

Cumbria Local Nature Partnership



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Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Strategy 2015-2020

Produced by G. Jackson-Pitt (CLNP Secretariat) of Cumbria Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Board

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Foreword

Since becoming chairman of the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership (CLNP), I have become even more strongly convinced that the county's environment is one of its greatest assets.

This environment includes a range of important habitats and species that have a fundamental role in creating our well known landscapes. It also underpins important economic sectors such as farming and the tourist industry. There are however challenges to recognise and address such as declining water quality and peat erosion.

There are already a great many organisations and landowners doing fine work for the environment in Cumbria. To maximise the effect of our efforts everyone involved from across the sectors must work together to achieve the most we possibly can.

Local Nature Partnerships are where this collaborative thinking and working can take place. Together we can identify local priorities and work in a manner that truly benefits nature, people and the economy - **Lord Inglewood** Chair of Cumbria LNP.



Overview

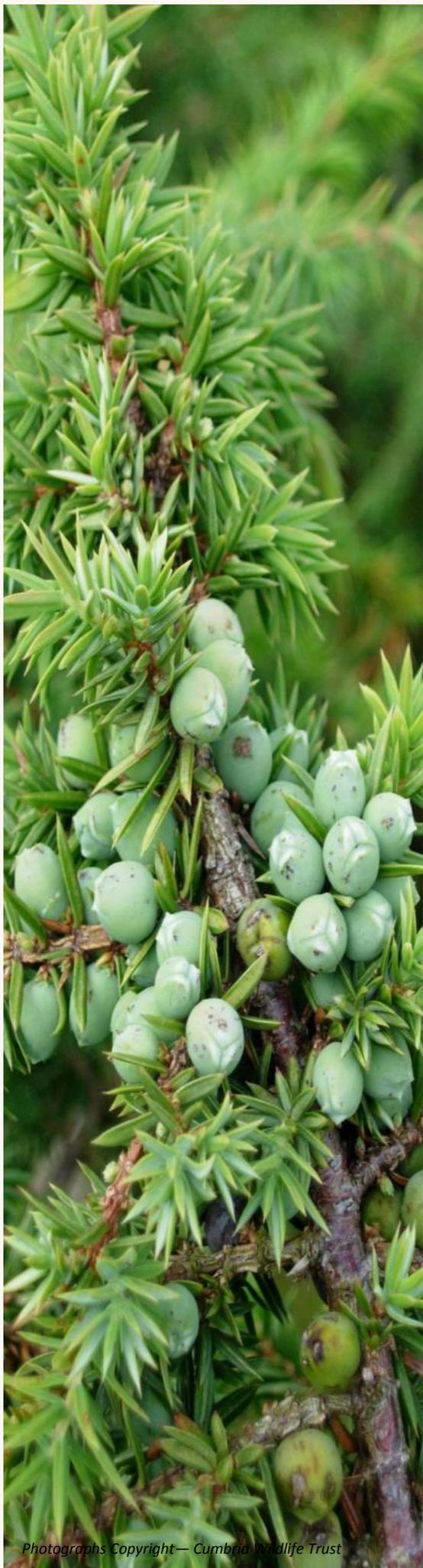
This document outlines the strategy of the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership (CLNP) in seeking to realise its vision for Cumbria's environment.

It specifically relates to the government's Natural Environment White Paper (Natural Choice: securing the value of nature - see Figure 1) and subsequent DEFRA guidance on the role of Local Nature Partnerships and is informed by the strategy for biodiversity in England (Biodiversity 2020).

Although biodiversity is at its core the strategy recognises the strong linkage with other policies bedded with the wider environment such as those for forestry, farming, fishing and water. It also acknowledges that in delivering for the environment LNPs should seek to create jobs, stimulate growth and improve wellbeing.

The CLNP will work in conjunction with key groups¹ such as land owners, farmers and land managers along with partnerships including the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Board (CHWB). This strategy has been drawn up in alignment with other key strategic plans for Cumbria.

(1. The CLNP acknowledges that there are huge number and range of organisations, groups and partnerships that it must engage with. Unfortunately there is not enough space to individually list them all).



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Our vision for the environment of Cumbria:

“Cumbria is a place where consideration for the environment informs every decision making process and where the environment is managed to provide a wide range of benefits for nature, people and the economy. In Cumbria nature’s role within the landscape is understood and valued by all”.

In order to realise this vision the CLNP will adopt four key themes. These are:

1. Putting people at the heart of environmental policy;
2. Managing environmental impacts and growing the economy;
3. Adopting an integrated landscape approach to conservation on both land and at sea;
4. Improving knowledge and understanding of the environment.

The CLNP will encourage delivery and where necessary instigate a series of priority actions under these four themes using the best available evidence and in consultation with its stakeholders and others (e.g. Morecambe Bay and Northern Upland Chain LNPs).



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Cumbria's Environment

Cumbria is one of the largest counties in England covering an area of 6,804km², and has a coastline some 180 miles long, three quarters of which is of international importance for wildlife. It encompasses a wide range of climatic conditions, topography and geology. It includes England's highest mountains and largest lakes.

Even with a relatively low population, 10,000 years of human activity has heavily influenced the creation of the landscapes we see today. These landscapes include a third of England's commons and are recognised nationally and internationally.

Large parts are 'designated landscapes' such as the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, Lake District National Park and portions of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, and the Solway, North Pennines and Arnsdale & Silverdale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These are soon to be joined by the Cumbria Coastal Marine Conservation Zone.

Cumbria's environment provides us with high quality food, wood products, recreational opportunities and spiritual refreshment. It has the potential to also provide clean air, water and lock up carbon. These benefits and services are all underpinned by biodiversity and embedded in a wide range of ecosystems. When biodiversity is in good condition and ecosystems function properly, they are improved.

Cumbria's environment is one of its greatest assets and is essential for human wellbeing and its economic prosperity. It contributes to people choosing to live and work in the county and is a key selling point for many of the products and services produced and supplied from here. The inherent value of environmental assets must be safeguarded and promoted so it can continue to contribute to the economy.

People's physical and mental wellbeing benefits from a high quality environment. In Cumbria sport and recreational opportunities abound and an abundance of 'natural' green spaces offer the chance for quiet enjoyment, contemplation and learning. Unfortunately health inequalities do exist in Cumbria often relating to social and economic issues but also those of the environment.

The environment can however be an important tool in helping address the key challenges facing the health and wellbeing of people in Cumbria. It can be used to encourage positive lifestyle and behavioural changes, contributing to ensuring everybody has a high quality of life.

Why the partnership approach?

There are a large number of organisations and individuals who directly or indirectly have an impact upon Cumbria's environment. They tend to specialise in different types of work. This means that a high degree of co-ordination and partnership working is required if money and time is to be used most effectively.

Quite deliberately the CLNP is envisaged to be a wide partnership in order to be inclusive and encourage participation. In summary, working in partnership helps:

- To share workloads, resources and skills;
- To ensure activities are co-ordinated and that duplication is avoided;
- To promote communication, wider understanding between organisations and individuals and to inspire confidence;
- To develop links between work undertaken at European, national, regional and local levels.

The CLNP covers the entire county of Cumbria and its footprint (see Figure 2) is shared by many important partner bodies including the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Board and Cumbria County Council all of whom will be key in delivering a successful Local Nature Partnership. The strategy's scope extends to include Cumbria's coastal and marine environments.

Cumbria also has two other Local Nature Partnerships. The Morecambe Bay and the Northern Upland Chain LNPs, part of each lying within the county. The CLNP will meet regularly with both other LNPs and the LEP to work collaboratively with them on areas of mutual benefit.

Strategy

Why do we need a strategy and priorities for action?

This strategy sets out what the CLNP wants for the environment in Cumbria. It outlines the approach required and lists the themes on which CLNP and others need to work.

The CLNP must also be clear about what it actually intends to do and what its contribution to the environment will be. Identifying the CLNP's priority actions and resources required is the next step towards enabling this to happen.

More generally the strategy will help identify priorities, set measurable targets, monitor progress and widen the Partnership's impact.

Putting people at the heart of environmental policy

Outcome - More people are engaged with the environment and nature through recreation, volunteering, and learning

People access and value the environment in different ways, one of the most obvious being through recreational activities. Cumbria's landscape lends itself to this and its label as England's premier outdoor destination forms part of its tourism offer. People should be encouraged to benefit from having a physically active lifestyle but also to ensure that sustainability is at the heart of physical activity ensuring impacts on the environment are considered whilst taking part.

Volunteers are essential to many environmental organisations and hence the success of their work. The benefits of volunteering mean that such organisations will be encouraged not just to provide volunteering programmes but to link them with the learning and health sector. Linking such programmes to private business can also harness these benefits for staff whilst increasing corporate social responsibility.

Stronger links need to be made between the environmental and learning sector, especially higher education. There is a need to ensure young people and others entering the workplace have the up to date knowledge and skills required for them to carry out work to the environment in an appropriate and sensitive way. There is also an opportunity for the environmental sector to benefit from the cutting edge research and technologies of universities in particular.

Finally from a young age people should be encouraged to respect the environment and understand its links to the economy and society. There also needs to be greater recognition both locally and nationally of the contribution made by people in Cumbria towards the conservation of the environment.

Measures of success:

- The creation of new environmental volunteering opportunities with a particular focus on encouraging links with the sports, learning, health and business sectors;
- The creation of new research and learning opportunities (e.g. undergraduate work placements and PhD research) within/linked to environmental organisations and projects;
- More schools are learning about and participating in the conservation of their local environment;
- Greater recording and recognition of the activities in Cumbria to conserve the environment.

Outcome - The environment sector contributes more to improving the health and wellbeing of people

The environment and health sectors working strategically together is the key to harnessing the environment as a tool that can be used to help attain health equality and improve health generally in Cumbria. Barriers that prevent individuals and communities accessing and benefiting from the environment need to be identified and removed. Organisations within the environmental sector need to be mobilised to develop linkages to the health sector.

Efforts should be focused on helping those that currently have no connections with the environment or have a long term illness/disability. Children and young people should also be a priority and could benefit through establishing links with schools, colleges, universities and young people's organisations.

Measures of success:

- The environment and health sectors are working collaboratively and their work is strategically aligned;
- The role the environment can play in addressing public health issues (e.g. reducing health inequalities, preventing illness and encouraging active lifestyles) is better understood;
- Innovative approaches to developing projects and services that improve health and wellbeing by enabling people to access and make connections with their environment are explored and taken forward where appropriate.

*Managing environmental impacts & growing the economy***Outcome - Greater awareness of and consideration for the natural environment especially amongst those that have the greatest potential impact on it**

Government has concluded that some sectors (e.g. water management, tourism, planning and development) can and do create pressures on the environment. It also

recognises that awakening consideration of the environment within these sectors has great potential to deliver multiple benefits via ecosystem services. These can be encouraged through ecological restoration at a landscape scale.

Working in partnership (e.g. with rural and farming networks) across sectors offers the best way to help and enhance the environment in Cumbria. Financial and voluntary mechanisms such as the Countryside Stewardship and visitor giving are likely to be central in helping to contribute improvements to the environment.

Measures of success:

- A greater understanding and appreciation across sectors of the wide range of services that the environment provides;
- An increase in the number and range of enterprises and organisations delivering benefits to the environment whilst supporting the local economy.

Outcome - Cumbria is a national exemplar of best practice of how the environment underpins and contributes to economic growth

The environment underpins the Cumbrian economy hence it must be managed sustainably. The environment sector has the potential to create growth in its own right however its work is inter-linked with many others. These sectors must complement one another and work together to enjoy mutual growth (e.g. The CLNP will work with the LEP to deliver the environmental aspirations from its Strategic Economic Plan).

The environment must be central to Cumbria's offer as a world class visitor destination and the environment sector must work alongside businesses and local authorities to help bring about informed, high quality development and growth. Finally investment in environmental infrastructure must be secured to ensure it continues to underpin and contribute to the economy.

Measures of success:

- The exploration and development of innovative approaches to unlocking Cumbria's environmental economy (e.g. payment for environmental services, premium agri-food products, low carbon economy and Woodland Enterprise Zones);
- An increase in employment opportunities within the environment sector;
- The establishment of stronger links between sectors promoting economic growth for the environment;
- The achievement of new growth in the visitor economy based on Cumbria's high quality and improving environment;
- The relocation or expansion of businesses in Cumbria due to its high quality and improving environment;
- Greater expenditure on environmental infrastructure with an increased contribution from business and non traditional sources.

Adopting a more integrated landscape approach to conservation on both land and at sea.

Outcome - Ecosystem networks in Cumbria are coherent and resilient

Cumbria's landscape can support a healthy and resilient network of habitats. This relies on a landscape scale approach to sustainable land management which recognises that action is required on occasions to ensure stability and sustainability over time. To achieve this, it is necessary that the priorities set and mechanisms used in different parts of Cumbria encourage good ecosystem management and work together to achieve agreed common goals.

Measures of success:

- Identification of key areas and agreements put in place to achieve an integrated approach to landscape scale land management. These should provide effective safeguards for biodiversity and ecosystems;
- The development and bringing into effect of landscape scale initiatives within agreed key areas of Cumbria;
- The Irish Sea's marine habitats contribution to England's Marine Protected Area network.

Outcome - Cumbria has bigger, better and joined up areas of Priority Habitat

Much of Cumbria is Priority Habitat - for example woodland, peatlands and grassland. The quality and importance of these areas for biodiversity is shown by the significant amount designated as internationally important Special Areas of Conservation, nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest and regionally important County Wildlife Sites. Some Priority Habitat however has no designation at all. All areas of Priority Habitat have a role to play in the landscape scale approach to ecological networks.

The biodiversity potential of existing Priority Habitats can be maximised by ensuring that sympathetic management is in place. This may involve measures either to maintain existing good ecological conditions or to improve them.

Some land and sea in Cumbria is currently of low ecological quality but could be improved as it has the potential for the creation or restoration of habitats. The value of newly created habitats can be enhanced by siting them adjacent to and/or between existing habitats thereby increasing resilience and the connectivity of ecological networks.

Measures of success:

- More land and inland water, conserved through effective, integrated and joined up approaches to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- More priority habitats are in favourable or recovering condition;
- More Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in favourable or recovering condition.

Outcome - Priority species in Cumbria will be in recovery

The landscape scale approach to improving ecological networks is the main means for conserving wildlife. However, this alone may not be sufficient to achieve recovery of some extinct or declining priority species. Of the 276 Priority Species in Cumbria, some (e.g. red squirrel) will require special help if they are to recover and thrive again.

Measures of success:

- Identification of priority species most in need of special management;
- Putting in place suitable measures for the special management of the most vulnerable priority species, thus reducing the chance of local extinctions and increasing resistance in the face of threats;
- The monitoring and management of non-native invasive species to the benefit of Cumbria's species and habitats;
- No human-induced local extinctions of priority species.

Outcome - Cumbria's Green Infrastructure and its associated benefits are strengthened

Green Infrastructure (G.I) is the physical network of green and blue spaces throughout rural and urban Cumbria. It includes not only habitats such as woodland and lakes but also our cultural and historical sites, parks and gardens. The benefits (often termed environmental benefits/services) provided by the network are removed or impoverished when that network is fragmented or part of it becomes isolated.

A county wide approach is needed to develop a better understanding of our G.I, where it is and what the key pinch points are. Local interventions can then be targeted at where they would best repair or improve the network but also simultaneously deliver enhanced benefits. This approach offers excellent opportunities to target environmental delivery, especially in relation to health and wellbeing and the economy.

Measures of success:

- Cumbria's G.I and the benefits it provides have been further identified;
- The interventions required to address G.I pinch points have been identified and where possible addressed;
- Local authorities are better supported to implement G.I strategies locally and incorporate G.I considerations into new developments.

Improving knowledge and understanding of the environment

Outcome - Good quality data about the environment will be more widely available in suitable formats

Reliable evidence (e.g. distribution, condition and management of species and habitats) is a prerequisite to informed decision making. Cumbria must also be able to demonstrate its contribution to the environment as a whole, and to measure it against European, national and local delivery plans. The key to achieving this outcome will be working with Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre.

Measures of success:

- Reduction in the gaps of existing environmental datasets;
- Greater consistency and reliability of local environmental datasets;
- The improved integration of environmental data and knowledge with other data sets.



Reporting Action and Reviewing Progress

Following completion of this strategy an action plan will be developed containing the priorities for action and resources associated with delivery. The action plan will be updated annually with the strategy being updated at the end of its five year lifetime. These updates will enable the CLNP to remain aligned with national policy and strategy whilst complementing local work such as that being carried out by the national parks, local authorities and the LEP.

A monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed showing what is being done and who is doing what to deliver the Partnership's priorities. It will aid transparency and enable others to comment and constructively challenge what the CLNP is doing.

The partnership will identify and develop the best methods to communicate with and inform others of the latest developments, share knowledge and expertise. It will promote the LNP's successes and raise awareness of issues as necessary. Communication could be via website development, social media, newsletters, e-forums and workshops.

Figure 1: The diagram below shows the context of the CLNP Strategy and its links to national and local policies.

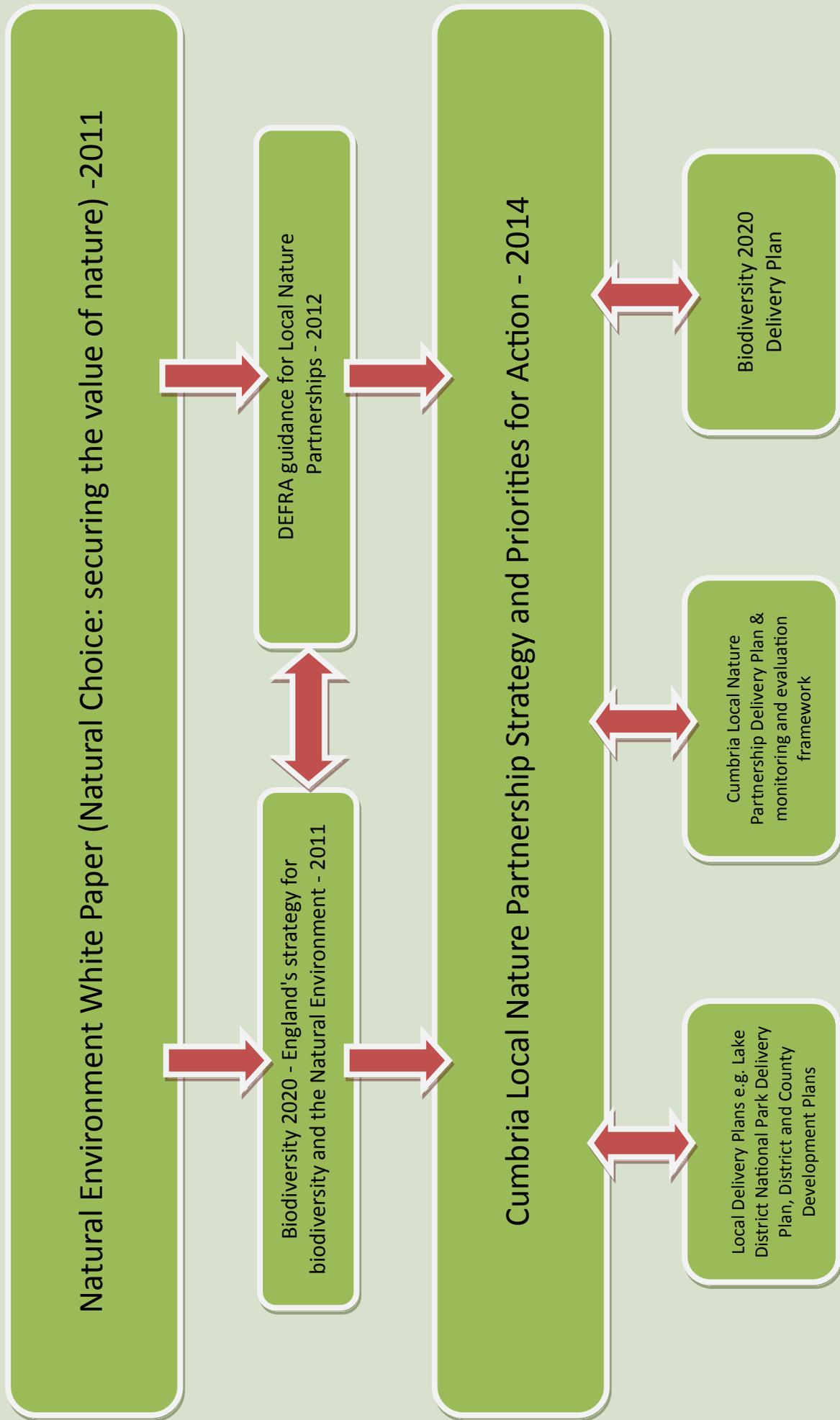


Figure 2: The map below shows the boundary of the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership and the area covered by the two other LNPs in the county (Morecambe Bay LNP and the Northern Upland Chain LNP):



Table 1: The table below shows the individuals and organisations that currently form the Cumbria Local Nature Partnership Board.

Name	Organisation
Lord Inglewood (Chair)	Member of the House of Lords
Will Rawling	Cumbria Farmers Network
Douglas Chalmers	Country Land And Business Association
Peter Strike	University of Cumbria
John Thompson	Eden District Council
Hugh Branney	Copeland Borough Council
Peter Bullard	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Judith Cooke	Lake District National Park
Simon Humphries	Natural England
John McCreesh	Cumbria County Council

Graham Jackson-Pitt (Conservation Officer) at Cumbria Wildlife Trust currently acts as secretariat for the CLNP. For more information about the CLNP please contact Graham at:

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