits within ABC's Community Services Department, where she is managed by Julian Smith, ABC Parks and Open Spaces Officer. Julian provides support in strategic planning, partnership working, preparation of funding bids and technical knowledge, as well as day-to-day line management. He is very involved with the management and future development of all of the key sites.

Raegan can also call on support from other ABC staff, such as Street Scene Officers, and has a good working relationship with the local management at ISS, the grounds maintenance contractor for ABC.

Larger schemes are undertaken when the budget permits – usually as a result of funding applications prepared by Raegan and Julian. These may be regular tasks, like the contracts to cut reeds at Siddick Ponds, or more significant habitat restoration projects, such as the current scheme to de-silt Harrington Reservoir, which has been long in the planning mainly due to the need for fundraising. The total cost of the project is £174,000 with significant contributions from ABC and WTC, large grants from WREN and Robin Rigg Community Fund and various other smaller grants.

Raegan also identifies smaller projects for site improvements, which are often supported by ABC funding and small grants from external funders. Over the last few years, this has included:

- Structural survey and repairs to the bird hide at Siddick Ponds (£4,845 ABC contribution)

- Bird hide exhibition and education project with Ashfield School (ABC contributed over £5,000 toward a total cost of £12,000)
- Fencing and gates at Siddick Ponds to create grazing compartments (£5,084 from ABC)
- Harrington Reservoir access improvements (ABC contributed over £25,000 toward a total cost of £45,000)
- Contribution to projects that are partially grant-funded, e.g. otter holt, sand martin nesting bank, floating bird raft, barn owl box (around £4,000 from ABC)
- Himalayan Balsam control – contractor costs (ABC contributed around £1,000 toward a total cost of £2,300)

From the site visits, it is clear that the sites are being well managed for both wildlife and access. At Siddick Ponds and Harrington Nature Reserve there was clear evidence of appropriate management that had been carefully planned and executed. This is largely due to having a dedicated member of staff for Workington Nature Partnership that allows management to be tailored to the needs of each site. Raegan has an invaluable set of skills that include ecological knowledge, practical management and people skills. She has developed the involvement of local volunteers, which is important because volunteer management is often the best way to achieve some of the management tasks as they are labour intensive.

The input of Steve Doyle from Butterfly Conservation ensures that appropriate habitat management is in place to benefit Small Blue butterflies and other species. Steve has specific knowledge and expertise and also works well with volunteers, getting the best both for and from them.

2.3.2 Management Plans

The three main sites – Siddick Ponds, Harrington Reservoir and Workington Hall Parklands – each has a five-year management plan. The Harrington and Siddick Ponds management plans are overdue for revision (2016 and 2017 respectively) and the Workington Hall Parklands plan runs to 2018 when, presumably, a new management and maintenance plan will be written as part of the preparation of the HLF funding application. The formal areas of the parklands are managed under the grounds maintenance contract; and the meadows are managed by sheep grazing under agreement with a local farmer. Raegan organises biodiversity enhancement works with volunteers as needed, most often in the woodland, and has a small tree nursery area in the woodland.

The management plans are long documents that do not lend themselves well to day-to-day use. Raegan said that she does not refer to them – they give broad principles for management that she is aware of and she knows what is needed on site without referring back to them.

2.3.3. Monitoring and Reporting

Although it was evident from the site visits that the sites are well managed, it was not clear how their condition is regularly recorded and reported to demonstrate improvements. The management plans provide previous site survey results, e.g. a habitat survey in July 2004 at Harrington, and propose further surveys at the end of the five-year management plan period. In the meantime, however, there is little information on habitats and species that is readily accessible for the sites, although information is gathered, including monthly bird records for 10-day periods over the last three years to compile a definitive species list and status summary. Other reports have also been commissioned, for example, a survey of the brackish pond at Siddick for water quality and biological investigation, undertaken by White Young Green. The Cumbria Bird Club database holds data and Siddick Ponds are still subject to a WeBS count. Small Blue butterfly counts and other

butterfly surveys are undertaken and held by the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre at Tullie House. As mentioned above, a successful Bioblitz was undertaken in Workington Hall Park in July 2014 and this is likely to be repeated. Although all of this information is gathered, at present there is not an obvious mechanism to use it to show whether and how the management of the sites is protecting or improving their biodiversity value, other than the management plan revision.

As the management plans are now due for review, there is a good opportunity to review the condition of the sites after five years and identify a number of indicators for each set to measure future, e.g. extent and condition of important habitat or number of specific species; and other improvements can be reported such as access and educational facilities. A simple set of indicators could be developed and reported on annually, along with a summary of habitat improvements and people involvement.

At present, the main reporting mechanism to Allerdale Borough Council is an annual report on KPIs, of which the relevant ones are volunteers, events (clean-ups) and the number of people involved. An annual Workington Nature Partnership report could draw together more information and help to raise the profile of the Workington Nature Partnership and its achievements.

2.4 How the sites are protected

2.4.1 Strategies and Policies

The protection of open spaces relies on a number of factors including whether they are designated sites protected by legislation, how the sites are protected by Local Plan policies and, to a significant extent, how the sites are perceived by both politicians and local people, which influences decisions on planning policy and practice and the allocation of resources for management and improvement.

The designation of Siddick Ponds as SSSI and LNR, and Harrington Reservoir as LNR, afford the sites protection under legislation. Workington Hall Parklands is protected by a number of covenants; over half of it is protected by its dedication as a Queen Elizabeth II protected field, the site is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden and the hall is a Grade I listed building, with other listed structures in the grounds.

Urban green spaces and networks are often the subject of additional strategies or plans to improve their value for people and wildlife. Such plans recognise the value of non-designated sites, they can help to direct further conservation and enhancement and encourage greater use by a wider range of people.

Workington does not have a specific green space or wildlife plan as such, but the Local Plan includes many relevant policies and a proposal that additional Supplementary Planning Guidance should be produced.

2.4.2 National Planning Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance documents provide government policies and information on how to apply them locally. Natural England, as the government's advisor for the natural environment in England also publishes strategies, policies and research which are relevant for the work of Workington Nature Partnership. More information is given in Appendix 1.

In late 2016, Natural England published a new strategy document titled 'Conservation 21: Natural England's conservation strategy for the 21st century.' This document recognises that Natural

England's current approach is not producing the desired outcomes, with wildlife declining, people 'less connected with their local environment' and the environment 'often perceived as a constraint on economic development.'⁷ Conservation 21 sets out a new approach for nature conservation based on three guiding principles:

- Creating resilient landscapes and seas
- Putting people at the heart of the environment
- Growing natural capital

This new approach also includes a challenge for Natural England 'to see how we can increase the impact and relevance of our work in and around towns, cities and along the coast, where the majority of people live, work and visit.'⁸

Consultation with Natural England's Land Management & Conservation Lead Adviser, Kate Doughty, highlighted the opportunity that this new strategy presents to champion the work of Workington Nature Partnership and develop a closer relationship between Natural England and the partnership.

Historic England is the government's advisor on the historic environment and publishes advice in two forms; Good Practice Advice notes (GPAs) and Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs). Advice notes cover a range of topics including Conservation Areas, Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessment and Managing Local Authority Heritage Assets – the latter particularly relevant for the management of Workington Hall Park.

Historic England's 'Conservation Principles'⁹ document (currently under review) provides detailed guidance on sustaining the historic environment within the framework of established government policy. Of particular note for the Partnership is the principle of understanding the significance of place:

'The significance of a place should influence decisions about its future, whether or not it has statutory designation.'¹⁰ Significance can be assessed using a number of values; evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. 'Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.'¹¹

The communal value of the sites in the care of Workington Nature Partnership is anecdotally known about but not currently well evidenced in the management plans. The management plans for Siddick Ponds, Harrington Nature Reserve and Workington Hall Parklands focus on the heritage, wildlife and nature values of the site, with only a passing mention of the sites' social values.

Policies within Allerdale's Local Plan contain reference to significance and social benefit, particularly those policies which relate to the historic environment. Relevant Local Plan policies are discussed in further detail below.

2.4.3 Allerdale Borough Council Local Plan 2014

The Allerdale Local Plan, adopted in July 2014, contains a number of policies to protect and enhance the green network as detailed in Appendix 1. The Local Plan also contains area based policies for Workington; two of which are relevant for designated nature sites and brownfield sites:

⁷ Natural England (2016) *Conservation 21* (page 3)

⁸ Natural England (2016) *Conservation 21* (page 7)

⁹ English Heritage (2008) *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*

¹⁰ English Heritage (2008) *Conservation Principles* (page 27)

¹¹ English Heritage (2008) *Conservation Principles* (page 31)

- Recognise the high environmental and amenity value of some brownfield sites in the Locality.
- Protect and enhance the special character of the River Derwent and River Derwent Corridors as Natura 2000 sites and the Siddick Pond Site of Special Scientific Interest, as well protecting and enhancing other biodiversity and geodiversity assets;

Oldside, a key brownfield site providing habitat for Small Blue butterflies is allocated in the Local Plan (part 2) for potential employment development. Sites 1/WOR/032A/E and 1/WOR/034A/E have been identified as preferred options due to their location close to the port, relationship with the town, low flood risk areas and access can be achieved directly from Port Road. The justification also states that no significant effects have been predicted for protected sites and species. Proposals for the site however, must undertake an ecological survey and incorporate measures to maximise the biodiversity of the site, particularly in relation to blue butterflies and maintain green infrastructure links with the adjoining Cumbria Wildlife site to the north.¹²

Part of Oldside is also allocated in the local plan as a Gypsy and Traveller Site (3/WOR/096/GT) with the same stipulation that measures are taken to maximise biodiversity and maintain green infrastructure links. Development proposals for the site should include an ecological assessment 'with particular reference to butterflies. Compensatory measures will need to be included in mitigation for butterfly scrapes provided on the most northerly part of the site.'¹³

Strategic policy **S24 Green Infrastructure** states that the council will 'promote the creation, enhancement, maintenance and protection of a range of green infrastructure assets that contribute to a diverse network of natural and man-made green and blue spaces, links, habitats and landscapes, which is accessible to all.' Linked to this policy are key pledges to protect and promote key natural sites, increase nature biodiversity and promote health and fitness through the provision of open spaces.

Green infrastructure strategies and policies recognise the multi-functional nature and benefits of the green network. A Green Infrastructure Topic Paper¹⁴ was commissioned to inform the preparation of Allerdale Local Plan and sets out generic opportunities for safeguarding, enhancing and extending the Green Infrastructure assets within the Workington locality. The key assets are listed, which includes the areas of land on the west coast between Workington and Maryport that support colonies of the uncommon Small Blue butterfly and highlights the opportunity to '*safeguard the important habitats for the Small Blue butterfly in and around the Workington coast*'. This detail, however, is not picked up in the Allerdale Local Plan (part 1).

The commitment in the Green Infrastructure Topic Paper to integration between green networks and development was planned to be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)¹⁵. However this has not yet been produced.

Other policies refer to the protection of green infrastructure, sports, leisure, open spaces, landscape, biodiversity as detailed in Appendix 1. An omission in the plan appears to be under Strategic Policy **S35 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity**, which states that "conditions for biodiversity will be maintained and improved and important geodiversity assets will be protected. Nationally and internationally protected sites and species will be afforded the highest level of protection but a high priority is also given to the protection of locally identified biodiversity or ecologically valuable assets". Crucially, however, these locally identified sites are not named in the Local Plan despite some being identified in the Green Infrastructure Topic Paper.

¹² Allerdale Borough Council (2017) *Allerdale Local Plan (Part 2)*

¹³ Allerdale Borough Council (2017) *Allerdale Local Plan (Part 2) page 143*

¹⁴ Allerdale Borough Council (2010) *The Green Infrastructure Topic Paper*

¹⁵ Allerdale Borough Council (2014) *Allerdale Local Plan (part 1) page 112*

2.4.4 Allerdale Borough Council Heritage Strategy October 2016

Allerdale Borough Council's Heritage Strategy was produced in October 2016, partly in response to HLF's desire to see a cohesive plan for heritage projects across the district which approach HLF for funding (for more information see Appendix 1).

The report recognises that in order to implement the strategy there needed to be an increased capacity for natural and cultural heritage management in the district. This includes increasing the capacity of the Council to manage its own heritage assets, to perform its statutory duties and to co-ordinate delivery of this strategy. In addition it includes increasing the skills and resources of organisations concerned with heritage in Allerdale and making them more resilient.

A recommendation from the heritage strategy is to set up a Heritage Forum for Allerdale to coordinate the delivery of the strategy. There are few other recommendations in the report and the action plan is very broad brush and much relies on partners to deliver the actions.

The report does suggest three methods which could be used to monitor heritage in the district which may be useful to use alongside existing monitoring carried out for Workington Nature Partnership sites:

- Expanding the heritage elements of the existing 'State of the AONB' review to cover the rest of Allerdale District
- Conducting an impacts assessment to quantify and qualify the current level of economic, social and environmental impacts of heritage in Allerdale
- Agreeing a process for continual measurement (for example repeating the impacts assessment on a five-year cycle)

2.4.5 Political Awareness

There was a strong sense when interviewing all of the people involved with Workington Nature Partnership – councillors, staff and volunteers – that there was a lack of awareness and understanding amongst others about the current and potential value of the sites. Some people felt that the environment does not appear to be high in Allerdale Borough Council's priorities and that councillors do not see it as important because it does not make money. They felt that there could be better understanding among councillors and officers about the value of a high quality green environment for tourism, businesses, health and wellbeing, education and fostering an appreciation of the natural environment. Examples were given of instances of other council officers carrying out works that have had a negative impact on biodiversity or access without consulting those involved in the Nature Partnership.

Open spaces are important for wildlife and people, but also for the image and economic development of an area and can help to encourage visitors and businesses to come to the town (see Section 3.1). It is, therefore, essential that Workington Nature Partnership raises the profile of its work and increases awareness of its success, especially in the current context of reduced local government budgets.

2.5 Conclusions and Opportunities

2.5.1 Conclusions

Workington has an extensive open space network, including some sites that are green gems where wildlife flourishes.

Workington Nature Partnership has successfully managed and improved key sites for both wildlife and people. Having a skilled and dedicated member of staff has allowed carefully planned and managed habitat improvements to take place that are appropriate to each of the sites. Allerdale Borough Council and Workington Town Council should be commended for their approach.

The Partnership has worked well and could continue to operate in its current form. However, the Partnership is currently operating at capacity and there is a threat from the increasing pressures on local authority budgets in future. There is also an opportunity and desire expressed by the Partnership to extend its role. Workington Nature Partnership's approach could be applied more widely to the green network within, and possibly beyond, Workington, and it could build on its success to engage a wider range of people, subject to securing additional resources. Opportunities to do this are described below and in Section 3.

Connectivity is a key element in the sustainability of wildlife habitats; and green routes can also encourage people to walk, run and cycle. There is great potential in Workington for linking sites to each other, to local communities and to the town centre along green corridors.

There are good opportunities to link natural, built and cultural heritage throughout the green and blue network and to engage local people in conservation and enjoyment.

National policies and guidance documents support the work of the Nature Partnership; and Natural England's new strategy reaffirms the importance of partnership working and the value of urban and coastal green spaces.

The designated sites are well protected by national and local planning policies. The Small Blue butterfly habitat at Oldside is potentially under threat from development as this is not a protected site or species; however mitigation is included within the site allocation policy. Natural England's Land Management & Conservation Lead Adviser has recommended that part of Oldside should be designated as a Local Nature Reserve; and Natural England would support Allerdale Borough Council to implement this.

The significance of the sites is recorded within the management plans but with a focus upon heritage and scientific values; there is an opportunity to highlight the value of the sites for individuals and communities.

2.5.2 Recommendations

It is important that the Workington Nature Partnership raises the profile of its work and increases awareness of its success in order to ensure continued and increased support for the protection and improvement of the sites.

The three key site management plans are unwieldy and are due for review. When revising them, shorter and more user-friendly plans should be developed that can be used regularly by staff and volunteers to direct management on the ground. As the management plans for the sites are updated it would be very beneficial to re-evaluate the significance of the sites taking into account Historic England's guidance on heritage values, in addition to nature values to ensure that the communal significance of the sites is properly assessed and articulated. This could further enhance the protection of the sites as the social value of places is taken into account in local plan policies and decision making.

More regular recording and reporting on the condition of sites would help to demonstrate the success of Workington Nature Partnership and raise awareness of its work. Some key indicator habitats or species could be identified for the sites and a brief annual report produced that can be circulated widely.

The benefits that the sites and the work of the partnership bring to people should also be recorded and shared to further demonstrate and celebrate the success of Workington Nature Partnership. There are recognised tools for evidencing the social benefits of projects which are currently used by Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Youth Alliance.

The restoration of Workington Hall Parklands provides an opportunity to establish an operational and educational base for use by Workington Nature Partnership. The links between the two projects should be strengthened to assist both the Partnership and the HLF funding application for the park. A joined up approach to developing nature and heritage projects across the district, but particularly within Workington, could help to secure funding for these projects and crucially strengthen their impact for people and places.

2.5.3 Opportunities

Workington Nature Partnership is interested in extending its scope but is currently limited by availability of staff, volunteers and resources. There are other sites within, and some beyond, Workington that would benefit from the Partnership's approach and there is good connectivity between the sites, often with provision for walking, running or cycling.

Further research to map and prioritise the green and blue sites and links would help to direct any expansion of the Nature Partnership. This could provide Supplementary Planning Guidance, adding detail to the policies and proposals in the Local Plan, or it may be a more practical approach to identifying key sites and links where communities can become more engaged with their local environment. Community engagement is explored in section 3 below.

For green routes, there are some clear examples where improvements could be made to connect sites to create a circular route linking the sites.

Blue spaces and links are an important feature of Workington and provide an opportunity to develop and enhance the network. The coast is an attractive feature and water is a link to the industrial heritage a physical feature along many green corridors.

Workington Nature Partnership is well placed to benefit from the new people centred approach set out in Natural England's Conservation 21 strategy and the Partnership could become a lead player in a co-created plan for the Workington area. Natural England's aim to focus more upon urban and coastal areas offers an opportunity for Workington Nature Partnership to be an exemplar project which others look to for inspiration. Natural England also aims to align economic development and nature conservation so that the perceived conflict between development and nature is reduced; joint working with Natural England on this approach could greatly benefit the Partnership as this conflict is evident within Allerdale Borough Council.

Built and cultural heritage is not currently within the remit of Workington Nature Partnership, but is closely linked to the green space network. If resources allow the partnership could evolve to include the wider heritage where it is associated with the green network.

Allerdale Borough Council's Heritage Strategy was an attempt at setting out a joined up approach for heritage projects across the district and some of the recommendations in that report could be developed to help conserve both nature and heritage sites. A strategic approach to funding applications for sites which currently fall under the remit of Workington Nature Partnership (and those which might benefit from the partnership's approach) would strengthen bids by the Partnership and could greatly increase the impact and legacy of projects.

3. People and Communities

3.1 Benefits of urban green space

The benefits of urban green space for both wildlife and people have been well-documented since the 1980s. Groundwork has collated some headline results from a wide range of research on benefits to the environment, health, society and economy. References that are of particular relevance to Workington Nature Partnership are shown in the box below.

Cabe Space is part of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), now merged with the Design Council, which advises the government on architecture, urban design and public space. Cabe Space produced a report¹⁶ about the value of open space in 2014, also drawing on extensive research, which drew conclusions under the following headings:

- **The economic value of public space**
The report shows that good public open space can have a positive impact on property prices; it helps to attract businesses and customers; and so increase tax revenue.
- **The impact on physical and mental health**
It highlights that access to good quality, well-maintained public open spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, to play sport or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment. It refers to the increase in obesity in Britain, especially among young people (note 20% of four-year-olds are overweight, and 8.5% of six-year-olds and 15% of 15-year-olds are obese) and the cost to the NHS.
- **The benefits for children and young people**
The report notes that play is essential for children's development and that green spaces can provide great opportunities. They can be particularly beneficial for children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).
- **Reducing crime and fear of crime**
Better management of open space can help to address fear of crime and encourage more use.
- **The social dimension of public open space**
Public space can promote neighbourliness and help to generate community cohesion.
- **Movement in and between spaces**
Good quality open space encourages cycling and walking.
- **Value from biodiversity and nature**
Green spaces can help to improve air quality; trees provide shade and cooler air; contact with nature in urban areas is highly valued by local people.

While all of the benefits outlined above are relevant for Workington, there is great potential to realise health benefits and to work with young people. This is particularly important because of the '*health and wellbeing gap*' as described in the current Cumbria Health & Wellbeing Strategy¹⁷. The measures of deprivation and health reveal that two of the most deprived areas in Allerdale are Mossbay and St Michael's wards in Workington, each containing areas that rank within the 10% most deprived areas in England¹⁸.

¹⁶ Cabe Space (2014) *The Value of Open Space*

¹⁷ Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group (2015) *The Cumbria Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019*

¹⁸ Cumbria Intelligence Observatory (2015) *Deprivation Analysis Allerdale*

Benefits of Urban Green Space

Environment

Greenspace can soak up 3.5 times more water than hard areas reducing the risk of flooding.⁸

1 hectare of trees and shrubs can absorb 1 tonne of CO₂ - equivalent to 100 family cars.⁹

Living closer to nature may foster greater appreciation of it.¹⁰

Health

Stress: simply viewing nature can create significant recovery or restoration from stress in 3-5 minutes.¹¹

Walking produces endorphins which can fight depression.¹²

Unlike antidepressant drugs that cost £750 million a year, green exercise is free and does not carry the potential for negative side effects.¹³

Blood pressure decreases in a more natural environment.¹⁴

37% of coronary related deaths are due to lack of exercise.¹⁵

A daily walk in the park reduces risk of heart attack by 50%.¹⁶

Less active lifestyles cost NHS £8.2 billion a year.¹⁷

People on exercise programmes in outdoor green environments are more likely to continue than gym or leisure centre.¹⁸

People in high greenery areas are 3.3 times as likely to take frequent physical activity.¹⁹

Society and Community

"91% of people believe that open spaces improve their quality of life".²⁰

Parks and green spaces are used least by: over 65s, people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic people and 12-19 year olds.²¹

46% said they would use local green space more if it had better facilities.²²

The higher the quality of green space the more likely it'll be used.²³

The likelihood of children visiting any green space at all has halved in a generation.²⁴

The area around children's homes which they know and use has fallen by 90% in 20 years.²⁵

Children with ADHD can concentrate on schoolwork and similar tasks better than usual after taking part in activities in green settings, such as walking through or playing in a park.²⁶

Economy

Green space can increase property values by 6% to 35%.²⁷

Living near a well maintained park increases the value of the average home by 6%. Living near derelict or neglected land can decrease the value of the average home by 15%.²⁸

For references, see Appendix 2

3.2 Health & Wellbeing

The Cumbria Health & Wellbeing Strategy identifies poor performing areas and inequalities across populations, including:

- Life expectancy is lower in Cumbria than the English average.
- The gap in life expectancy levels between the most and least deprived areas in Cumbria is 9.5 years for men and 7.3 years for women and it is not decreasing.
- 25.1% of reception children in Cumbria are overweight compared to 22.5% nationally.
- Only of 4.6% adults with learning disabilities in Cumbria are in employment compared to 6% in England.
- Attendances at A&E for a psychiatric disorder are 45% higher in Cumbria compared to England.
- Cumbria has a significantly higher rate of suicide than England.
- Excess death in those under 75 with serious mental illness is almost 30% higher than the English average.
- Almost half of people who use social care services report that they did not have as much social contact as they would like – for carers this increases to almost 60%.

In March 2018, Cumbria County Council approved a Healthy Weight Declaration, as part of efforts to support council staff and wider Cumbrian communities to make healthy lifestyle choices. It intends to secure commitment to the declaration from all six district councils which, when agreed, will mean that Cumbria will become the first two-tier area to introduce a joint Declaration between county and district level councils.

Some of the Cumbria facts included in press coverage about the declaration were:

- 1 in 3 children in year 6 have excess weight and obesity (35.5%)
- More than 1 in 4 children starting reception class in Cumbria have excess weight and obesity (28.2%)
- 2 in 3 adults age 16+ are overweight (66.9%)

“The partnership between local councils provides a way of engaging service areas like planning, children’s services, environmental health, public health, community services and more to highlight each other’s role in tackling obesity.”

*Colin Cox,
Cumbria County Council’s Director of Public Health, on signing the Healthy Weight Declaration*

As part of this evaluation, an informal interview took place with Helen Sant, Policy Manager (Health Improvement and Inequalities) with Allerdale Borough Council.

Helen feels that Workington Nature Partnership has good potential to help address social isolation, mental well-being and community cohesion. She said that Workington has a lot of open space, but local people do not engage with their local sites and some do not know about them. She believes that connectivity is important – how people get from their house to a site or from one site to another.

She referred to the Health & Well Being Forum, whose main concerns for Workington are ageing well and healthy weight in children and adults. The Cumbria Health & Wellbeing Strategy predicts that by 2037 the proportion of residents aged 65+ is projected to increase to 32.9% across Cumbria; this is the third greatest projected proportion of all counties in England.

In view of this, Helen’s suggestions on how to future-proof open spaces were to consider footpaths and seating and possibly lighting. For example, a seat could also be part of an outdoor gym and signposting is a way of being dementia-friendly. She also mentioned the ‘five steps to well-being’, a

technique being used to encourage mental wellbeing that could be incorporated into a community engagement plan for Workington Nature Partnership:

- Connect – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. This can happen while walking or volunteering on wildlife sites.
- Be active – you don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Workington's green corridors are ideal for this.
- Keep learning – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. This could be volunteer training or simply a guided wildlife walk
- Give to others – even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Volunteering on local sites can improve mental wellbeing and build new social networks.
- Be mindful – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Watching for wildlife can help to develop this skill.

In the rest of this section we will look in more detail at how people currently engage with Workington wildlife sites and green corridors and explore options for expanding that involvement.

3.3 Volunteers

3.3.1 Benefits of Volunteering

There is a range benefits that accrue from volunteering including:

- value for money for the councils
- good management of the nature conservation sites
- benefits for the volunteers, including skills and health and wellbeing

Given the nature of the sites, their management requirements and the pressure on local authority resources, volunteer engagement is both valuable and essential in achieving the management aims.

3.3.2 Current Situation

This section deals with volunteers who regularly work on the sites. There are also three Friends Groups who are volunteers who meet to help inform the management of their local sites and to raise funds – more information on those is given in Section 4.

Since Raegan was appointed as Workington Nature Partnership Officer in 2014, the number of volunteers and their contribution has increased significantly:

	2015	2016	2017
Number of volunteers	78	92	140
Number of sessions	136	118	149
Volunteer hours	2,322	1,961	3,168
Value @ £50 per day	£15,480	£13,073	£21,120

Figures provided for 2018 showed a busy start to the year. Between 4th January and 23rd April, Raegan worked with 83 volunteers contributing around 800 hours in total. Alongside weekly work parties at Harrington Nature Reserve (Tuesdays) and Siddick Pond (Thursdays), Raegan has also organised monthly beach cleans at Harrington, Oldside and Workington shores. These beach

cleans have attracted impressive attendances, such as in April 2018 when 28 volunteers braved 40mph winds and persistent rain. They have also attracted a great deal of media interest, capitalising on the issue of single use plastics being so high on the political and environmental agenda.

Beach cleans attracted existing and new volunteers, such as in February when 15 volunteers took part, ten of whom were new to the project.



Volunteers at the beach clean in February 2018

Raegan continues to work with and create opportunities for organisations such as Workington Rotary Club, Salterbeck Residents Association, Lakes College, National Citizen Service, Youth Offending Service, Cumbria Youth Alliance, local schools and Friends of groups.

She explained the dip in the volunteer sessions in 2016 as other demands on her time – training as a Forest Schools practitioner, leading education sessions and more office based/planning work. For most weeks, Raegan organises and leads two volunteer sessions, often lasting most of the day. This is a significant time commitment.

There has been a shift in the type and enrolment of volunteers. Previously, most volunteers had been referred to the project by schemes. While this still happens, there has been a move from the project providing a service to these groups, to a more local relationship with regular volunteers with an interest in wildlife and local sites. This has allowed better management of the sites.

There is a group of six to ten regular volunteers who regularly work on the key sites, including the Siddick Ponds, Harrington Reservoir and the Small Blue butterfly habitats at Oldside and the ex-steelworks site. Most of them work on all of the sites, with a very few working only at their local site.

This seems to be a suitable number of volunteers for the routine maintenance required, but more are needed for some of the bigger tasks. For example, a routine volunteer work party was observed at Harrington Reservoir Nature Reserve where the work required seemed to match the numbers and skills of the volunteers. Conversely, for some butterfly habitat conservation works, it was reported that a larger group of volunteers is needed at certain times of year.

When Raegan is planning a large or onerous task, such as pulling Himalayan balsam, she draws on larger groups of volunteers. For example, she engaged Lakes College students in a litter pick at Workington Hall Park in March 2018, where they collected 16 large bags of rubbish.

The Stay West scheme, based at the Lakes College, has a project with the aim of improving the life skills of people with learning disabilities. Two people with learning difficulties have been volunteering with Raegan every Thursday since she started.

Turning Point for people with drug and alcohol problems have referred volunteers to the project and the Job Centre may also refer people.

A group from West House (people with learning disabilities) used to go regularly to work at Bankfield, but because the site was mis-used by local youths, Raegan has put a temporary stop to this.

There has not been a direct concerted effort to recruit volunteers. When asked about volunteer recruitment, Raegan commented that 'they normally they find us'. She said that people approach her when she is working on site with volunteers or when they have seen press articles about events and activities, such as in response to the announcement on Facebook for the beach clean described above. She said she also attends volunteer fayres and often picks up a couple of people that way.

At present volunteers can only come out for work parties when Raegan is there. If Raegan is off, then maintenance work does not get done, leading to paths quickly becoming overgrown in summer. As Raegan's time is limited and she is the only staff member, enabling volunteers to work on their own initiative would be helpful.

Workington Nature Partnership appears to be the only project hosted by Allerdale Borough Council that engages regularly with volunteers. They have developed appropriate procedures, such as Risk Assessments that are always carried out and tailored to the work done, and they receive advice and support from the Council's Health and Safety adviser. Parks and Open Spaces Officer, Julian Smith, commented that he is confident that they have what they need in place but agreed that more volunteer policy work could be done.

3.3.3 Volunteer Survey

As part of this evaluation, informal interviews were undertaken with the regular volunteer group at Harrington Reservoir Local Nature Reserve on 9 January 2018. Four volunteers and Raegan were present. All four were men and of a similar age, three were retired. There are three other regular younger volunteers who were not present on the day – two men and a woman.

The four volunteers were working on the site, picking litter and pruning. They worked well as a team and were friendly with each other and with the interviewer.

The following key points emerged from the survey:

- There is a small band of dedicated volunteers who meet usually twice a week
- Volunteers found it easy to join up and felt welcome
- They like the flexibility and prefer not having to commit to a set number of days
- They appreciate wildlife and like volunteering locally
- They feel adequately trained and confident in the tasks that they do
- They appreciate Raegan's input and co-ordination and feel that the Nature Partnership Officer should continue to lead the work parties
- They enjoy volunteering and gain benefits including social, health and well-being

Without divulging personal details, volunteering has had a particularly significant impact on at least two of the volunteers. For one, it has increased his self-confidence and reduced his isolation; for another it has given his life meaning and helped him to manage mental illness.

More details from the volunteer interviews are given in Appendix 3.

3.4 Education and young people

3.4.1 Current Situation

At present, Raegan organises regular educational visits to Harrington and Siddick Ponds that are funded by the Countryside Stewardship agreements for each of the sites for up to 25 visits per year. She plans these with schools that she regularly works with; and occasionally schools contact her to ask for a visit.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is immediately opposite (across the road from) the Harrington Reserve and Beckstone is within walking distance. Other schools that visit Siddick Ponds are Ashfield, Westfield and Victoria. They each usually only do one or two sessions per year.

Schools generally want to look at habitats and at Harrington they do pond-dipping. They are usually a one-off session but can be four sessions in a week.

A limiting factor for educational visits is the lack of indoor space for classroom work and when the weather is poor. This has been resolved at Siddick Ponds by the bird-hide, though most schools would require transport to the hide, which is another limiting factor. Ashfield School was involved in the bird hide project; and the interpretation includes some of their work. It raised awareness with children and parents – five or six children took their parents to see it afterwards.

Raegan is a Forest Schools Practitioner (Level 3) and this is becoming more popular. She is keen to increase education and schools involvement and has suggested an after-school club, but her time is limited.

The National Citizen Service managed by Inspira is a 4 week programme for year 11 in the summer, involving a 30 hour social action project. It is good for larger tasks, such as Himalayan balsam pulling parties. This year, Inspira will be doing a Monday morning meeting for six weeks in the summer, which Raegan will attend to talk about opportunities and attract volunteers through the project.

As part of this evaluation local primary schools were contacted and asked about their current use of the sites and opportunities for future involvement with Workington Nature Partnership.

Steve Breeze, a teacher at Victoria Junior School (Victoria Road, Workington) explained how the school used Harrington Nature Reserve for year 4 to look at mini beasts and lifecycles. They usually travel to Harrington by bus and Steve was interested in exploring whether they could walk to Siddick Ponds for a site visit. He was not aware of the bird hide at Siddick and felt that they could benefit from this, but the lack of toilets would still prevent a longer site visit. The school would be interested in using the sites for other curriculum areas, as they currently only carry out site visits in relation to science but they could link site visits to geography and local history.

If Workington Nature Partnership were able to develop resources linked to the sites and the national curriculum this would make it much easier for schools to use the sites more – with more age groups and for a wider variety of topics. Follow up activities in the class room are essential as they can only do short site visits – if the Nature Partnership could deliver class room sessions that would be of interest.

Forest Schools would also be of interest, particularly during the school holidays and for children who do not have the opportunity to engage in other extra curricula activities. Steve also felt that there would be interest in an after school club or watch group during spring and autumn.

Key feedback from teachers was the desire to do more site visits and outdoor education but they are constrained by time and resources. Anything that the Nature Partnership can do to support with site visits, like resource packs, follow up classroom sessions and making links to the curriculum would help to increase school engagement with the sites.

Charities including West House, Mind and Turning Point have previously been involved with the Nature Partnership through practical volunteered sessions; these organisations would be interested in more practical volunteering sessions but are equally interested in visiting the sites to look at the wildlife and learn more about the species that live and visit the reserves.

A conversation with Emma Robinson from West House explored their current involvement and what they would like to do in the future. West House run Allerby Community Gardens and do their own practical volunteering sessions here which would limit the amount of time they would spend volunteering on Workington nature sites. They are also hoping to install a Green Gym at Allerby and are currently seeking funds for this. Emma felt that there would be interest in visiting the sites to view wildlife and learn more about the species which visit the sites. They often have spare time during the winter months when they cannot do too much practical work outside so some site visits in the winter months would be welcome. Emma was not aware of the bird hide at Siddick Ponds and was keen to see how they could use this to facilitate site visits. The lack of toilets on the site would determine the length of time they could spend there.

For this evaluation, Cumbria Youth Alliance (CYA) was contacted and a telephone interview undertaken with Chief Officer, Cath Clarke. CYA used to be involved with the sites as part of John Muir Award but the funding for that expired. There appears to be a good opportunity for CYA and South Workington Youth Partnership to partner with Workington Nature Partnership on a joint bid to run a project, such as John Muir Award or apprenticeships.

CYA work with NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in West Cumbria and explained that there is a need for structured volunteering opportunities for young people – particularly 16-18 year olds. CYA are currently working with 90 NEETs who would benefit from work experience, skills and training which would improve their employment prospects and wider social skills. Apprenticeships and skills training which could lead to a career in conservation would be well received as there are few opportunities available in the area and people who cannot travel are not able to access what is on offer in the National Park or further north on the Solway for instance.

CYA also work with young people in schools to avoid them becoming NEETs and there may be opportunities for secondary school children to become engaged with the Nature Partnership, possibly through a specific project, structured volunteering, work experience or mentoring. Cath said that there are young people interested in nature conservation but there are few opportunities for them to get involved in their local area.

Skills training and practical courses could also form a key part of a wider bid, possibly along the lines of a HLF Landscape Partnership programme, where partners work together to realise a range of outcomes for heritage, landscape and people.

Further opportunities include partnership projects with youth clubs on joint projects such as habitat restoration, renewable energy and recycling. There is funding available for projects which encourage young people to volunteer; and a partnership approach with a youth organisation would be a great way to engage young people in the work of the partnership and increase participation and learning.

From speaking to schools, youth organisations and other groups there is a desire for more engagement and involvement with the Nature Partnership. The extent to which schools can engage is limited by time and resources and so would need more input from the partnership for this to increase substantially. It is acknowledged that this is not possible without the Partnership increasing its own resources. Feedback from CYA shows that there is an opportunity for the partnership to provide some structured volunteering, work experience and practical training that is not available in the local area. There is some interest in further practical volunteering, but for these sessions to benefit young people or those in work, the volunteering offer will need to be extended and weekend sessions provided.

Grant funding to enable specific youth skills and training projects is currently available and, by working in partnership with youth organisations, the likelihood of gaining funding should be increased and project management and delivery can be shared.

3.5 Partnerships

There are three specific opportunities to work with other partners with an environmental interest on current or planned projects, as described below. There may be others.

3.5.1 Cumbria Wildlife Trust and the Pollinators Project

Cumbria Wildlife Trust (CWT) is planning a project with funding from HLF and others that will have an impact on the Partnership and, in particular, on the role and operation of its volunteers. The aim of the project is to engage local people in improving habitats for bees, butterflies and other pollinators on specific sites and wildlife corridors.

Discussions and site visits took place between the Partnership and CWT during the preparation of the Round One HLF application, resulting in the inclusion of the following eleven sites in Workington:

- Harrington Harbour
- Harrington Reservoir
- Shore Road
- Moorclose Green
- Bankfield Gardens
- Banklands Cemetery
- Hall Park
- South Harbour and slag banks
- Siddick Ponds
- Oldside
- Brow Top

Allerdale Borough Council has, in principle, committed funding toward each of these sites as part of the project, totalling £39,000 and attracting £165,000 in match funding.

As part of this evaluation, discussions were held with Graham Jackson-Pitt of CWT and Fiona Southern, who was commissioned to prepare the HLF funding application.

Graham explained that CWT does not have any reserves on the west coast and/or staff working in the locality. The Pollinators Project will mean that there is a staff resource to work in the area.

The Pollinators Project starts its development phase in April 2018, possibly to the end of the year, then delivery will be over three years from April 2019. Highways England is providing funding for capital works. The main activity funded by HLF is people engagement. It will work alongside Raegan to get volunteers involved. There will be a Community Engagement Officer employed during the development stage, who will prioritise sites and trial some activities.

Graham highlighted the importance of the legacy of the Pollinators Project. It will raise awareness, encourage wildlife gardening, support the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure and develop a ready group of volunteers working on different sites. The project will require a band of volunteers and he sees this engaging the existing Workington Nature Partnership volunteers and recruiting new ones. He saw the Partnership as a mechanism to keep the volunteers going after the end of Pollinators Project.

Fiona Southern added that Workington Nature Partnership and Allerdale Borough Council are key partners in the Pollinators Project. She believes there is great potential for partnership working and hopes that the development officer appointed will work very closely with Partnership.

As well as volunteers working on sites, the project also includes the Biodiversity Data Centre, with training and recording sessions.

Neil Harnott represented Cumbria Wildlife Trust at the Workington Nature Partnership workshop in April 2018 that was organised as part of this evaluation. He gave an update on the Pollinators Project and contributed to the discussion on future plans and partnership working.

3.5.2 Sustrans and the Tracks of the Ironmasters project

Sustrans owns and manages the section of the C2C cycleway which connects Lowca with Seaton and Siddick. Sustrans was awarded HLF funding in 2016 for a three-year project to enhance the industrial, natural and social heritage of this (and another section) of the cycle route, known as the 'Track of the Ironmasters' due to its connection with the former iron and coal mining in the area. The project is to repair historic industrial features, improve wildlife habitats along the routes and record people's memories of the area. The project engages apprentices and volunteers in practical management works and events, such as leading guided walks. There was a history of volunteer involvement before the project, which has been extended, and it will continue after the project ends.

As part of this evaluation, a discussion took place with Nikki Wingfield at Sustrans, who felt that there are opportunities for them to work with the Nature Partnership to develop volunteering in the area. Nikki also attended the Workington Nature Partnership workshop in April 2018.

3.5.3 Solway Coast AONB

There is a long-standing Solway Coast Community Volunteer Group that has operated for many years, carrying out such tasks as annual clearance of gorse and scrub from historic sites and Mawbray and Wolsty Banks SSSI. The AONB has recently been re-organised and consideration was given on how to achieve the best results from and for their staff and volunteers.

As part of this evaluation, a brief discussion was held with Chris Spencer at the Solway Coast AONB, who said that their volunteer policy has been revised. They are removing the annual clearance of gorse at Mawbray Banks from volunteer tasks and it will be undertaken by contractors. They are looking instead at meaningful engagement of volunteers and a wider recruitment from areas outside the AONB, focusing on young people. There could be opportunities to develop this alongside plans for Workington Nature Partnership.

3.6 Communities

3.6.1 Community Use

The three main sites are different in nature and are used differently by people. For example, Harrington Reservoir LNR is very much a local resource used by local people for short walks, dog walks, by parents and grandparents with children feeding the ducks, and others cutting through from school to home.

Siddick Ponds LNR is most often used as a through-route by walkers, runners and cyclists. A regular 'Park Run' goes by every week. Birdwatchers are regular users of the site; they spend more time there than people passing through, studying the wildlife.

Workington Hall Parklands itself contains a variety of landscapes and recreational opportunities and so is attractive to a variety of users.

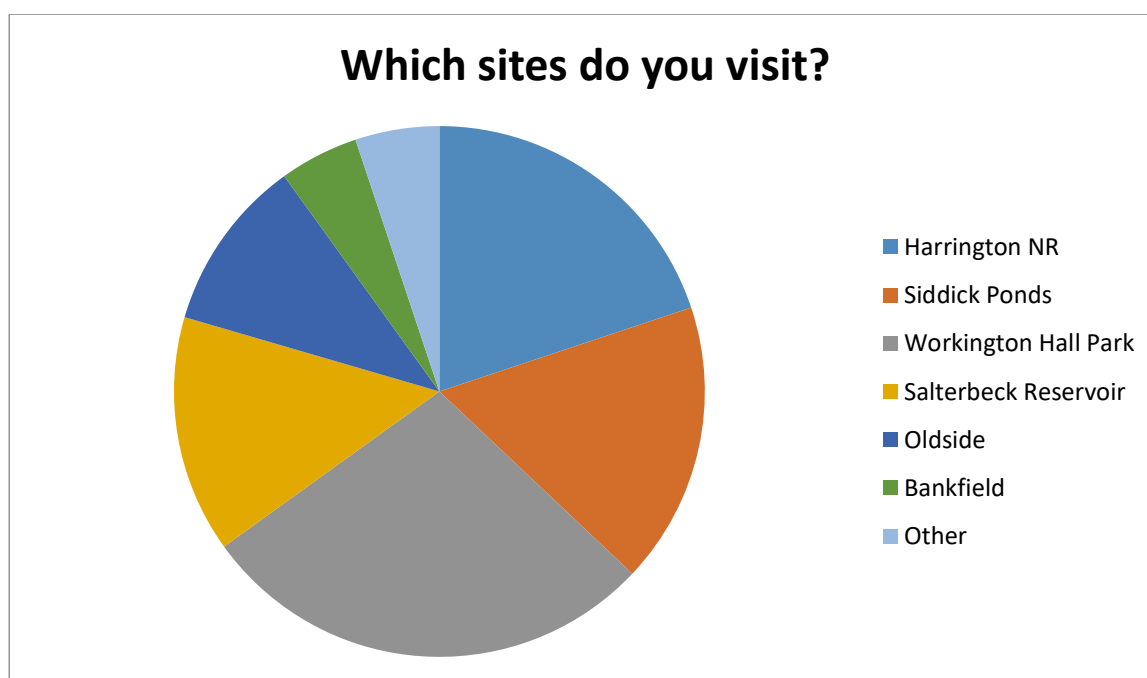
Some users of the different sites can be problematical, such as the trail bikes at Oldside and the casual drinkers and litterers at Bankfield.

3.6.2 Online Survey

An online survey was used to gather feedback from both users and non-users of the sites. The survey opened on the 22nd of February and closed on the 29th of March. It was promoted by the Partnership through websites and Facebook and via contacts. There were 120 responses which are summarised below. The full results of the survey are available.

Of the 120 respondents, 81 (67.5%) had heard of Workington Nature Partnership.

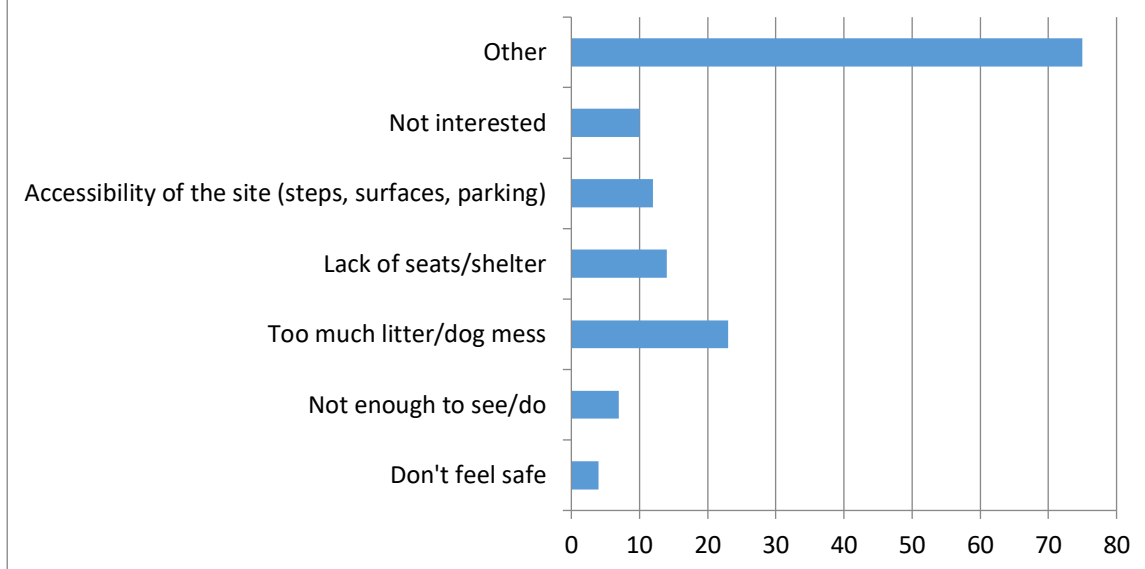
Question 2 asked which sites they visited; Workington Hall Park was visited by 93 of the 120 respondents (77.5%) making this the most visited site. Harrington Nature reserve was visited by 66 people (55%) and Siddick Ponds 57 people (47.5%). Oldside and Bankfield were the least visited with 29% and 13% respectively.



Respondents were then asked, for the site you visit most how often do you visit. More than once a week and around once a week were selected by 65 respondents (54%), with 34% of respondents selecting more than once a week.

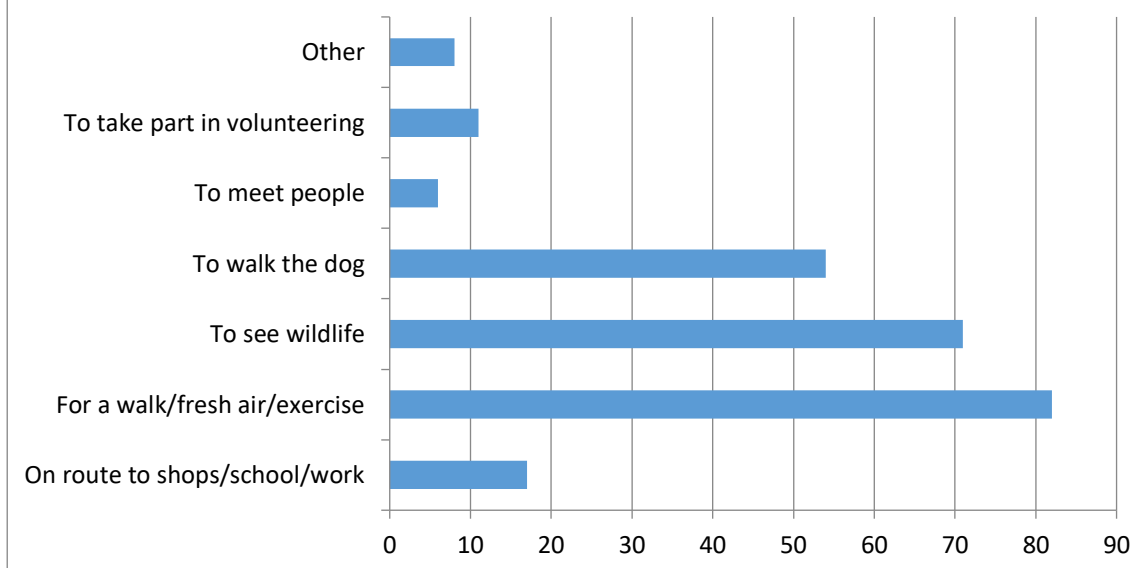
Question 4 asked respondents 'If you do not visit any of the sites, please state why not'. The responses were fairly evenly split with litter/dog mess getting the highest score after "other", which included a variety of responses.

If you do not visit, why not?



The reasons people visited the sites was explored in question 5 with a range of options to choose from – respondents were able to select as many options as applicable. The most popular reasons for visiting the sites were to see wildlife and take a walk/exercise.

Reasons for visiting



Question 6 asked people to state which site they visited most and what they liked about it. Selected comments for each site are given below. All 120 respondents answered this question and the open text gives really useful feedback on what people value about the sites.

Workington Hall Park

"It's a lung of fresh air and nature very close to the town centre. Few towns have anything like it. And it belongs to us. It's also a very historic landscape. I like the woodlands - and the fact that it's not over-gardened. It feels natural even though I know it's a plantation."

"I love the serenity, the feeling of history that surrounds the Hall. No matter how bad things seem with the weather, at home etc. as the Hall and Parklands come into view my heart is lifted to a great height, my mind clears and nothing else matters for the time I'm in the grounds."

"Workington Hall Park. It's a great area for lots of people to visit i.e. Dog walkers, joggers, cyclists, adults and young families. The path through the park enables people with prams or wheelchairs to enjoy the area plus there is a fenced off area surrounding sports pitches which are used by local schools and football teams."

"I enjoy the scenery and it brings back memories of my youth."

"I have always liked Curwen Park but for many years only went around the Hall, it is only in the past two years have I become aware of the walks down into Millfield. Very calming and varied sights."

"Plenty of space, lovely surroundings, good paths for my son on his bike and for me on days where walking is hard, loads of wildlife (if you look hard enough), great for dogs, great safe splashing about in the mill run beck, bins, the odd place for having a sit that's off the ground, parking."

"Curwen Park is well fenced, I can let the dogs off leads and not worry about them going on the roads. The wooded area is great for looking for conkers with the kids in autumn, I enjoy watching the seasons change and the way the foliage changes with the seasons. "

Siddick Ponds

"I visit Siddick Ponds on a regular basis for the wide selection of birds that can be seen there also there is good parking and ease of access and I think we should appreciate the fact that we have this area to enjoy in our county."

"Siddick Ponds total revelation always viewed from the A596 but until I became of the cycle way around the back - had not realised what a special place this is for nature."

"Siddick ponds. An unexpected and beautiful site, with great views and wildlife. A route to school, work, shops. No traffic and safe for children and dogs."

"Walk along the cycle path beside Siddick Ponds and up to Seaton or to Northside. Lovely views of the birds/wildlife, the reservoir and the sea. Good walking conditions underfoot safe to let our little dogs run around on extended leads. Big factor is handy for parking nearby also."

"We live in Allonby and shop at Dunmail Park. We learned of the Siddick Pond site from neighbours and often combine a walk there with our visits to the retail park. It is a great little walk, good path and everything visible. It seems well managed. We love to watch the regular residents and to see what arrives every winter. The variety of visitors is terrific. The bird life is great and but we have seen otters too. We don't know about some of the other sites mentioned on here - but will now find out more about them and probably visit them too."

"Siddick - I love seeing the otter and, when they are there, the deer. I come every time we visit from Australia and encourage others visiting the Lake District to visit as well."

"Siddick ponds, due to it being easily accessible, close to amenities such as toilets and shopping, and is a great place to spot wildlife. No matter the time of year or weather, there's always something to see. There's also frequent rarities and elusive species to find."

Harrington Nature Reserve

"Full of interesting greenery. Balm to the soul. My dog loves this walk, plenty to sniff, investigate, explore, listen for (birds, water, perhaps the odd mouse he thinks). The air is fresh. The trail is

pleasant and meandering. There's always something new to see on the ground, work being done, a sense of it being cared for. I appreciate also the gripper mesh on the bridges to stop slipping. The bridges are made safe for us. Siddick Ponds also is fantastic, so scenic, but the scope of it seems so much bigger and it's a photographer's dream whereas Harrington Rezza feels more intimate. "

"I visit Harrington reservoir with my own child and also with the local nursery little stars that I work for. We take the children to look at the trees and collect leaves Etc in the autumn for arts and crafts. We also go to see the ducks and any other wildlife we can see. The children enjoy having picnics and running around on the open grass."

"Me & my 4yr old daughter walk through Harrington nature reserve every day on our way to school to visit the ducks. It's a good way of getting fit and to encourage my little girl's interest in her love of nature. We also visit Salterbeck shore reservoir for the same reason. Harrington shore foot/cycle path on the shore side and below Salterbeck cemetery are some of our favourite walks at weekends but the old railway line is eroding away and it's not safe to walk along the top. I feel that there needs to be something done about that sooner rather than later as the working railway line will be at risk next. The path below cemetery is basically mud best part of way and the rest is a bit dodgy as there's potholes and bits of metal sticking up through the gravel/cement path."

"I feel privileged to be able to see the reserve from my kitchen window everyday and I only have to open the garden gate and I'm there."

"Harrington reservoir, it is close to my home and the work already carried out at this location has improved the experience."

"It is down the hill from where we live so it's always a good opportunity to get the kids interested in wildlife."

"Harrington Nature Reserve. It is oasis of beauty in a built-up residential and industrial area. I played there as a child and it is very satisfying that it is being restored to a great haven for wildlife and not used as dumping ground from the factories and fly-tippers."

"Harrington Nature reserve - I have visited since childhood and love the calm atmosphere, I can walk, contemplate and clear my mind."

"Harrington Nature Reserve. I like to see the kingfisher."

Salterbeck Reservoir

"Visit Salterbeck Reservoir and Harrington nature Reserve as they are local to where I live and it's a nice walk with the dog from the shore to the Reservoir."

"I like that Salterbeck is kept tidy and you can see the wildlife."

Oldside

"Oldside - wide open space."

"Oldside is lovely to walk the dogs."

"Oldside go there as part of my job occasionally and if able to take my break the generally have a walk about."

"Oldside has a beautiful beach and the most gorgeous sunsets...i love walking my dogs here...also sidekick ponds as I am interested in wildlife and bird watching."

Other sites

"Harrington shore, the green site is spacious enough for dog walking. Spacious enough you don't have to bump into people if you don't want to. There is still wildlife. Please keep the wild spaces!"

"Harrington shore. Lovely fresh air and we like to spot the seal. My son and I love to look for crabs in the rock pools in the summer too."

"Crosscanonby. A small site but with variety, wildlife and sheltered from the Solway winds."

"I didn't know about any of them apart from Curwen Park and wouldn't think to visit Workington for nature or wildlife."

"I don't know any of these sites because they're not advertised. Now that you have told me about them I may go and see. Please tell us what's out there."

"Hall park and beach/slag bank, open space and other walkers make these areas feel safe. I don't really know the other areas."

Question 7 asked, for the site you visit most what would improve it for you. There were comments from 103 respondents; a selection of comments are given here with the full results in Appendix 4.

"It just needs more TLC than it's had these past years. A bit of money spent on woodland management and maintenance would make a massive difference, and improving (but not too much) the paths and carriageways. It would be good to use the Hall for plays and ice-skating again. And the Walled Garden could be used for events and festivals if someone invested a bit of cash."

"There is no information what-so-ever to be found on the Hall, the history of the Hall. Signage is a must in both the near and long term."

"I would love to be able to take my Grand children and now my Great grand children up to the Hall where they could hear story tellers with their tales of ghosts, brave deeds, and an escaping Queen etc."

"It might be good to have some more seats in the lower fields plus more litter bins to encourage proper disposal of rubbish/dog muck."

"Curwen Park - maybe a map with some trail markers such as you see on forest trails given different distances for routes and what you can see - if you are not local and work in or visit Workington how do people know about what Curwen Park can offer?"

"Siddick ponds - the area of land either side of the path to the rear of Northside - just feel it is neglected and whether it could be developed more for fauna and flora - in itself a nice place to visit."

"Seating and being able to walk completely around the main pond."

"Less shopping trollies, wish people would pick up their litter and dog mess. Difficult to fix these as it's a behaviour thing and not really the resources to keep clearing up after people."

"Look at potential for nesting sea birds at Workington. Need Tern island protected from Otter at Siddick. Used to be more terns breeding along Cumbrian coast away from Millom [Hodbarrow]"

"I would move the hide, it's in the wrong place, make a pathway on the other side of the reed beds if it is doable. Put some viewing stations behind the gate where the feeders are."

"More wildflowers - continue to improve on what there is."

"The rezzer has deteriorated over the years and the view is not like it used to be, hope the improvements make a big difference completed. More waste bins are needed along the dog walk routes to encourage bagging it up."

"The Salterbeck industrial site bordering the reserve must be made to clean their site and stop litter coming into the nature reserve through the fence. The factory site is a disgrace with litter everywhere. I am sure the council could exercise a legal warning that their site is polluting the nature reserve with litter."

"Less litter and tipped waste control of people on trail bikes"

"Cleaning up the steel industry's mess. Harrington shore has been used as a dumping ground for the steel works and housing waist. Unbelievable!"

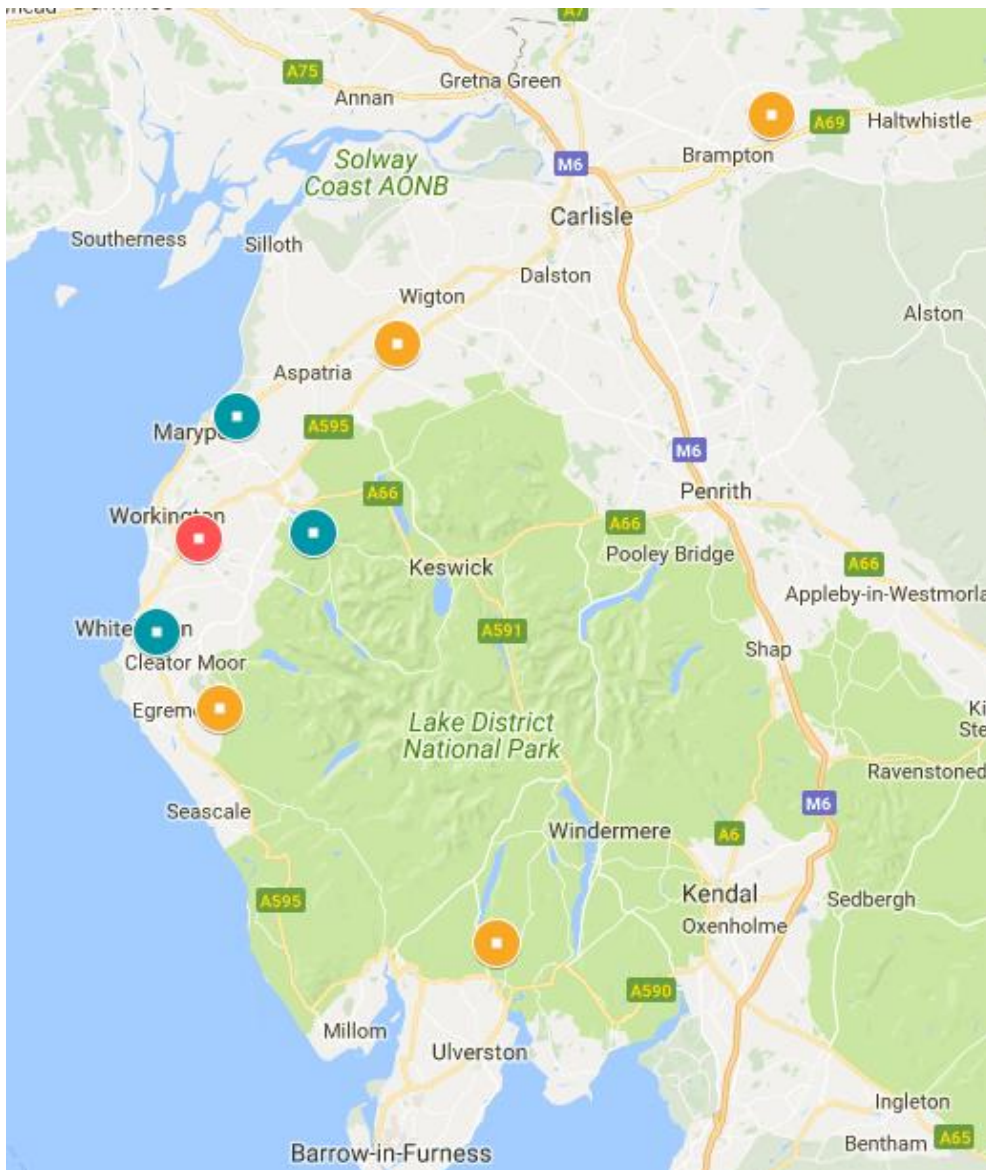
"Places to picnic"

"Activities to do"

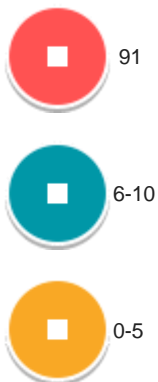
"I'm happy that it's in good hands and will enjoy watching for progress. For those lazy people who leave dog poop on the path maybe a bin at the very end of the trail where the big factory boundary fence is? Overall though the site is enjoyable."

"The road to oldside is an absolute disgrace full of potholes and there is a lot of rubbish that needs cleared up...also the scrambling that goes on there should be restricted to certain areas instead of being allowed to plow up the old golf course..would be lovely to have some seats along there too like on the coalwash at Maryport."

Question 8, asked people for their postcodes; the majority of respondents (75) were from the Workington area (CA14 postcode) with other concentrations from Maryport, Cockermouth and Whitehaven.



Map of postcodes from online survey responses



3.7 Conclusions and Opportunities

3.7.1 Conclusions

Open space and wildlife in urban areas can provide a range of benefits for people. Of particular relevance to Workington is health and wellbeing and working with young people and families to encourage an active lifestyle as part of making healthy choices.

The results of the online survey show that the sites are highly valued for their nature, wildlife and heritage, but also for the benefits they provide for people's health and wellbeing. One respondent described Harrington Nature Reserve as 'balm to the soul' and others mentioned contemplation, serenity and space to think. One respondent described how their visits to Workington Hall Park lifted their heart and cleared their mind. The health and wellbeing benefits that the sites bring to local residents and visitors are very important and currently not well recorded or evidenced.

Engaging with volunteers provides benefits, both for the councils in terms of value for money and ensuring good management of the sites, and for the volunteers themselves. Currently volunteers contribute over 420 days per year, valued at over £20,000. There is a regular group of volunteers who are local residents who work once or twice per week; and larger groups are brought in for bigger tasks.

There are opportunities for Workington Nature Partnership to engage with more people and a wider range of people, but this is currently limited by resources – particularly that there is only one officer to deliver not only volunteering but all of her other responsibilities too. There are also limits to the work required on the current sites, which are generally met through the current regime.

Under the current arrangements, Raegan has to be present for volunteer work parties twice a week or more. In order to expand volunteering, either a different system is needed whereby volunteers can manage their own work programme, or additional staff are needed, such as a volunteer co-ordinator.

If the Partnership can secure additional resources, then more staff and volunteers would allow it to expand to other sites using its tried and tested model.

It is recommended that Workington Nature Partnership develops a volunteering policy which sets out who it wants to involve and why and is clear about the processes involved.

3.7.2 Opportunities

The opportunities for expanding engagement throughout Workington include:

- recruiting more volunteers from the communities near each site;
- recruiting more volunteers from a wider area who are interested in wildlife;
- carrying out more activities – practical sessions and learning about wildlife – with groups such as West House, Mind and Turning Point;
- more involvement from groups that engage young people such as Cumbria Youth Alliance and South Workington Youth Partnership;
- providing skills training, possibly as part of setting up or contributing towards apprenticeships;
- working with others to deliver the John Muir Award;
- developing learning and outdoor play activities outside school; and
- working with partners and youth groups on joint projects such as habitat restoration, renewable energy and recycling.

There are three specific options for widening partnership working with Cumbria Wildlife Trust (on the Pollinator Project), Solway AONB (on volunteering) and Sustrans (on the cycleway network).

4. Building Resilience into the Governance of the Partnership

4.1 Current situation

4.1.1 Partnership Arrangements

Workington Nature Partnership is managed through a Memorandum of Joint Arrangements (MJA) between Allerdale Borough Council (ABC) and Workington Town Council (WTC). Signed in 2013, it details the appointment and support for a project officer for the partnership, that is hosted by Allerdale and part funded by both ABC and WTC. The details of the funding arrangement are laid out and a clause provides security for both partners should one want to leave the Partnership with 18 months' notice and funding stipulated. A copy is included at Appendix 5.

ABC owns most of the sites and has delegated responsibility for strategic management to an Executive elected member. The Chair of the Environment Committee of WTC is the other delegated member.

4.1.2 Steering Group

The steering group is made up of the two elected members as described above – Michael Heaslip (ABC) and Denise Rollo (WTC) – and officers Julian Smith, Parks and Open Spaces Officer with ABC, Chris Bagshaw, the Workington Town Clerk and Raegan Blacker, the Nature Partnership Officer.

The group meets quarterly. Observations made from attending the meetings are that they are informal, friendly and constructive. There does not appear to be a designated chair. The agenda is based on a standard format, centred around various updates on sites and activities. No notes are taken, but some actions are agreed.

There is a regular item on the agenda, 'Progress Report from Nature Partnership Officer', which is a verbal update from Raegan about her work on all of the sites over the last quarter and progress on a number of funding applications.

Some key points emerging from observing the meetings are:

- Would their time be better spent if Raegan produced and circulated a report before the meeting? If people read the report beforehand, they could raise questions on specific issues at the meeting. The reports could be used as a way of reporting to Workington Town Council Environment Committee and then be collated and summarised at the end of the year into an annual report.
- There is a strong desire among the group to raise awareness of what WNP does.
- There is an aspiration in the group to change planning policy and influence planning decisions to better protect the natural environment (noted in discussions about development affecting Ellerbeck and the need for a masterplan at Oldside).
- There seems to be a lack of time for strategic input. Julian has a wide remit and responsibilities within ABC and Raegan is busy on the ground.
- Extending the WNP work outside Workington, as at Brick Dubbs at Seaton, is possible providing that there is a contribution to fund Raegan's time. It was questioned whether this would dilute or reduce the WTC contribution. At present it is a 50:50 split and it was agreed

that it would remain this way and that any extra resources would go into Harrington or Siddick. This would be a discrete project, not an annual arrangement. However, if sufficient additional funds can be attracted in future, the money could be used for an apprentice or part-time WNP officer.

- Clarity on annual budget costs and breakdown of spend is needed.

4.1.3 Friends Groups

There is a constituted Friends Group for each of the three main sites: Harrington Reservoir, Siddick Ponds and Workington Hall Park. The groups were established before the Workington Nature Partnership was set up, when they were supported by Allerdale Borough Council and now benefit from additional time provided by the Nature Partnership Officer.

Each Friends Group meets three or four times a year, each one has a bank account and funds are raised in their name. Their members are few in number and many of them are older people who used to volunteer on site. Sometimes birdwatchers go to the Siddick Ponds Friends meetings and, more recently, some new volunteers have attended meetings at Siddick and Harrington.

Workington Nature Partnership staff reported that the Friends Groups are not robust now and suggested that they could be combined or at least meet together to learn from each other. As part of this evaluation, the authors attended meetings of each of the Friends Groups. The key points that emerged that were common to the groups and of relevance to this study were:

- Attendance varied between four and eight individuals
- Two officers representing Workington Nature Partnership also attended
- A lot of the content and updates were provided by the officers
- There are good communications between the Friends and the Nature Partnership. The relationship is positive but reliant on input from the Partnership
- Funding was a significant agenda item
- Each Friends Group is primarily concerned with its own site; interest in engaging with the wider Partnership was limited

The three Friends Groups have been successful in helping to manage the sites and, in particular, in raising funds. Often grants are available to such groups but not to local authorities.

4.1.4 Partners' views on governance

Interviews were held with the two elected members, Michael Heaslip and Denise Rollo, the results of which are summarised below:

- Both members felt the Committee worked well, with an informal approach that allowed good discussion of any issues.
- Both felt there is senior management support in their respective councils.
- ABC members have less awareness of the Partnership's work, although they receive regular briefings. Michael has achieved a budget uplift for his portfolio (with 12 areas across Allerdale and eight of those in Workington) and recognises the need to commit more resource for the Partnership to be successful.
- Workington Town Council's Environment Committee is very interested in the Partnership, keen to see the focus on Workington maintained and may be keen to invest more funds should a good case for additional investment be made.
- Both recognised the Friends Groups as overly dependent on support from ABC and in need of review to strengthen their roles.

- Both identified the opportunity of an expanded Management Group and expressed interest in other management models that could include a contracted Managing Agent for specific sites, under the governance of the Partnership.
- There was recognition that the sites and the work of the partnership are not widely recognised in the community and that more could be done to engage local people.
- Both praised Raegan and her work, but recognised the limitations of having one officer covering all the work of the Partnership.
- Concern over the effects of planning policy were expressed, with both recognising the need to embed and take up challenges on behalf of the green and blue environment of Workington
- Opportunities for apprentices, additional staff, working in partnership with others to achieve more work on the ground were welcomed
- The potential to become a Heritage and Nature Partnership was of interest.
- Michael recognises ABC's stewardship responsibility and liabilities for Workington Hall Park, contaminated land, flood reduction works and maintenance at all of the sites.
- The concept of "Liveability" is getting a higher profile in ABC policy thinking.
- Denise stated that the Environment Committee of which she is chair would take on responsibility for the sites should they be under risk, but that the joint arrangement with ABC was in both their interests.
- Workington Town Council is taking on Vulcan Park as an asset transfer from ABC and has a policy on 'Every child having access to good quality play provision'.
- Both recognise the opportunity for a green corridor and circular walk around Workington.
- Denise would like more regular communication from ABC and occasionally can feel 'out of the communication loop' and specifically has requested information on the budget for the Partnership which is managed by ABC
- Michael expressed concern that the residents are over consulted and under delivered, so wants to be very clear about the offer from the Nature Partnership in any engagement processes.
- Both felt that the Workington Nature Partnership is not a contentious political issue and that there is a mandate to do what is needed (within agreed resources) to ensure good quality open spaces for Workington.

The officers in attendance at Steering Group meetings are Julian Smith, Parks and Open Spaces Officer with ABC; Raegan Blacker the Nature Partnership Officer; and Chris Bagshaw, the Workington Town Clerk.

An interview was held with Julian Smith and Chris Bagshaw, a summary of which is below:

- Both felt the Workington Nature Partnership is working well, achieving as much as can be expected within its budget.
- Both expressed concern about the visibility of the partnership and that promoting it before the upcoming local elections may not be the wisest move.
- Chris was ambitious for the Partnership, as was Julian but with more concern about capacity due to his role covering the whole of Allerdale.
- A staffing and succession strategy was recognised to be a key need. Both were very aware of the strengths that Raegan brings to the role and the challenges they would face to if/when they need to recruit again.
- Further work with the Friends groups to build their independence was discussed, including options for drawing them together and having them represented on the management group in some form.

- Both were concerned about the feedback from funders that the Friends groups are (just) a route to funding.
- Both were interested in options for governance that improved local and agency involvement but not change for change's sake.
- Chris was clear that the Town Council's support for the Partnership is firm and could include some additional resources for specific works.
- Julian reflected that while there is very little core funding for management of the sites, with this mostly coming from a Countryside Stewardship Agreement and fundraising for projects, that Allerdale contribute in other ways through routine management, e.g. cutting the hay meadows, through the contract with ISS and in a limited way through his strategic role, as well as through their contributions detailed in the MJA.
- Strategically both saw the opportunities for a green corridor route around Workington and were aware of requests from surrounding Parishes for a Partnership approach.

4.2 Options

From the interviews and observations of the partnership work it is clear that much is being achieved with limited resources under the current MJA arrangements. In Section 5 there are some case studies to show how other similar projects are managed and delivered. The significant difference in many of the projects researched for this study is the inclusion of a wider range of agencies and significantly a major or managing third sector partner. This observation leads to the following interconnected proposals and options:

1. The sites could be asset transferred to Workington Town Council or another party.
 Pros: This would release the MJA partners their responsibilities and potentially create wider funding opportunities for the managing agent.
 Cons: ABC (and possibly Workington Town Council) would be released from management obligations and in these challenging times may decrease or cut funding.
2. An independent group with a management agreement delegated from MJA partners could be formed. Potentially a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, trading as a social enterprise to manage the sites, and the educational programmes.
 Pros: This could create a more extensive range of funding partners
 Cons: This would increase management costs and divorce the MJA partners from hands on involvement.
3. The current MJA group could be expanded with additional partners and potential a third sector lead (CWT, groundwork, ACT)
 Pros: This could build capacity in the Partnership and offer routes to additional funds
 Cons: The MJA would need to be amended
4. The Friends groups could be approached to send representatives to the MJA. This could either be one from each group or a representative of all three.
 Pros: Inclusion would make more real the role of the Friends Groups, thereby leading to increased funding opportunities
 Cons: The Groups are far from ready for this at present and the Partnership has little capacity to support them in this
5. Set up an advisory body to the Partnership meeting twice per year with a full range of partners – Health and Well Being, Children's Services, Police, environment bodies, community representatives etc.

- Pros: This would create wider engagement in the Partnership and offer a route to develop capacity and additional partners
- Cons: This would take additional resource

4.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.3.1 Conclusions

Workington Nature Partnership is working well. The steering group meetings are informal and constructive. ABC and WTC are committed to supporting the Partnership.

The Partnership is working to capacity at present and is very reliant on its one member of staff. A staffing and succession strategy is needed to maintain its operation should the current Partnership Officer leave. Additional staff resources are needed if the Partnership wants to expand its work.

The role of the Friends Groups could be strengthened; they are reliant on ABC at present.

The sites and the work of the Partnership are not widely known or valued by local people or politicians.

The Partnership would like to see stronger support for the green and blue network from planning policy.

There is good potential for a circular green corridor route linking key sites and encouraging cycling and walking.

4.3.2 Recommendations

Suggested improvements to improve the efficiency of the Workington Nature Partnership are:

- The budget and spend of the Partnership is clearly reported
- The Partnership Officer circulates a short report on progress before the meeting
- Action points are noted at the meeting and reviewed at the next one

The governance options were discussed with the Partnership Steering Group at its meeting on 9th April 2018 and further comments were invited and made by members of the group. The preferred option is to maintain its current management arrangements and to develop a wider advisory group to include other sectors and groups. This development would also allow them to explore the involvement of a significant third sector partner and the development of the capacity of the Friends groups in the future.

The following recommendations are made for the future governance of the Partnership:

- Current management arrangements between Allerdale Borough Council and Workington Town Council are effective and should continue.
- Develop an advisory group with wider representation and interests, including Health and Well-being, Children's Services, Police, environment and community. The development of the group could be the subject of a funding application if needed and it could be the catalyst for a wider programme and partnership funding application, along the lines of a lottery-funded Landscape Partnership or Awards for All bid.
- Develop the preferred option over time, starting with the friends groups and environmental and engagement partners.
- There appears to be a clear benefit in Allerdale maintaining ownership of the sites.

How Workington Nature Partnership's governance needs to evolve relies, to a large extent, on how it develops its work programme in light of the above findings and vice versa. Some case studies are provided below that are relevant for the development of future work of the partnership. It is worth noting that all of the approaches were developed over a number of years with the input of a number of partners, usually with one strong lead.

5. Case Studies

There are many similar projects that can help to inform the future direction of Workington Nature Partnership. Three relevant examples are shown here. The first is very similar to the Workington situation and shows how it might develop more community participation; the second shows how it might focus on a particular aspect – outdoor learning and play; and the third shows how it could draw in built and cultural heritage to take a wider approach.

5.1 Cumbernauld Living Landscape – Creating Natural Connections

Cumbernauld Living Landscape is a partnership led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council, Forestry Commission Scotland and The Conservation Volunteers. It has delivered a number of projects since 2013, including:

- Wild Ways Well, which uses the ‘five steps to wellbeing’ principles (mentioned in Section 3.2 above)
- Green routes to develop and promote safe and accessible cycling and walking routes
- Engaging communities working with schools and communities to improve three important wildlife sites

It is now developing a four-year initiative, called Creating Natural Connections, to make the town’s woods, parks and open spaces better for wildlife and people, with funding from HLF. Its aims are to:

- Create a community network that connects more people to nature and gives a wider range of people the capacity to benefit from and improve Cumbernauld’s greenspaces
- Improving the quality of Cumbernauld’s greenspaces for people and wildlife

The project builds on previous experience and piloting community engagement models, which have been evaluated. It has received development funding from HLF. The partnership wants to

“nurture ideas and strategies to improve habitat and access connections within and between greenspaces whilst working with local young people, hard-to-reach groups and community groups to build a sustainable network of people who care about – and have the skills to care for – the town’s natural heritage in years to come”.

They have commissioned consultants to carry out audience development and interpretation works including:

Audience Analysis and Review

- Help to define the current and new audiences and target groups
- Improve our understanding of the interests and attitudes of people who live and work in the area toward the natural environment and local greenspaces
- Improve understanding of motivations and barriers to community participation that relate to different social groups
- Generate a baseline of perceptions of the local natural heritage
- Inform strategies/plans to engage and communicate with audiences
- Work with staff to understand the strengths and weaknesses of previous communications and interpretation

Communications Strategy

- Identify key messages, themes and stories which reflect the special features of the local natural heritage
- Recommend how to engage with the audiences identified
- Develop an outline communications strategy

Interpretation Strategy

- Audit and review existing interpretation and its quality and effectiveness
- Identify opportunities for new interpretation and ways of linking interpretation around the landscape

More information can be found on the website:

<https://cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/project/creating-natural-connections/>

There are good comparisons between the Cumbernauld Living Landscape and Workington Nature Partnership. Ian Mackenzie, the Living Landscape Project Officer at Scottish Wildlife Trust, said that he is happy for the *Creating Natural Connections* project to be used as a case study and would be happy to pass on the benefits of their experience to the Workington Partnership.

5.2 Outdoor Learning and Play

‘Growing Up Wild’ was a project delivered by the Clyde and Avon Valleys Landscape Partnership (CAVLP) from 2016 to 2018. The aim was to deliver natural play taster sessions and support community champions to take forward natural play and outdoor learning in schools and community settings.

‘Growing Up Wild’ was funded by CAVLP (HLF), South Lanarkshire Leader and The William Grant Foundation and was able to build on the experience in South Lanarkshire Council of delivering outdoor learning and play. The activities ranged from formal outdoor learning, forest school training or tailored on-site support. Its objectives were to:

- Create opportunities for children to play in our local woodlands and greenspaces.
- Work with schools and community groups to establish links to/stewardship of local greenspaces.
- Grow a culture of acceptance that children need places to play in our communities.
- Encourage free-play (not adult- led play).

The vision for the project combines two interlinked concepts:

- Outdoor play is vital to our children’s healthy physical, emotional and mental development.
- Through outdoor play, children are immersed in nature and make an emotional connection to their local environment.

This led to the principle that “As the future custodians of our local and global environment, it is essential that children do not lose their connection to the natural environment”.

Growing Up Wild 2016-2018 supported schools and communities through training, mentoring and networking opportunities. Project highlights include holiday play sessions, outdoor play clubs set up, outdoor after schools clubs supported, Forest School projects supported and Forest School practitioners trained and 46 schools were engaged.

As a result of the project, the establishment of two Community Interest Companies was supported to deliver and expand local outdoor play provision

One of the Community Interest Companies was OutLET Play Resource, which was established by local people whose interest was piqued by volunteering on play projects. They now fundraise to sustain their own projects, employ staff and have developed a website and Facebook page. They

deliver outdoor play opportunities and support and mentor local groups in setting up their own outdoor play projects.

The other is Equitots, who provide equine assisted learning activities to children with additional support needs. They use horses to help children develop confidence, communication and resilience skills. They have a waiting list of 20 families but currently have the resources to work with only six. They are working with other Forest School leaders to expand their capacity.

Project staff reported that parents and teachers learned new skills and gained confidence in allowing and encouraging their children to play outdoors, and have more independence while playing. Participants indicated that they were now more likely to attend or organise regular natural play sessions with other families after attending the Growing up Wild play sessions.

They said that parents noted that their children gained more confidence in playing outside, doing new activities, interacting and problem solving with other children. Parents expressed that they were pleased to have an active, outdoor activity to do with their children.

5.3 Rusland Horizons Landscape Partnership

Rusland Horizons is a £1.7m Landscape Partnership scheme incorporating projects across four inter-connected themes:

Heritage Skills providing people with training and experience in the traditional skills used to manage the land and craft products from natural local materials. Woodlands and Wildlife

Woodlands and Wildlife is made up of eight closely linked projects of habitat improvements and species monitoring and support.

Hidden Heritage involves the local community in archaeology, archive research and oral history.

Out and About improves physical access and underpins the other three as it focuses on engaging people and getting them involved in the scheme through learning about, enhancing and enjoying the cultural and natural heritage.

Each project provides opportunities to engage people in events and activities. Volunteering and training are key features of the scheme and proposals include:

- Formal apprenticeship scheme, on the Fell Futures model led by the Lake District National Park Authority
- Long and short courses on woodland skills
- John Muir Award
- Community woodlands and woodfuel
- Wildlife surveys and monitoring
- Managing hedgerows
- Managing wildflowers
- Archaeology volunteers
- Mapped and oral history

The scheme employs a Programme Manager, an Apprentice Co-ordinator, a part-time Woodland and Wildlife Ranger, a part-time Community Engagement Ranger and an Administrator.

6. Options and Opportunities

6.1 Options

There are a number of options for the Workington Nature Partnership to extend its work, depending on the availability of additional resources. In summary these are:

Extending its Reach along the Green Network

- Working on more sites within the green and blue network
- Develop green routes to strengthen wildlife corridors and encourage walking and cycling
- Mapping the sites and opportunities to identify priorities and direct further work

Engaging More People

- Develop projects with partners to realise benefits for people, particularly health and wellbeing, young people and families
- Increase opportunities for volunteering and training

Extending the Scope

- Include built and cultural heritage in the remit of the Partnership where it relates to the green and blue network
- Work with more partners, including environmental and youth groups
- Focus on extending one aspect, such as training or outdoor education and play

These options were discussed at the workshop held on 26th April and with Workington Nature Partnership at its meeting on 3rd May 2018.

The workshop was attended by representatives of the Partnership, Friends Groups, volunteers, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Cumbria Butterfly Conservation, Natural England, Sustrans, West Cumbria Rivers Trust and University of Lancashire. The format of the workshop was, in three separate groups, to consider the opportunities to develop proposals for:

- Green and Blue network and Industrial and Cultural Heritage
- Healthy Lifestyle, Play and Learning
- Volunteering and skills

Delegates played an active and constructive part in discussions and, as a result, devised three projects, as shown on the following pages. The notes of the workshop are included at Appendix 6. The workshop demonstrated excellent potential for extending the partnership through an advisory group.

It helped greatly in formulating the recommendations given in Section 7.

6.2 Funding

At the beginning of this commission, one idea for project development was in the style of a HLF Landscape Partnership. These are schemes that combine natural and built heritage with engaging people and communities. They are usually applied to rural areas, but it was felt that Workington has the potential to be an interesting urban candidate with its foundations in the work of the Nature Partnership extended to include the industrial and cultural heritage.

Since the beginning of this commission, Cumbria Wildlife Trust has received confirmation of its first round pass for the Pollinators Project, which directly affects sites in Workington and provides opportunities for joint working, especially with community engagement and volunteering.

HLF recently announced a change in its grant funding, stating that, “There will be no new rounds of targeted programmes (i.e. Landscape Partnerships, Parks for People or Townscape Heritage) in 2018”. However, it goes on to state that they are also planning new strategic funding to support innovation and new ways of working and “expect these initiatives to include a strong focus on urban parks and landscapes, with further details to follow in the Spring”.

Once these details are known, it is recommended that Workington Nature Partnership considers the proposals for the future direction of the Partnership and the potential for HLF funding. The Cumbria Wildlife Trust Pollinators project and the proposed bid for Workington Hall Park are important factors in considering future bids. HLF has already said that it would like to see a structured or co-ordinated approach to funding applications for the area. It may be beneficial to have an informal discussion with a HLF case officer about potential bids.

6.3 Opportunities

The following three project ideas were devised at the workshop held on 26th April 2018 and represent some of the possible directions for Workington Nature Partnership.

Workington Nature Partnership – Proposal 1

Project Name	Workington Green Infrastructure Plan for people and wildlife
Summary of project	Need to map out sites and connectivity routes Identify core wildlife sites then discuss with ABC to prioritise areas to feed into planning policy.
Lead organisation	Workington Town Council
Partners	Working group with ABC (planning dept), WNP, Butterfly Conservation, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Natural England and Sustrans.
How will the project be delivered?	Could it be a green 'Neighbourhood plan'? Could it be a great way to grow/develop the partnership Need to fund a person to do it Could it be linked to the Cumbria Wildlife Trust Pollinators project?
What effect will the project have?	Needs to be a visible project Prioritise what to do next Influence planning decisions Where/how to engage people
Links to other projects/initiatives	Cumbria Wildlife Trust Pollinators Project Tracks of the Iron Masters
What will the project cost?	£5,000 Look at Health Lottery Coastal Communities

Workington Nature Partnership – Proposal 2

Project Name	Mapping and information for people to do things for themselves
Summary of project	Information – signs to encourage activity Talk to partners about what they can offer Launch and raise awareness Branded package of information Linkages of activity and areas
Lead organisation	Workington Nature Partnership
Partners	Cumbria County Council – can assist on Rights of Way Sustrans Allerdale Sports and Recreation Housing Associations
How will the project be delivered?	<p>Phase 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio of mechanisms to reach people – web, leaflet, press etc • Session with volunteers to discuss opportunities • Session with partners about their offers • Build a natural inclination to use sites for biking, running etc <p>Phase 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QR codes – signage throughout the area • Link into C2C for profile – improve start point • Maintenance regime for basic H&S
What effect will the project have?	Can go to GPs to show offer of activities on map Enabling people to access informal activities Start to build more formal offers Improve economy – make it a nice place to live, improve Health and Wellbeing
Links to other projects/initiatives	Town Council have an app Harrington Rights of Way have been done – linkage and identity of other sites – need champions
What will the project cost?	Possible addition of Winscale Parish into Workington – Wind Farm Funds 10/15 days staff time initially Funding for signs

Workington Nature Partnership – Proposal 3

Project Name	Roots into Work
Summary of project	Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship project Diploma in Environmental Conservation Levels 1-3 6 month pre-apprenticeship linked to soft skills and core skills 10 apprentices on Diploma course – additional core skills and employability skills
Lead organisation	Workington Nature Partnership and West Cumbria Rivers Trust (Rivers Trust have/are delivering the Diploma in other areas – Eden)
Partners	Cumbria Youth Alliance South Workington Youth Partnership Cumbria Wildlife Trust Schools, colleges and job centre
How will the project be delivered?	Cumbria Youth Alliance main link to targeting young people for pre-apprenticeship project – promotion through schools, colleges and job centres West Cumbria Rivers Trust manage project in partnership with WNP Work takes place on sites in Workington and surrounding areas to cover broad range of skills Workington focus for recruitment of trainees Pollinators project could help to deliver elements
What effect will the project have?	Upskilling young people Health and Wellbeing benefits Environmental benefits – better managed sites Raise profile of WNP Links to Citizenship Pride in local community
Links to other projects/initiatives	John Muir Award Duke of Edinburgh Award National Citizenship Scheme CYA Resilience Project
What will the project cost?	Apprentice wages Equipment/training Additional costs for employers (WCRT/WNP) Link to apprentice levy? Match funding through pollinators project – evidence base developed through this project NEET project which may be able to access additional funding streams

7. Recommendations

7.1 Effective Partnership

The partnership between Workington Town Council and Allerdale Borough Council works well and current management arrangements are appropriate. Its work would benefit from the engagement of a wider group of partners.

- An advisory group with members signed up to a Memorandum of Understanding would assist in expanding the work of Workington Nature Partnership and could help to secure funding. Friends and volunteers should also be part of this wider group. Advisory meetings or workshops should be held at least twice a year and could be topic-based.

Workington Nature Partnership meetings are constructive and informal. Some small improvements could improve efficiency:

- Invitations can be extended to other staff as required, such as for input on health
- The Partnership Officer should circulate a short report on progress before the meeting
- Action points should be noted at the meeting and reviewed at the next one
- The budget and spend of the Partnership should be clearly reported

The three key sites have management plans intended to direct works on the ground but they are unwieldy and are not regularly used. They are due for review.

- Shorter and more user-friendly management plans should be developed, which would help volunteers to take more control of the required management schedules.
- Some key indicator habitats or species could be identified for the sites and a brief annual report produced that can be circulated widely. More regular recording and reporting on the condition of sites would help to demonstrate the success of Workington Nature Partnership and raise awareness of its work.

7.2 Engaging People

There are opportunities to engage more people that would result in benefits for the people involved, for the sites and for the Partnership. Resources are currently a limiting factor.

- It is recommended that Workington Nature Partnership develops a volunteering policy which sets out who it wants to involve and why and is clear about the processes involved.
- The Partnership can trial some events and activities, such as fun runs, guided walks from the leisure centre or the museum, or children's activities as part of an organised summer playscheme. This would help to identify where there is good potential and could inform future funding bids.

7.3 Green Infrastructure Plan

A Green Infrastructure Plan to map and prioritise sites and routes within the green network, and links where communities can become more engaged, is needed to direct the expansion of the Nature Partnership's work. Those involved in the Workington Nature Partnership already know a

great deal about the value and potential of sites and routes in Workington. The workshop held as part of this evaluation engaged others in drawing up some proposals on a map.

- Workington Nature Partnership should set aside some time to develop the Green Infrastructure Plan, engaging external help where required. It should include community engagement proposals if possible. A small funding application may be required to complete the work and produce a document.
- The Green Infrastructure Plan can be used by Allerdale Borough Council's planning department to develop further as Supplementary Planning Guidance to provide better protection for the sites.

7.4 Current Opportunities

A circular route exists, linking the Sustrans route to England's Coast Path, which could easily be improved and signposted as a first 'green routes' project. A 'Workington Nature Trail' should be developed with signage and interpretation. Funding may be available through Allerdale Borough Council's Tourism and Culture work and/or from external grants, such as Awards for All from the Big Lottery.

- Working with other partners will help to co-ordinate actions to benefit wildlife and people and attract funding. West Cumbria Rivers Trust is looking to develop an apprenticeship scheme and it would benefit both parties to work together on the proposal.
- Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Pollinator project has now been given approval from HLF for the development phase, which will take place in 2018. It directly affects sites in Workington and provides opportunities for joint working, especially with community engagement and volunteering. Trialling activities as part of the project development could provide evidence for extending the work of Workington Nature Partnership in future. It is important that the Partnership and the Trust develop a good working relationship and the two projects work together.
- The restoration of Workington Hall Parklands provides an opportunity to establish a practical operational and educational base for use by Workington Nature Partnership. It can also provide a base for extending the approach and outreach activities of the Partnership across the town, engaging the community in the green infrastructure and wildlife and realising health and wellbeing benefits.

Appendix 1

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies and how they are expected to be applied by Local Planning Authorities; the central theme of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Within the NPPF policies for Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment are contained in section 11 (paragraphs 109-125) and policies relating to the Historic Environment are contained in section 12 (paragraphs 126-141).¹⁹

Planning Practice Guidance documents (PPG) give further information on how national policy is to be interpreted and applied locally. This includes particular guidance on matters relating to the natural environment which covers landscape, biodiversity and ecosystems, green infrastructure, brownfield land and agricultural land. A separate guidance document covers open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is also covered within a PPG document.

Natural England, as the government's advisor for the natural environment in England also publishes strategies, policies and research which are relevant for the work of Workington Nature Partnership. Natural England publishes or contributes to policy documents covering 9 topics:

- Access to the countryside
- Biodiversity and ecosystems
- Climate change adaptation
- Common agricultural policy reform
- Economic growth in rural areas
- Food and farming industry
- Marine environments
- Rural economy and community
- Water quality

In late 2016, Natural England published a new strategy document titled 'Conservation 21: Natural England's conservation strategy for the 21st century.' This strategy sets out how Natural England will work to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and in support of the food and farming industry. The aims of Natural England are to:

- Reverse biodiversity loss
- Sustain distinctive landscapes
- Enhance engagement with nature

This document recognises that Natural England's current approach is not producing the desired outcomes, with wildlife declining, people 'less connected with their local environment' and the environment 'often perceived as a constraint on economic development.'²⁰ Conservation 21 sets out a new approach for nature conservation based on three guiding principles:

- Creating resilient landscapes and seas
- Putting people at the heart of the environment
- Growing natural capital

¹⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*

²⁰ Natural England (2016) *Conservation 21 (page 3)*

The strategy sets out new ways of working; focusing on an ecosystems approach, working at a much larger scale and working in partnership with people and other organisations to co-create shared plans for places.

This new approach also includes a challenge for Natural England ‘to see how we can increase the impact and relevance of our work in and around towns, cities and along the coast, where the majority of people live, work and visit.’²¹

Consultation with Natural England’s Land Management & Conservation Lead Adviser, Kate Doughty, highlighted the opportunity that this new strategy presents to champion the work of Workington Nature Partnership and develop a closer relationship between Natural England and the partnership.

Historic England is the government’s advisor on the historic environment and publishes advice in two forms; Good Practice Advice notes (GPAs) and Historic England Advice Notes (HEANs). There are three published GPAs and one forthcoming document:

- GPA1 Local Plan Making
- GPA2 Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment
- GPA3 Setting and Views
- GPA4 Enabling Development (forthcoming)

Advice notes cover a range of topics including Conservation Areas, Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessment and Managing Local Authority Heritage Assets – the latter particularly relevant for the management of Workington Hall Park.

Historic England’s ‘Conservation Principles’²² document (currently under review) provides detailed guidance on sustaining the historic environment within the framework of established government policy. There are 6 principles within the document:

1. The historic environment is a shared resource
2. Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
3. Understanding the significance of place is vital
4. Significant places should be managed to sustain their values
5. Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent
6. Documenting and learning from decisions is essential

Whilst all 6 principles are relevant to the management of Workington Hall Park as a designated heritage asset, principle 3: understanding the significance of place is applicable to all sites within the care of Workington Nature Partnership.

‘The significance of a place should influence decisions about its future, whether or not it has statutory designation.’²³ Significance can be assessed using a number of values; evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. ‘Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.’²⁴

The communal value of the sites in the care of Workington Nature Partnership is anecdotally known about but not currently well evidenced in the management plans. The management plans for Siddick Ponds, Harrington Nature Reserve and Workington Hall Parklands focus on the

²¹ Natural England (2016) *Conservation 21* (page 7)

²² English Heritage (2008) *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*

²³ English Heritage (2008) *Conservation Principles* (page 27)

²⁴ English Heritage (2008) *Conservation Principles* (page 31)

heritage, wildlife and nature values of the site, with only a passing mention of the sites' social values.

Policies within Allerdale's Local Plan contain reference to significance and social benefit, particularly those policies which relate to the historic environment. Relevant Local Plan policies are discussed in further detail below.

Allerdale Borough Council Local Plan 2014

The Allerdale Local Plan, adopted in July 2014, contains a number of policies to protect and enhance the green network. Strategic objectives relevant to the natural environment include:

- **SO5d** Enhance green infrastructure by developing a comprehensive network of high quality open space such as parks, woodlands, gardens, natural green spaces and allotments.
- **SO5f** Protect and enhance the quality of the environment and amenity.
- **SO6a** Protect and enhance the natural and historic landscape, including ancient woodland and geological assets, from unnecessary and harmful development, particularly within the Solway Coast AONB and areas adjoining the National Park.
- **SO6b** Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, notably the Natura 2000 sites and create ecologically diverse habitats across Allerdale and ensure the ability of habitats and species to adapt to climate change.
- **SO6c** Promote opportunities to improve access to the countryside and coast.
- **SO6e** Promote, protect and provide a comprehensive network of green infrastructure, incorporating multi-functional green and blue spaces both within developments, and linking across and between settlements throughout the area.

The Local Plan also contains area based policies for Workington; two of which are relevant for designated nature sites and brownfield sites:

- Recognise the high environmental and amenity value of some brownfield sites in the Locality.
- Protect and enhance the special character of the River Derwent and River Derwent Corridors as Natura 2000 sites and the Siddick Pond Site of Special Scientific Interest, as well protecting and enhancing other biodiversity and geodiversity assets;

Oldside, a key brownfield site providing habitat for Small Blue Butterflies is allocated in Allerdale Borough Council's Local Plan (part 2) for potential employment development. Sites 1/WOR/032A/E and 1/WOR/034A/E have been identified as preferred options due to their location close to the port, relationship with the town, low flood risk areas and access can be achieved directly from Port Road. The justification also states that no significant effects have been predicted for protected sites and species. Proposals for the site however, must undertake an ecological survey and incorporate measures to maximise the biodiversity of the site, particularly in relation to blue butterflies and maintain green infrastructure links with the adjoining Cumbria Wildlife site to the north.²⁵

Part of Oldside is also allocated in the local plan as a Gypsy and Traveller Site (3/WOR/096/GT) with the same stipulation that measures are taken to maximise biodiversity and maintain green infrastructure links. Development proposals for the site should include an ecological assessment 'with particular reference to butterflies. Compensatory measures will need to be included in mitigation for butterfly scrapes provided on the most northerly part of the site.'²⁶

²⁵ Allerdale Borough Council (2017) *Allerdale Local Plan (Part 2)*

²⁶ Allerdale Borough Council (2017) *Allerdale Local Plan (Part 2)* page 143

Strategic policy **S24 Green Infrastructure** states that the council will ‘promote the creation, enhancement, maintenance and protection of a range of green infrastructure assets that contribute to a diverse network of natural and man-made green and blue spaces, links, habitats and landscapes, which is accessible to all.’ Linked to this policy are key pledges to protect and promote key natural sites, increase nature biodiversity and promote health and fitness through the provision of open spaces.

Green infrastructure strategies and policies recognise the multi-functional nature and benefits of the green network. A Green Infrastructure Topic Paper²⁷ was commissioned to inform the preparation of Allerdale Local Plan and sets out generic opportunities for safeguarding, enhancing and extending the Green Infrastructure assets within the Workington locality. The key assets are listed, which includes the areas of land on the west coast between Workington and Maryport that support colonies of the uncommon Small Blue butterfly and highlights the opportunity to ‘*safeguard the important habitats for the Small Blue butterfly in and around the Workington coast*’. This detail, however, is not picked up in the Allerdale Local Plan (part 1).

The commitment in the Green Infrastructure Topic Paper to integration between green networks and development was planned to be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)²⁸ however this has not yet been produced. Green infrastructure is considered in Part 2 of the Local Plan, section 10: Open Spaces, with a policy proposed (SA12) that would identify key green infrastructure assets and ensure that development proposals that have the potential to impact upon these sites are fully assessed. Major developments will be expected to strengthen the green infrastructure network and incorporate a layout that provides linkages to the existing network where connectively is feasible.²⁹

Strategic Policy **S25 Sports, Leisure and Open Space** is relevant for green spaces and how they are used; the policy sets out a commitment to improve existing sports and leisure facilities and promote opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreational activities, open spaces and the countryside.

(The value of urban green spaces is discussed further in section 3.1)

Strategic Policy **S33 Landscape**, states that the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the plan area shall be protected, conserved and wherever possible, enhanced. The landscape character of the Local Plan area is defined in the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit; a document produced jointly by Cumbria County Council and all Cumbrian Local Planning Authorities.

Strategic Policy **S35 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity** states that conditions for biodiversity will be maintained and improved and important geodiversity assets will be protected. Nationally and internationally protected sites and species will be afforded the highest level of protection but a high priority is also given to the protection of locally identified biodiversity or ecologically valuable assets. Crucially, however, these locally identified sites are not named in the Local Plan despite some being identified in the Green Infrastructure Topic Paper.

Policy S35 further sets out how the council will seek to make positive improvements to the quality of the natural environment which will result in net gains for biodiversity across the plan area; this includes protecting and enhancing key ecological habitats and wildlife corridors and stepping stones including watercourses and wetlands. The value of previously developed land in providing habitats for plant and animal wildlife is recognised in the policy and it is stated that ‘there is a need to ensure that development within both rural and urban areas does not damage habitats or encroach upon land forming part of the wider network of wildlife habitats.’

²⁷ Allerdale Borough Council (2010) *The Green Infrastructure Topic Paper*

²⁸ Allerdale Borough Council (2014) *Allerdale Local Plan (part 1) page 112*

²⁹ Allerdale Borough Council (2017) *Allerdale Local Plan (part 2) page 154*

Policy S35 also recognises the consequences for the long-term protection and adaptability of biodiversity and the ability of wildlife and habitats to respond to climate change, stating that 'there is a need to expand and re-connect the existing areas and restore habitats where they have been destroyed.'

The Local Plan sets out future actions to identify and map components of the local ecological network, informed by the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan and the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre, including an action to identify potential Nature Improvement Areas and produce a strategy for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks in the area. Although Nature Improvement Areas are not mentioned, the protection and enhancement of the green infrastructure network is contained within the Local Plan, Part 2, section 10: Open Spaces - SA12: Protecting and Creating Green Infrastructure.

Policies relating to the historic environment are relevant to Workington Hall Park, as a registered park and garden with a number of listed buildings, and these policies may also be relevant for any non-designated heritage assets associated with green or brownfield sites.

Strategic Policy **S27 Heritage Assets**, states that the historic environment including all heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their intrinsic historic value and significance, their importance to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place, and to other social, cultural or environmental benefits. The policy further states that the council will work with partners to seek the conservation and enhancement of all designated or non-designated heritage assets within the plan area.

Other policies with the Local Plan that have some relevance for the protection or enhancement of Workington Nature Partnership managed sites include:

- S29 Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage
- S30 Reuse of Land
- S32 Safeguarding Amenity

Allerdale Borough Council Heritage Strategy October 2016

Allerdale Borough Council's Heritage Strategy was produced in October 2016, partly in response to HLF's desire to see a cohesive plan for heritage projects across the district which approach HLF for funding. The need for the plan is given in the introduction:

- Our natural and cultural heritage is internationally important.
- Some of our heritage is at risk from a range of internal and external factors.
- Heritage can make a contribution to health and well-being, economic development and other aspects of the lives of our residents and visitors to Allerdale.

The Heritage Strategy has four strategic priorities:

- Understanding our story - knowing what is most important about our heritage and ensuring that it is recorded.
- Caring - ensuring our heritage is well-cared-for, that important heritage is protected through designation, management and, where necessary, enforcement.
- Sharing - making our heritage physically and intellectually accessible to all.
- Engaging - involving our community and partners in understanding, caring for and sharing our heritage.

The report recognises that in order to implement the strategy there needed to be an increased capacity for natural and cultural heritage management in the district. This includes increasing the capacity of the Council to manage its own heritage assets, to perform its statutory duties and to co-

ordinate delivery of this strategy. In addition it includes increasing the skills and resources of organisations concerned with heritage in Allerdale and making them more resilient.

A recommendation from the heritage strategy is to set up a Heritage Forum for Allerdale to coordinate the delivery of the strategy. There are few other recommendations in this report and the action plan is very broad brush and much relies on partners to deliver the actions.

The report does suggest three methods which could be used to monitor heritage in the district which may be useful to use alongside existing monitoring carried out for Workington Nature Partnership sites;

- Expanding the heritage elements of the existing 'State of the AONB' review to cover the rest of Allerdale District.
- Conducting an impacts assessment to quantify and qualify the current level of economic, social and environmental impacts of heritage in Allerdale.
- Agreeing a process for continual measurement (for example repeating the impacts assessment on a five-year cycle)

Appendix 2

References for the Benefits of Open Space

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Appendix 3

Notes from the Volunteer Interviews

Harrington Reservoir Local Nature Reserve

9 January 2018

Introduction

Four volunteers and Raegan were present. All four were men and of a similar age, three were retired. There are three other regular younger volunteers, two men and a woman.

The four volunteers were working on the site, picking litter and pruning. They worked well as a team and were friendly with each other and me. I chatted with each one individually and informally, using the following questions as a prompt if and when needed:

How long have you been volunteering at this site?

Do you volunteer at other wildlife sites / do you prefer to volunteer at one or more? Why?

Had you done any other volunteering before? If so, what?

How did you get involved?

Why did you get involved? Why do you keep coming?

What (if anything) stops you from doing more?

What do you get from it (e.g. fresh air, exercise, social, state of mind)?

Have you learnt any new skills?

What training have you had? What training would you like to have?

Would you be happy to take part in or lead work parties without Raegan present? What do you need in place for that to happen?

What do you most like about it?

What could make it better for you?

Any other comments?

The following key points emerged.

i) Why/how did they get involved?

All four live close to the Harrington Reservoir Nature Reserve and have an interest in wildlife.

One person said that he saw the opportunity on the council website, but that he took a while to get in touch (due to a lack of self-confidence). One was actively looking for volunteer opportunities and had joined Cumbria Wildlife Trust (and is a member of the National Trust), but their nearest reserve is in Cockermouth. Another saw the volunteers working there and got involved. One was referred by the Compton Trust.

They all found it very easy to 'join up' as a volunteer, except one who said he found it hard at first because there was a lot of young people involved and he felt out of place (the situation has changed now). Another one mentioned that he had been put off volunteering with the Lake District National Park Authority *Fix the Fells* project because it was very structured and you have to book into and commit to volunteering on set days. It was also much further to travel.

They all felt welcome.

One man commented that all the sites are within walking distance of his home and another said that he can get a lift with Raegan when working at the other sites. One person said that the reserve was a factor in choosing to live there.

Being retired and/or having the time to commit to volunteering was an important driver.

ii) Volunteer time

Each one has been volunteering for a year or more, one of them for more than two years. They all volunteer regularly at this and other sites – Siddick Ponds, butterfly habitat work and occasionally at Workington Hall Park. They each generally do two days per week. The work is very similar across all of the sites.

They also mentioned that they regularly walk the reserve at Harrington at other times. They do additional small tasks themselves as required in between the regular volunteer days and report back to Raegan if they find any more significant problems.

While they all enjoy volunteering regularly, they also appreciate that they do not have to commit to certain days; they can turn up when they want to.

Two people mentioned that there had been a positive change from the days when there were more children on site visits on volunteering days, when Raegan spent most of her time looking after the children. They now get more done.

iii) Training

They received on-the-job training for all of the tasks that they do – pruning, lopping and strimming (one of them chooses not to do strimming because of an existing hearing problem).

Only one person suggested additional training in chainsaw use (he has used one before). When queried how often a chainsaw is needed and, given that Raegan is there anyway, it was not thought to be a major issue.

iv) Benefits

All four mentioned the social benefits of volunteering; two in particular referred to it helping them mentally and/or their wellbeing.

They all enjoy seeing wildlife and working to benefit it.

Comments on why they enjoy it included “Just being out here”, “I like wildlife and birdwatching. I get a sense of satisfaction from looking after the place for others”, “It’s good to get feedback from residents who appreciate what we do”, and “I enjoy working with other people, it helps me mentally and physically”.

One person in particular said that it helped with his mental state. He has suffered from long-term depression and used to be isolated. Now he volunteers regularly and meets interesting people. He has a sense of achievement and young people look up to him.

Another referred to his own lack of self-confidence. He likes working with the group, they are all friends.

v) Improvements/Changes

Nobody had any suggestions for improvement, except sometimes they need additional resources for bigger jobs.

When asked about doing work parties on their own (without Raegan), it was clear that they appreciate Raegan’s input and co-ordination, e.g. “It wouldn’t be the same without Raegan”. They felt that they need someone in charge.

Appendix 4

Results of the Online Survey

1. Have you heard of Workington Nature Partnership?

Yes 81 (67.5%)

No 39 (32.5%)

2. Which sites do you visit?

Harrington Nature Reserve	66	55.00%
Siddick Ponds	57	47.50%
Workington Hall Park (aka Curwen Park)	93	77.50%
Salterbeck Reservoir	48	40.0%
Oldside	35	29.17%
Bankfield	16	13.33%
Other wildlife sites in Workington – please say which ones	17	14.17%

3. How often do you visit?

more than once a week	41	34.17%
around once a week	24	20.0%
one to three times a month	18	15.00%
a few times a year	31	25.83%
once a year	1	0.8333%
less than once a year	4	3.333%
never	3	2.500%

4. If you do not visit any of the sites, please state why not?

Don't feel safe	4	3.333%
Not enough to see/do	7	5.833%
Too much litter/dog mess	23	19.17%
Lack of seats/shelter	14	11.67%
Accessibility of the site – steps, surfaces, parking	12	10.0%
Not interested	10	8.333%
Other	75	62.50%

5. For the site you visit most often, what are the main reasons you go there? (tick all that are relevant)

On walking/cycling route to shops/school/work	17	14.17%
For a walk / fresh air / exercise	82	68.33%
To see wildlife	71	59.17%
To walk the dog (s)	54	45.00%
To meet people	6	5.00%
To take part in volunteering	11	9.167%
Other	8	6.667%

6. Please tell us the site you visit most often, what do you like about it?

"Hall Park.

Its a lung of fresh air and nature very close to the town centre. Few towns have anything like it. And it belongs to us. Its also a very historic landscape. I like the woodlands - and the fact thats its not over-gardened. Its feels natural even though I know its a plantation."

Workington Hall. I love the serenity, the feeling of history that surrounds the Hall. No matter how bad things seem with the weather, at home etc. as the Hall and Parklands come into view my heart is lifted to a great height, my mind clears and nothing else matters for the time i'm in the grounds.

"Workington Hall park.

Things that I do not like is the amount of maintenance carried out i.e. the sweating of footpaths and the rectification of muddy paths used by vehicles as an exit."

Hall Park on a daily basis. Like-open space, wild life, trees

"Workington Hall Park. Its a great area for lots of people to visit i.e. Dog walkers, joggers, cyclists, adults and young families. The path through the park enables people with prams or wheelchairs to enjoy the area plus there is a fenced off area surrounding sports pitches which are used by local schools and football teams.

Its a great asset to the area and has also been host to musical and theatrical events, fairs and a variety of Fun Days."

Workington Hall Park, my visits are to monitor red squirrels. Likes; red squirrels, birds including woodpeckers, wildflowers & British bluebells

Workington Hall Park I enjoy the scenery and it brings back memories of my youth.

"I have always liked Curwen Park but for many years only went around the Hall, it is only in the past two years have I become aware of the walks down into Millfield. very calming and varied sights.

Siddick Ponds total revelation always viewed from the A596 but until I became of the cycle way around the back - had not realised what a special place this is for nature."

Harrington reservoir, it is close to my home and the work already carried out at this location has improved the experience.

"Visit Salterbeck Reservoir and Harrington nature Reserve as they are local to where I live and its a nice walk with the dog from the shore to the Reservoir.

I like that Salterbeck is kept tidy and you can see the wildlife.

Harrington 'Rezza' is not as good as it used to be with declining wildlife which is a shame."

Oldside - wide open space

I visit harrington resevoir with my own child and also with the local nursery little stars that I work for. We take the children to look at the trees and collect leaves Etc in the autumn for arts and crafts. We also go to see the ducks and any other wildlife we can see. The children enjoy having picnics and running around on the open grass

"Hall Park

Wide open space with a variety of things to lok at. "

"Siddick ponds. An unexpected and beautiful site, with great views and wildlife. A route to school, work, shops. No traffic and safe for children and dogs.

great to have park run coming through here as it is a lovely run."

it loops round nicely to the police station

Mill Field/Hall Park...open space, the river, seasonal changes, close to home

Harrington shore, the green site is spacious enough for dog walking. Spacious enough you don't have to bump into people if you don't want to. There is still wildlife. Please keep the wild spaces !

The Harrington rezer. My daughter likes to look at the wildlife and ducks

Harrington nature reserve is lovely peaceful and a good walk.

Harrington Nature Reserve - Close to my home and quiet during the day where i can go for a walk and get fresh air.

Crosscanonby. A small site but with variety, wildlife and sheltered from the Solway winds.

"Harrington nature reserve

I feel privileged to be able to see the reserve from my kitchen window everyday and i only have to open the garden gate and im there."

Cerwen park. Plenty of space, lovely surroundings, good paths for my son on his bike and for me on days where walking is hard, loads of wildlife (if you look hard enough), great for dogs, great safe splashing about in the mill run beck, bins, the odd place for having a sit thats off the ground, parking.

I like them all, but particularly the area around the bird hide at Siddick Ponds/Iggesund

Curwen park has been visited most frequently recently however myself and my family have been regular visitors to both Salterbeck and Harrington rezzers over the years to visit the wildlife.

Salterbeck reservior and harrington. Not alot really. i lived next door to the reservior for 20 years and it has been left in a straight of disaray.

Harrington Nature Reserve

Siddick and Workington Harbour - Its History [Roman Port], Wildlife, Photography, sea watching. migration, winter birds, breeding birds [Both in my book - The Solway 2010]

Curwen park. We like to walk our dog & my children feed the ducks & swans, it's a lovely open space.

"Harrington Nature Reserve.

The peace and quiet and to take photos of the wildlife when their is some."

Siddick Ponds Easy access , variety of wildlife.

Facebook

I visit Siddick Pond about three times a week I like it for the wild life and the view over the reed bed but I have noticed in summer the open areas are getting chocked with weed growth and the gap between the reeds on each side of the pond is getting narrower I think it could do with more management and advice from the RSPB at Leighton Moss

Harrington Nature Reserve. It is down the hill from where we live so i's always a good opportunity to get the kids interested in wildlife.

Harrington

Workington Hall Park - the historic nature of the site. Easy to get to.

Visit Workington Hall Park twice daily to walk the dog. It feels safer than Oldside and there is usually others about. The sheep should not be allowed in at all, I have to pick up after my dog. I don't see the farmer picking up after his sheep!

Siddick Ponds

Harrington NR. although slightly over grown it's a beautiful wildlife haven from birds to red squirrels butterflies & insects galore and a beautiful walk and well maintained paths.

Walk along the cycle path beside Siddick Ponds and up to Seaton or to Northside. Lovely views of the birds/wildlife, the reservoir and the sea. Good walking conditions underfoot safe to let our little dogs run around on extended leads. Big factor is handy for parking nearby also.

Hall park. Its easily accesible. Has the trains and lots of nature components. We also like to feed the ducks.

Siddick Pond. Good habitat. Easy to bring and walk the dog while wildlife watching. Good parking.

Oldside is lovely to walk the dogs

Siddick ponds. Very interesting wildlife.

Siddick, good collection of birds through out the year aswell as Otter, some rarities from time to time

Nice and quiet

Harrington Nature Reserve

Harrington nature reserve

I live opposite Harrington nature reserve and my children love it

Workington Hall Park. Peaceful

Harrington resorvar and the walk up to the factories it's a beautiful walk lots of wildlife

I take children and dog for a walk around the sites. Each one offers some thing different. I like to walk with a pram , look at nature and space to run around.

I didnt know about any of them apart from Curwen Park and wouldnt think to visit Workington for nature or wildlife.

Harrington nature park because it has interesting wild life

Local,clean.nice walk.

Hall park, good paths, plenty of room, historical interest, fab old trees, can link a walk to millfield and the river

Siddick Ponds. Great bird watching

Siddick Ponds. The variety of bird life you can see from a relatively close distance.

"Harrington Nature Reserve. It is oasis of beauty in a built-up residential and industrial area. I played there as a child and it is very satisfying that it is being restored to a great haven for wildlife and not used as dumping ground from the factories and fly-tippers.

It is a credit to Reagen Blacker and Allerdale. They should be applauded for investing both time and funds into this lovely area.

Really looking forward to the restoration of some open water in the reservoir and the other plans, which can only increase the wildlife and their well being."

Oldside go there as part of my job occasionally and if able to take my break the generally have a walk about.

Everything except it's a shame the Hall is in such a state!

Visit them the same with dogs.

Salterbeck reservoir because of birds

backfield

I take my daughters labrador to Millfield. Its safe and the river is great for him to swim in. I love the swans and have seen kingfishers and red squirrels. My grandchildren can play safely in the river too.

Siddick Pond - it is always good for spotting wildlife

"Siddick ponds.

"Cycle path, watching the squirrels

Me & my 4yr old daughter walk through Harrington nature reserve every day on our way to school to visit the ducks.its a good way of getting fit and to encourage my little girls interest in her love of nature.we also visit salterbeck shore reservoir for the same reason.harrington shore foot/cycle path on the shore side and below salterbeck cemetery are some of our favourite walks at weekends but the old railway line is eroding away and it's not safe to walk along the top.i feel that there needs to be something done about that sooner rather than later as the working railway line will be at risk next.the path below cemetery is basically mud best part of way and the rest is abit dodgy as there's potholes and bits of metal sticking up through the gravel/cement path.

Curwen park

Workington hall park. It is close to home, and a nice place for a walk with my young children. They enjoy exploring the woodlands, spotting wildlife and playing in the spaces around the hall.

"Harrington Nature Reserve.

I like to see the kingfisher.

"Harrington Nature Reserve.

I like to see the kingfisher."

Siddick Ponds for wildlife, mainly birds

Salterbeck and Harrington reserves

I visit Siddick Ponds on a regular basis for the wide selection of birds that can be seen there also there is good parking and ease of access and I think we should appreciate the fact that we have this area to enjoy in our county.

Nothing

"Salterbeck pond.

Very close,easy to access,always plenty of birds etc.

I usually walk along the shore to Harrington each day and pass the pond in both directions. I love the fishing stands electrical facilitate the disabled.

I hate the continual battle against litter,abandoned shopping trolleys and dog faeces. Actually I would rather cope with the faeces than the liberally scattered poop bags. "

We live in Allonby and shop at Dunmail Park. We learned of the Siddick Pond site from neighbours and often combine a walk there with our visits to the retail park. It is a great little walk, good path and everything visible. It seems well managed. We love to watch the regular residents and to see what arrives every winter. The variety of visitors is terrific. The bird life is great and but we have seen otters too. We don't know about some of the other sites mentioned on here - but will now find out more about them and probably visit them too

"Harrington Rezza

Full of interesting greenery. Balm to the soul. My dog loves this walk, plenty to sniff, investigate, explore, listen for (birds, water, perhaps the odd mouse he thinks). The air is fresh. The trail is pleasant and meandering. There's always something new to see on the ground, work being done, a sense of it being cared for. I appreciate also the gripper mesh on the bridges to stop slipping. The bridges are made safe for us. Siddick Ponds also is fantastic, so scenic, but the scope of it seems so much bigger and it's a photographer's dream whereas Harrington Rezza feels more intimate.

A lovely peaceful place that is on my doorstep

Siddick ponds. Accessible, quiet, clean

Oldside has a beautiful beach and the most gorgeous sunsets...i love walking my dogs here...also sidekick ponds as I am interested in wildlife and bird watching

I don't know any of these sites because they're not advertised. Now that you have told me about them I may go and see. I have had to answer the ? as I visit an other but I don't know any. Please tell us wats out there x

Hall park is a lovely walk, nice flat paths to push the pram around. Near to home.

I regularly visit Curwen park and Workington harbour whilst walking my dog. I particularly enjoy walking the path that goes through Curwen park with all the lovely scenery.

Siddick Ponds, easy access

Hall park the space and views

Hall park Curwen park lovely just walking in quiet surroundings like the river feeding the ducks all the simple things

Harrington shore. Lovely fresh air and we like to spot the seal. My son and I love to look for crabs in the rock pools in the summer too.

Siddick ponds. For ease of access and pram accessibility.

hall park its nice to take the kids around for a walk

Harrington nature reserve, I have visited here from a child and now take my own children although there isnt as much wildlife there now

Siddick - I love seeing the otter and, when they are there, the deer. I come every time we visit from Australia and encourage others visiting the Lake District to visit as well.

Hall park and beach/slag bank, open space and other walkers make these areas feel safe. I don't really know the other areas.

Hall park, ease of access, great trees, bit of heritage too, good in winter too

Siddick ponds, due to it being easily accessible, close to amenities such as toilets and shopping, and is a great place to spot wildlife. No matter the time of year or weather, there's always something to see. There's also frequent rarities and elusive species to find.

Harrington

Harrington reservoir I grew up on Moorclose road almost directly opposite the park and loved going in there with my friends.

"It's peaceful away from the hustle and bustle of the town.

The wildlife."

"Workington Hall Park.

A good place for a walk with the dog."

Harrington Nature Reserve has lots of different wild ares. Has enchanting woods. Easy to see wildiife (birds). Views into the tree tops. The wildflower meadow has orchids and lots of wild flowers. It is lovely to sit along side the Ellerbeck and listen to the water. I used to enjoy the swans but the pond and awans have gone.

"Hall park.

Nice place to walk when not full of litter and dog mess.

Peaceful. "

Well maintained grounds and easily accessible. Plus close to where I live

Salterbeck reservoir Harrington marina love the walk in the shore via the rezzie

Curwen Park. Son likes collecting conkers in autumn & riding on the trains. Walks can incorporate Mill Field.

Harrington nature reserve. Very peaceful. More awareness could be made on the wildness and importance of keeping dogs on lead. Good there are bins near Mooreclose Road for dog poop bags

Siddick Ponds - wildlife - variety of birds, starlings coming in to roost on winter evenings, always the chance to see otters even during the day. Good path access around much of the site, and handy being close to home.

Harrington nature reserve i like the wildlife and nature surrounds its great for all ages pity theres dogs being walked off leads cleaning themselves this area could be made beautiful and more people/children orientated it should be protected more than what it some people abuse it but alot of people admire it

Harrington Nature reserve - I have visited since childhood and love the calm atmosphere, I can walk, contemplate and clear my mind

Curwen Park is well fenced, I can let the dogs off leads and not worry about them going on the roads. The wooded area is great for looking for conkers with the kids in autumn, I enjoy watching the seasons change and the way the foliage changes with the seasons.

all the sites ticked for volunteer work, helping the environment and nature.

Harrington Rezza, to see water birds, and any other wildlife. A good dredge out and landscaping, which is now about to happen soon. Will make this site great.

The rezza I grew up on Brierydale and spent my childhood on there is really used to be a marvellous place to go as a child and as an adult for a nice walk, bit of peace and quiet and to marvel at the fabulous wildlife and nature at its best

"Curwen park

I love this place, it's a great place to see and hear a variety of birds. It's not usually over crowded and quite peaceful. "

"Siddick More obvious location, wildlife in abundance

.... and yet littered in places further along the cycle path which needs important work done by the partnership"

"Siddick Ponds, good selection of wildlife.

Siddick pond as it has a lot of wildlife just wish there was a hide a bit closer to the water

7. For the site you visit most often what would improve it for you?

It just needs more TLC than it's had these past years. A bit of money spent on woodland management and maintenance would make a massive difference, and improving (but not too much) the paths and carriageways. It would be good to use the Hall for plays and ice-skating again. And the Walled Garden could be used for events and festivals if someone invested a bit of cash.

"There is no information what-so-ever to be found on the Hall, the history of the Hall. Signage is a must in both the near and long term.

The planting of a few flower beds around the Hall would bring colour and enhance everyone's experience on a visit to the Hall.

I would love to be able to get a cup of tea or coffee, even an ice cream while visiting the Hall.

I would love to be able to take my Grand children and now my Great grand children up to the Hall where they could hear story tellers with their tales of ghosts, brave deeds, and an escaping Queen etc."

Better maintenance

"Foot path inside park parallel to Ramsey Brow -constantly used by Allerdale rubbish vans and they are creating pools of mud which are very slippery especially for all ages of park users.

Litter to be removed

Dog mess is disgusting "

"The removal of sheep from the fields would be an improvement especially during the summer when the sheep wander over the whole area and the footpath and fields get covered with sheep muck.

It might be good to have some more seats in the lower fields plus more litter bins to encourage proper disposal of rubbish/dog muck.

It would be great if Curwen Hall could be used again for events like we used to have - e.g. Plays, Ice Rink, Birds of Prey Exhibitions."

Removal of litter

"Siddick ponds - the area of land either side of the path to the rear of Northside - just feel it is neglected and whether it could be developed more for fauna and flora - in itself a nice place to visit.

Curwen Park - maybe a map with some trail markers such as you see on forest trails given different distances for routes and what you can see - if you are not local and work in or visit Workington how do people know about what Curwen Park can offer?"

The remedial works to the reservoir.

Harrington 'Rezzer' needs cleared out.

"Less litter and tipped waste

control of people on trail bikes"

When i was a child I used to visit the reservoir often and it has grown over grown and has shrank over the years it would be lovely to see it being restored to how it was when I was a child

Ensure dog owners pick up their dirt up.

"Less shopping trolleys, wish people would pick up their litter and dog mess. Difficult to fix these as it's a behaviour thing and not really the resources to keep clearing up after people.

More wildflowers - continue to improve on what there is.

More places to sit. "

more lighting

Less random dog muck and no rubbish left behind by football teams and riverside boozers, otherwise leave it alone for nature to work it's wonders.

Cleaning up the steel industry's mess . Harrington shore has been used as a dumping ground for the steel works and housing waste. Unbelievable!

If all the weeds and everything was taken away and they 're done all the pond as it looks like a swamp. As it used to be a beautiful pond. There needs to be more bins for litter and seats

Harrington nature reserve just needs a bit of tidying up around the pond /water area , I personally think the rest is ok

The overgrown weeds need to be cut down, dog mess issues need to be addressed and an overall revamp.

More trees.

The rezzer has deteriorated over the years and the view is not like it used to be, hope the improvements make a big difference completed. More waste bins are needed along the dog walk routes to encourage bagging it up.

Couple more areas to sit off the ground (bad back, if I sit on the ground I struggle to get back up).

More money, wider array of tools and equipment to allow better maintenance of the areas by Workington Nature Partnership and the volunteers.

I think the one thing that would make Curwen park better is a concrete footpath so that when we have bad weather you can walk round without having to get too muddy and you can also take pushchairs.

Less rubbish

Look at potential for nesting sea birds at Workington. Need Tern island protected from Otter at Siddick. Used to be more terns breeding along Cumbrian coast away from Millom [Hodbarrow]

The pond being dredged to get ducks and other wildlife back on it.

I would move the hide, it's in the wrong place, make a pathway on the other side of the reed beds if it is doable. Put some viewing stations behind the gate where the feeders are.

More intensive management

More benches around the grassed area and also for the grass to be cut more regularly as my children would like to play games on it.

More seating and cleaner

Information signs for the hall. Better lighting along the paths.

More litter bins and effective enforcement for those that do not pick up after their dog.

Seating and being able to walk completely around the main pond

Money for the volunteers that try so hard to keep everything under control

Perhaps a seat here and there especially so older folk could sit for a while and admire the view.

Coffee facilities and toilets

Dog waste bins.

The road access

More bins would hopefully encourage ppl to pick up. A clear out of flytipped stuff. Particularly on cycle track (hagworm wiggle to asda)

Dog fouling is disgusting along the cycle path also litter and dogs off the lead. A viewing screen close to the edge around the pond centre would be an improvement, (a hide would only be destroyed by vandals). It can't be long until Cetti Warblers are regular breeders/visitors which would be nice to see

Less dog mess

Complete dredging and make the beck flow in from the road end as it always did

The initial water problem in the reservoir

More litter bins. Picnic tables down by the river and weir.

To improve pathways to be able to use a pram. Ensure areas are clear from rubbish and dog mess.

A few more flowering shrubs

More wildflowers e.g. Meadow area

A couple more dog poo bins. Sometimes it's like an obstacle course dodging the poo.

Dog mess either cleaned up or some positive action taken to stop it. In all the sites I visit it has to be the worst I've encountered. You cannot concentrate on wildlife for having to watch what you are standing in.

"The Salterbeck industrial site bordering the reserve must be made to clean their site and stop litter coming into the nature reserve through the fence. The factory site is a disgrace with litter everywhere. I am sure the council could exercise a legal warning that their site is polluting the nature reserve with litter.

Inconsiderate dog owners leaving dog poo everywhere and individuals leaving litter.

This is an endemic problem however throughout Allerdale. More efforts needed to pursue prosecutions and education from a young age. The current generations throw everything on the ground or out of their cars. Littering needs to be made an anti-social behaviour as drink driving has been made. This can only happen if it is driven by government policy, driving prosecutions and providing an education policy. "

Pot holes sorted on the approach road

Funding for the hall

Nothing for my visits

Harrington reservoir

Nothing. Its perfect as it is.

Seating /viewing areas

"More information about it.

Places to picnic

Activities to do. "

Harrington reservoir needs dredging. theres loads of silt built up in middle of the rezza. the cement footpaths need redone got holes in them. think there's a drainage problem on the path below the housing estate in the park because it's always slippery when we've used it. in regards to the salterbeck rezza it looks scruffy with litter and seems quite exposed for the birds that live there. the shore paths need redone and some kind of anti eroding work done along the shore line from shore rd to below cemetery.

The lower area is not maintained. There is no seating other than a fallen tree that has been sawn into a seat despite the seating being purchased many years ago and remain in the local authority storage. The swans have to walk to get fed as the water courses have not been maintained in many years. New trees have been recently planted with no guards despite what I thought was agreement that this would be done to stop the sheep eating them thus a waste of revenue. The nearby parking is full of cars owned by people who work locally for 12+ hours a day leaving no parking for the general public to walk with their children or dogs and access issues for residents. You never see disabled people as they can't park close enough to walk a short distance or to get a wheelchair out of their vehicle. There is too much dog fouling on the paths and no deterrent to reduce this. The football pitches are too numerous for the parking available thus causing issues for residents. The players also leave vast amounts of gaffer tape and other rubbish behind or somebody else to clear up

Potentially improve the steps to the north down towards mill fields, as they are quite muddy and slippery.

"Less dog muck.

Less dog muck.

A hide that you can access at the ponds rather than having to go to Iggesund

Harrington

I would like to see access to the far side of the pond and better viewing facilities. I realise that this may be problematic but it would open up much of the pond which at present nobody can enjoy.

A path from the end of the present pondside path to the entrance just below Shore Terrace.

I don't think there is much more that you could do at a small site like Siddick - there are seats, the visibility is good, the reeds are managed - maybe a small hide on the Dunmail side of the water somewhere for days when the weather is not so good? I think it works well for the walkers, dog walkers. cyclists etc who use the path. The information board is good.

I'm happy that it's in good hands and will enjoy watching for progress. For those lazy people who leave dog poop on the path maybe a bin at the very end of the trail where the big factory boundary fence is? Overall though the site is enjoyable.

Possible sighting areas with viewing platforms, binoculars etc

The road to oldside is an absolute disgrace full of potholes and there is a lot of rubbish that needs cleared up...also the scrambling that goes on there should be restricted to certain areas instead of being allowed to plow up the old golf course..would be lovely to have some seats along there too like on the coalwash at maryport

More lighting and more bins.

Viewing areas with benches beside the path

Seating information about area bins activities for all ages

Would be nice to see the castle being restored to a degree of being safe to open but other than that maybe leave well alone .

"There is lots of rubbish there quite often and sometimes because of the nature of the tide the wiring on the rocks can be very dangerous.

I think this is an issue especially as lots of children visit the shore, some of the wiring is potentially harmful.
"

Places to stop and sit

some seating by the river and by the beck

Tidy it up make it look more like a rezzaer and help to get more wildlife back

"Getting rid of the poachers that kill the wildlife and addressing vandals...perhaps security cameras could work?

Having a more accessible bird hide."

Loo's

More wild flowers in the long grass

Dog fouling and littering is a big issue. Perhaps more bins are needed?

More wildlife less dog mess

Make it accessible, it is just so overgrown and dirty with litter (and rumours of drugs) I don't feel safe there anymore!

I have never heard of most of those listed so they could be advertised more. Also as I'm from out of town I wouldn't know if there's any parking.

a wildlif viewing hut with information on what can be seen.

No litter

A few more historical viewpoints

More wildlife

Minimise dog muck. More lighting. Curwen Hall as an accessible site would be nice (although presumably outside Nature Partnership's remit). Some of the paths can be muddy.

Easier passable with the pram. I have to let my dog off the lead to drag the pram up the steps

Not a lot really, possibly more viewing areas?

Stop dogs been off leads or no dogs allowed they worry the wildlife theres dog dirt all over the place it brings down the ambiance of the place id have more seating and picnic areas and designated childrens areas id also make the area more accessable to wheelchair users its great for sensory and visual users

The path leading from the ruin to stainburn that runs along the top of the football pitches is often flooded as water seems to leak from somewhere which makes the path muddy even in the summer

For the people who just(use) these sites to get from a to b,or just use them to exercise their animals to show some respect to the majority of people who come to enjoy them,and clean up after their animals and take their litter home.

Inprovmnts are about to begin, and not to soon for me, Like in a lot of other places, we need to see people getting fined, for the disgracefull amout of dog mess !!!!! I don't know what a dog warden looks like!!!! but there seems plenty of traffic wardens, getting easy pickings. The nature walks for everyone are often spoiled by blatent dog walkers.

Tidy up the walk ways get rid of the willow trees and try and make the pond silt free again.

Maybe have a few more bins on the top path from the skate park to football pitch entrance for the dog walkers as some of them think they are doing good picking the poo up but obviously get sick of carrying it to the closest bin and just drop the bag.

Continued work

Make the ponds more accessible put viewing walls nearer to ponds so wildlife isnt disturbed.

Couple of hides

8. Postcode

CA14 4DB	CA14 4NR	CA14 5JG	CA14 5 PT	Ca14 3nh	CA14 3EQ	Ca22 2rx	ca14 4aa
ca142sw	CA14	ca14 5lb	CA144HP	CA158RL	Ca145ng	Ca144db	Ca141aq
Ca14 4dd	Ca14 5bb	CA15 6PX	Ca145qh	CA13 9UD	Ca145qx	Ca145dd	CA28 6NF
CA14 4DD	CA144LU	CA14 5QR	CA145RL	Ca14 5bt	Ca15 6Pu	Ca145qa	CA28 6NF
CA14 4DB	ca15 6pu	CA145LS	ca14 5lr	Ca141ap	Ca14 5rl	ca14 5pd	CA13 0TJ
CA14 1TR	CA14 2ND	CA14 1JT	ca7 3pq	ca287tg	Ca14 5hl	CA14 3EN	Ca14 3tp
ca14 5ju	CA14 1PF	CA28 6DG	CA14	CA14 2UW	CA2 6RN	Ca141py	CA14 1 xn
CA14 3YJ	CA145QL	ca14 3hd	CA14 2UA	CA14 2QP	CA28 6QP	Ca141pt	Ca15 7az
ca14	Ca14 5pu	CA14 4NQ	CA14 5TG	Ca145eu	CA2 5LT	CA14 3NX	CA 14 5HL
Ca143jy	CA14 5 PT	CA89NF	Ca14 5dd	Ca14 5le	CA14 4LD	Ca145eu	CA15 6QE
CA14 4LD	CA145QX	CA14 5LB	Ca145qr	CA2 5HF	CA14 5LB	CA28 6LA	Ca144uh
Ca145ex	CA13 0LF	CA15 6QS	Ca144lt	Ca141qj	CA14 1JS	CA144LH	LA12 8PY
Ca14 4lt	ca142ns	CA14 3LB	ca14 3ur	Ca14 3hy	Ca145ee	Ca13ODR	Ca14 4ad
Ca141ag	Ca15 8rl	ca14 4hl	ca142nh	CA15 7JU	CA14 3EQ	Ca145js	Ca14 4ll
CA130AQ	CA14 3pe	ca14 3ur	ca145pe	CA144HP	CA13 9HQ	ca14 3nx	CA14 2QT

WORKINGTON NATURE PARTNERSHIP

Memorandum of Joint Arrangements

Introduction

Allerdale Borough Council and Workington Town Council agree to act jointly (under the terms of Local Government Act 1972 s101(5) as amended by Local Government Act 2000 s20) to better manage and conserve the natural environment within the civil parish of Workington.

This memorandum sets out, in general terms, the relative roles and responsibilities of the Councils under this agreement.

Programme and Budget Agreement

The Councils agree to adopt a jointly managed programme and budget for activity in pursuance of the shared objective, the programme to be adopted as part of each Council's Service Plan, and the budget to be contributed by each Council in equal shares the total amount to be agreed as part of the usual annual budget making processes of each Council, and both Service Plan and budget to be adopted jointly and concurrently by each Council. In the first instance, the Councils agree to each contribute at a full year rate of £20,000 to the budget for 2013-14, the actual amount to be pro-rata the proportion of the financial year remaining at inception; and to use that initial full year rate as the base figure for budget planning for future years.

Joint Arrangement oversight

The Environment Committee of Workington Town Council and the Executive Member of Allerdale BC with the relevant portfolio have been delegated responsibility for strategic oversight of this partnership arrangement on behalf of their respective Councils.

Host Council for the Joint Arrangement

Allerdale BC / ~~Workington TG~~ shall be Host Council for this arrangement to whom the relevant responsibilities are delegated by Workington Town Council under provisions of Local Government Act 1972 s101(1)(b) as amended, and day to day management for the Host Council is undertaken by the *Parks and Open Spaces Officer*

Employment of staff pursuant to the Arrangement

An officer (to be known as the Nature Partnership Worker or other agreed title) shall be employed by the Host Council to undertake such activities as may have been agreed in the jointly adopted service plan to be funded from the jointly provided budget, or such other activities as may separately agreed and funded between the Councils or with support of any external funding which may become available.

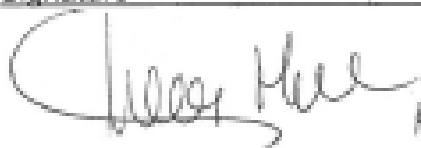

The Job Description and Person Specification shall form part of the jointly agreed Service Plan but Employment Policies and Procedures to be used shall be those of

the Host Council generally for all its staff and the those Policies and Procedures shall not be questioned by the other Council subsequent to adoption of this Agreement.

Variation and Determination of the Arrangement

The Memorandum may be varied by the written agreement of both Councils. This Memorandum may be terminated with effect from March 31st of any year by either Council giving written notice of termination to the other Council before January 1st of that year. The Council giving notice of termination shall fund such costs as may arise necessarily and solely from termination which are not otherwise funded from the jointly provided budget. A Council withdrawing from this arrangement without due notice shall be liable and indemnifies the other Council in respect of all costs incurred in termination.

This Memorandum is approved by the Councils on 16 October 2013

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
	CHARLES HOLMES HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	Allerdale Borough Council Workington Town Council
	Chris Bagshaw	Town Clerk Workington Town Council

ref FC 13.50 resolution

Appendix 6

Notes from the Workington Nature Partnership Workshop held on 26 April 2018

Introduction

The workshop was organised as part of an evaluation and forward planning exercise being undertaken by Workington Nature Partnership (WNP), led by consultants Shirley Muir and ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT).

The purpose of the workshop was to engage stakeholders – from the Nature Partnership, volunteers, Friends Groups and relevant organisations – in the review and in prioritising actions for the future.

Shirley presented the findings of the evaluation so far. An Executive Summary of the Evaluation Report is now available and has been circulated to workshop delegates.

Delegates were then divided into three groups to discuss the following topics:

1. Green and Blue network and Industrial and Cultural Heritage
2. Healthy Lifestyle, Play and Learning
3. Volunteering and skills

Group 1 Delegates

Kevin Mulligan – WNP volunteer
Clive Fletcher – WNP volunteer
Kate Doughty – Natural England
Steve Doyle – Butterfly Conservation, Cumbria
Nikki Wingfield – Sustrans
Raegan Blacker – Workington Nature Partnership Officer
Michael Heaslip – Allerdale Borough Councillor & WNP
Shirley Muir – Consultant and Facilitator

Group 2 Delegates

Hugh Wright – WNP volunteer and chair of Siddick Ponds Friends Group
Mike Croft – WNP volunteer
Ursula Pool – University of Central Lancashire
Sally Scales – Cumbria Youth Alliance
Hazel Wainwright – Cumbria County Council
Chris Bagshaw – Workington Town Council & WNP
Lorraine Smyth – ACT and Facilitator

Group 3 Delegates

Ann Douglas – Siddick Ponds Friends Group
Alan Heeth – Harrington Friends Group
Jodie Mills – West Cumbria Rivers Trust
Neil Harnott – Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Julian Smith – Allerdale Borough Council & WNP
Denise Rollo – Workington Town Councillor & WNP
Rose Lord – ACT and Facilitator

The following Section 2 summarises the points raised. Each group was asked then to devise a project based on their discussion and these are provided in Section 3.

2.1 Green and Blue Network

Suggestions were marked on a map and the following comments made

- Route around Siddick Pond
- Motorcycle problem on Oldside and other areas and on the cycleway – conflict with other users
- Perception of sites as low value or neglected, but they are important for wildlife – need to raise public awareness
- Does Allerdale Council value the sites?
- There is information on why sites are important.
- Education may help to reduce motorcycle problem
- Flytipping is another problem
- A plan is needed for Oldside
- The tunnel under the railway could be improved for a better link in the circular route
- Work has been done with the local community at 'Siddick Woodlands' to plant new trees; local involvement has reduced vandalism and damage from quad bikes and motorcycles
- Large green network but people only now their own bit
- Car parking is needed to encourage less able/mobile people – could be at Dunmail Park
- Housing Associations should be involved
- A bridge across the river would improve a the coast route
- Work has also started on a project outside Workington at Seaton (Brick Dubbs)
- There are routes from Harrington along the cycleway or south to the coast route
- There is a good link from Harrington to Salterbeck – a high route with good views
- Cemeteries are important for wildlife and heritage
- Britain in Bloom is a good opportunity
- Pollinators Project (CWT) is a great opportunity to work on sites and attract match funding
- Allotments could have potential for the Pollinators Project
- River Derwent is a key 'blue route' with wildlife designations
- Marine Conservation Area – coast and shoreline is important
- Areas eft dormant for 40 years could be managed for wildlife in the meantime
- Persimmons site is important for Small blue butterfly – it is well managed by Butterfly Conservation and volunteers but its future is not secure
- Need more wildlife gains from developers
- CCC Rights of Way team can help with improving routes

2.2 Health and Wellbeing

- Active Cumbria – walking project
- Priority groups – how to promote
- Getting people out of cars – walking, buses, big pedal (sustrans)
- Housing associations – Green estate opportunity to work together, opportunity for engagement, client group
- Brand for this activity
- Maypole!
- Passive play area development near Annie Pit
- Safety, natural environment, adventure
- **Integrated play policy alongside green and blue network (WTC have a play policy/ABC have a strategy)**
- Local cycling group use Siddick Ponds
- Walking – Salterbeck to Harrington – needs maintenance
- Therapeutic gardening in Hall Park
- Sponsored walk for publicity and raise funds
- Build on allotment engagement – incredible edibles, gorilla gardening
- Leadership, mission creep – all takes work, long term approach
- **Maintain link with natural environment**
- South Workington Youth Group + Salterbeck + CYA city centre groups
- Mental Health/unemployment – link to Small Blue butterfly opportunity – Raegan's work really successful and opportunities to develop
- Drawing, exploring, understanding to build wellbeing – pollinators role
- River Watch Scheme – build on this
- Challenge for young children with dexterity
- Stone painting – hide and find.
- Oxfordshire project – Farringdon
- Suggested activities include: Pond dipping, Geocaching, Orienteering, Dog walking
- Make more of the English Coastal Path
- Active travel – using green spaces to get around – daily life
- Arts + crafts – fairy grotto on cycle way/litter models
- Signage – to encourage looking and linking
- Place making project – people rather than traffic, more identity for the area, build on local identities – taking initiative in local areas and achieving things.
- Talking to young people about need (less formal opportunities)
- Learning programme about opportunities and risk taking
- Park Run on Saturday mornings – walking and participation

- **Wildplay opportunities – grandparents, back to the future activities – Lottery application for Hall Park will address this**
- Health walking in Distington – little spend, possible example
- Coven picking! On the water/sea shore. Beach school!
- **Mapping and phone apps for information.** Rubbish mobile phone signal)

Priorities – Nature walking and young people, link of health and wellbeing to nature, raising awareness, persuade planning this is important.

2.3 Volunteering and Skills

- Partners reported low numbers of applicants for Rivers Trust/conservation and wildlife roles
- Low numbers of people looking at courses/careers in countryside management
- **Need to provide pathways/links to university or other courses/work based training**
- Work with schools to provide routes in environmental careers – specific schools project
- Rivers Trust/CYA and CWT could all partner with WNP for skills projects
- Under 25 yr olds key target – need for additional skills including core skills, technical skills and employability skills
- Forging links project – mutual support for organisations with volunteers – there is a need for this as the community development roles have gone or decreased
- CYA has some funding from CCC to support other organisations
- Opportunity to formalise the link between WNP and CYA
- **Pathways for local young people**
- How do we identify people who could benefit from training opportunities – link with CYA and SWYP
- High numbers of people in Workington not able to access opportunities outside Workington
- Capacity of WNP to deliver the skills and training elements – need to work with partners or increase resources
- Accredited course/tickets for any age group – balance with H&S and ability to do the work needed
- **Retaining skills in Workington is key**
- WNP could be a factor in attracting people to live/work in Workington
- Benefits to health and wellbeing – link with CYA resilience project
- Council involvement in skills project – ABC/WTC as enablers
- Support for people to re-train including ex-service people
- Lack of funding for apprenticeships for post 25 yrs a challenge
- Targeting volunteers- message and promotion needed – not everyone is on facebook
- Local sponsorship from businesses

- Recruitment of volunteers – more info about the work of WNP and the benefits of volunteering
- **Focus on core volunteers – retired people – men in sheds idea but in nature**
- Feed other groups into core volunteers groups
- Growing old disgracefully project
- Promote impact of volunteers – celebrate successes on sites etc
- Recognition of volunteers – awards and support
- Pre-retirement info for local employers – drop in volunteering
- Remove barriers for potential volunteers – travel, additional costs, clothing etc
- Tapping into Sellafield workers – corporate volunteering and link to local business for support with training needs (First Aid, Manual Handling etc)
- Training for volunteer leaders – support, mentoring and training to allow volunteers to lead work groups (sustrans have volunteer coordinators)
- Recognition of volunteering by DWP would help!
- **Communication with existing and potential volunteers (avoid reliance on facebook)**
- Volunteering strategy for WNP
- Interest in volunteering for specific tasks – beach cleans and litter picks
- Review of management plans – volunteer input into work plans
- Easily accessible work plans and event plans
- Work with Solway AONB on training and bulk equipment
- Focus should be in Workington – could Maryport develop their own nature group?

3.1 Workington Nature Partnership – Proposal 1

Project Name	Workington Green Infrastructure Plan for people and wildlife
Summary of project	Need to map out sites and connectivity routes Identify core wildlife sites then discuss with ABC to prioritise areas to feed into planning policy.
Lead organisation	Workington Town Council
Partners	Working group with ABC (planning dept), WNP, Butterfly Conservation, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Natural England and Sustrans.
How will the project be delivered?	Could it be a green 'Neighbourhood plan'? Could it be a great way to grow/develop the partnership Need to fund a person to do it Could it be linked to the Cumbria Wildlife Trust Pollinators project?
What effect will the project have?	Needs to be a visible project Prioritise what to do next Influence planning decisions Where/how to engage people
Links to other projects/initiatives	Cumbria Wildlife Trust Pollinators Project Tracks of the Iron Masters
What will the project cost?	£5,000 Look at Health Lottery Coastal Communities

3.2 Workington Nature Partnership – Proposal 2

Project Name	Mapping and information for people to do things for themselves
Summary of project	Information – signs to encourage activity Talk to partners about what they can offer Launch and raise awareness Branded package of information Linkages of activity and areas
Lead organisation	Workington Nature Partnership
Partners	Cumbria County Council – can assist on Rights of Way Sustrans Allerdale Sports and Recreation Housing Associations
How will the project be delivered?	Phase 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio of mechanisms to reach people – web, leaflet, press etc • Session with volunteers to discuss opportunities • Session with partners about their offers • Build a natural inclination to use sites for biking, running etc Phase 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QR codes – signage throughout the area • Link into C2C for profile – improve start point • Maintenance regime for basic H&S
What effect will the project have?	Can go to GPs to show offer of activities on map Enabling people to access informal activities Start to build more formal offers Improve economy – make it a nice place to live, improve Health and Wellbeing
Links to other projects/initiatives	Town Council have an app Harrington Rights of Way have been done – linkage and identity of other sites – need champions
What will the project cost?	Possible addition of Winscale Parish into Workington – Wind Farm Funds 10/15 days staff time initially Funding for signs

3.3 Workington Nature Partnership – Proposal 3

Project Name	Roots into Work
Summary of project	Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship project Diploma in Environmental Conservation Levels 1-3 6 month pre-apprenticeship linked to soft skills and core skills 10 apprentices on Diploma course – additional core skills and employability skills
Lead organisation	Workington Nature Partnership and West Cumbria Rivers Trust (Rivers Trust have/are delivering the Diploma in other areas – Eden)
Partners	Cumbria Youth Alliance South Workington Youth Partnership Cumbria Wildlife Trust Schools, colleges and job centre
How will the project be delivered?	Cumbria Youth Alliance main link to targeting young people for pre-apprenticeship project – promotion through schools, colleges and job centres West Cumbria Rivers Trust manage project in partnership with WNP Work takes place on sites in Workington and surrounding areas to cover broad range of skills Workington focus for recruitment of trainees Pollinators project could help to deliver elements
What effect will the project have?	Upskilling young people Health and Wellbeing benefits Environmental benefits – better managed sites Raise profile of WNP Links to Citizenship Pride in local community
Links to other projects/initiatives	John Muir Award Duke of Edinburgh Award National Citizenship Scheme CYA Resilience Project
What will the project cost?	Up to £2m Apprentice wages Equipment/training Additional costs for employers (WCRT/WNP) Link to apprentice levy? Match funding through pollinators project – evidence base developed through this project NEET project which may be able to access additional funding streams