



## Access to Nature Regional Targeting Plan – North West

### 1. Purpose of targeting plan

This document identifies areas and beneficiaries that are seen as a particular priority for Natural England's (NE) Access to Nature scheme in the North West Region. These regional priorities reflect the national scheme's priorities, targets and outcomes, further informed by regional knowledge and evidence.

The purpose of the plan is:

- 1) To encourage applicants to develop proposals that will deliver the identified priorities within the limited budgets for the Access to Nature scheme.
- 2) To aid the assessment process to ensure that projects are targeted in accordance with the priorities described in the plan.

It should be noted that the plan is not a mechanism for approving (or not approving) individual applications, which will all be considered on their own merits.

Applicants should first meet all the **eligibility criteria** of the scheme. Applications should also accord with the scheme's **priorities, outcomes and targets**. Please refer to the website for full details of the application and assessment process, and as described in the General Guidance notes:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/accesstonature>

To increase the chances of a successful application, you are advised to read through the priorities in this targeting statement. Applicants should note that this is a qualitative process – applications do not need to address all the targets described. This list is not exhaustive, and many proposals not covered by the targeting statement may still receive funding.

**Applicants are required and encouraged to submit their own evidence of need in support of their application.** As Access to Nature is an open application scheme, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that their proposal will benefit those who currently have a low level of access, and / or engagement, with the natural environment.

Applicants are encouraged to speak with their local Natural England adviser before they commit to the time and expense of applying for grant aid. *Contacts are listed in section 8 'Sources of advice and information'.*

## 2. Access to Nature themes

To achieve our outcomes and meet our targets, our funding will focus on three main themes:

- 1 **Community awareness and active participation** – community engagement programmes that raise people’s awareness and enable a greater diversity and number of people to enjoy, benefit from and become actively involved in caring for their natural environment (for example, through outdoor activity and informal recreation and participative events).
- 2 **Education, learning and volunteering** – giving a greater number and diversity of people the opportunity to learn more about their natural environment and to develop and sustain the skills base of communities. For example, volunteering and volunteer leadership programmes, community skills training and development workshops, education programmes and out-of-schools learning linked to natural places.
- 3 **Welcoming, well managed and wildlife rich places** – projects which rejuvenate existing and/or create new natural places, ensuring that they are welcoming, accessible to a greater number and diversity of people, and act as a resource to support communities more active involvement with the natural environment.

## 3. Introduction to the region

|                          |   |                           |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Area                     | 14,106 sq. km.  |                           |
| Population               | 6,827,200   |                           |
| Urban / Rural %          | Urban   82 pop./ 20 area  | Rural   18 pop. / 80 area |
| Sub Regions (population) | Cumbria (494,800), Lancashire (1,152,000), Greater Manchester (2,539,000), Merseyside (1,365,800), Cheshire (680,000)                     |                           |
| Major centres            | Greater Manchester unitary authorities, Merseyside unitary authorities, Lancaster, Preston, Blackburn, Burnley, Chester, Crewe, Carlisle. |                           |
| Racial background        | White British   | 92%                       |
|                          | Asian   | 3%                        |
|                          | White Non-British   | 2%                        |
|                          | Mixed Race  | 1%                        |
|                          | Black   | 1%                        |
|                          | Chinese   | 1%                        |
| Religion                 | Christian   | 78%                       |
|                          | Muslim  | 3%                        |
|                          | Jewish  | 1%                        |
|                          | Buddhist  | 1%                        |
|                          | Hindu   | 1%                        |
|                          | No religion   | 15%                       |
| Designated areas         | National Park   | 18%                       |
|                          | AONB  | 11%                       |
|                          | NW also has the longest stretch of undeveloped coastline of any region  |                           |
|                          | 30 NNRs / 116 LNRs  |                           |
|                          | 3 Community Forests: Red Rose Forest, Mersey Forest and Pennine Edge Forest   |                           |

With a population of 6.83 million people (11.4 per cent of the UK) within an area of 14,106 sq km, the North West is the most populous region outside London and the South East.

The North West region consists of the two metropolitan areas of Greater Manchester and Merseyside and the three shire counties of Cheshire, Cumbria, and Lancashire. The region stretches 250km from north to south: from the Scottish border to the Dee estuary and the Welsh border, and is bounded on the west by the Irish Sea and on the east by the Pennine hills.

Some 80 per cent of the region is rural, agricultural or open woodland, yet four-fifths of its people live in urban areas, with 60 per cent of them found in the two city regional centres of Liverpool and Manchester. Important habitat and wildlife areas include 30 NNR's, 116 LNR's and nearly 400 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The region has significant environmental challenges, with 25% of England's derelict land and a third of the poorest quality rivers in England and Wales, a legacy partly from the damage caused by previous industrial activity.

Life expectancy is slowly improving but remains one of the lowest in England;

| Age         | Per cent of NW population |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 0 to 4      | 5.6%                      |
| 5 to 15     | 14.4%                     |
| 16 to 19    | 5.4%                      |
| 20 to 24    | 6.2%                      |
| 25 to 44    | 27.8%                     |
| 45 to 59    | 21.8%                     |
| 60 and over | 18.8%                     |

Approximately 5.5 per cent of the region's total population belong to ethnic minorities. Of these 3.4 per cent are of Asian or Asian British origin.

47% of people in the region actively volunteer in some capacity.

#### 4. Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

##### Regional IMD ranking

Applications will be prioritised geographically. **Those applications that address the needs of communities in the most deprived 10% urban and most deprived 10% rural Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA), identified through the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (IMD) statistics, will be a priority.** Applications aimed at beneficiaries outside these areas will need to supply additional supporting evidence of need. We accept IMD statistics may not reveal full and detailed local issues. Statutory authorities, agencies and delivery bodies will often have highlighted these. We will take account of such information where possible when evidence of need and supporting information is supplied by the applicant.

The urban and rural LSOA categorisation within the data and maps seeks to address the dominance that urban areas have in the IMD statistics that can mask rural deprivation.

*IMD maps by regionally ranked LSOA, both covering the entire North West region and by individual county, and a data spreadsheet for the IMD, are available separately from the guidance section of the Access to Nature webpages (see section 8). The regional ranking maps show only those LSOAs which fall within the regionally ranked most deprived 10%, to reflect the Access to Nature scheme's target areas.*

When examining LSOAs ranked by their deprivation relative to others within the region, certain areas show stronger prominence than others. As can be expected with such an urban focus to the population, the most deprived areas overall fall in the region's main centres, particularly within the Greater Manchester and Merseyside conurbations. Those figuring highly include the unitary authorities of Greater Manchester, particularly Manchester itself, Salford, Rochdale, Bolton, Wigan and Oldham. In Merseyside these include concentrations within the Liverpool and Knowsley authority areas, Birkenhead on the Wirral, and St Helens. Other areas are the Runcorn - Warrington area and parts of west Chester in Cheshire; Preston, Blackpool, Blackburn, Accrington, Burnley to Nelson and Colne, Skelmersdale, and pockets within the Lancaster – Morecambe locality in Lancashire. Despite being a predominately rural county, Cumbria also features in the overall and urban 5-10% most deprived ranks, with parts of west Cumbria in Workington and Whitehaven, and Barrow in south Cumbria.

Contrasting with the overall IMD ranking and the solely urban 5-10% most deprived ranking, the rural areas of the region are comparatively less deprived than many other areas of the country. This may be due to many of the rural areas surrounding the region's urban centres being inhabited by the more affluent who then commute in.

Having said this, distinct areas of rural deprivation occur at points within the region. In the south, these are focused on rural areas of Wigan, west and east Lancashire, and in Cheshire with parts of Weaverham in Vale Royal and the north of Frodsham.

In the north of the region, the strip along the West Cumbria coast features regular areas of relative deprivation along the A595 / A596 roads from Egremont in the south, to Aspatria and Wigton in the north. These areas fall under Allerdale and Copeland Councils. There is also a notable pocket of deprivation in Longtown to the north of Carlisle on the Scottish border, Brampton in Eden district and around Dalton and Millom, either side of the Duddon estuary.

### **National IMD ranking**

The North West has an disproportionately heavy presence in the nationally ranked deprived areas for IMD 2007, compared to the remaining 8 regions. It accounts for 16 of the top 20 ranked LSOAs, 38 out of the top 50 and 68 out of the top 100. This is trend is reflected further in the Indices ranks, with 404 of the most deprived 1000 LSOAs being covered by the North West region.

When examining IMD data according to nationally ranked LSOAs, as opposed to LSOAs ranked against others within the same region, the coverage of those areas experiencing high levels of deprivation within the North West expands and local concentrations of such areas deepen. On ranking within the north west region, 446 LSOAs fall into the most deprived 10%. This contrasts with 848 LSOAs in the north west featuring in the most deprived 10% nationally. This further illustrates the relatively high presence of deprivation in the north west.

From this comparison within the IMD data, it can be seen that nationally ranking the LSOAs brings further areas in the North West within the scope of targeting by IMD for the scheme.

Such areas falling within the nationally ranked most deprived 10% LSOAs, but outside those LSOAs within the most deprived 10% on a regional ranking will also be considered a priority. The primary focus, however, will be on the regional ranking.

*IMD maps by nationally ranked LSOA, both covering the entire North West region and by individual county are available separately from the guidance section of the Access to Nature webpages (see section 8). The data spreadsheet available from the same location contains regional ranking and national ranking data. The national ranking maps show only those LSOAs which fall within the nationally ranked most deprived 10%, to reflect the Access to Nature scheme's target areas.*

## 5. Environmental evidence

**Applications which address natural environment deprivation, the lack of access to, or engagement with, the natural environment and benefit those in the most deprived 10% of urban and rural areas will be a priority.**

**Projects which utilise existing greenspace to connect and engage with local communities will be encouraged. However, where there is a lack of natural greenspace, the creation of new natural areas can be considered.**

Natural England will use mapping of a wide range of Geographic Information (GI) datasets in order to assess applications for funding for the establishment of new natural environment areas in light of existing access to the natural environment. This information will also be used as a tool to identify potential links between applications and nearby existing natural area resources, thereby maximising benefits.

In addition, specialist advice will be sought where necessary on applications and the existing level of access to the natural environment in a particular area.

Natural England has produced draft 'Access Provision' maps, showing levels of natural environment access across England. The datasets used to illustrate such access in these draft maps are:

- Agri-environment scheme permissive access (routes and open access);
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act Access Land;
- Country Parks;
- Cycleways (Sustrans routes);
- Millennium Greens;
- Doorstep Greens;
- Local Nature Reserves;
- National Nature Reserves (accessible sites only);
- National Trails;
- Public Rights of Way;
- Village Greens;
- Forestry Commission 'Walkers Welcome' data.

It is acknowledged that restricting the datasets to this selection omits a number of other categories of natural greenspace; the selection was made on those datasets that were available and had consistent coverage over the country. **It should be strongly emphasised that these maps are in draft form only.**

In order to provide a usefully examinable overview of access to the natural environment distribution within the region and by county, levels of access provision within each LSOA have been assessed and graded according to both the percentage, and the total area, of each LSOA that is covered by such provision. *These maps are available separately from the guidance section of the Access to Nature webpages.*

### **Natural Environment Index**

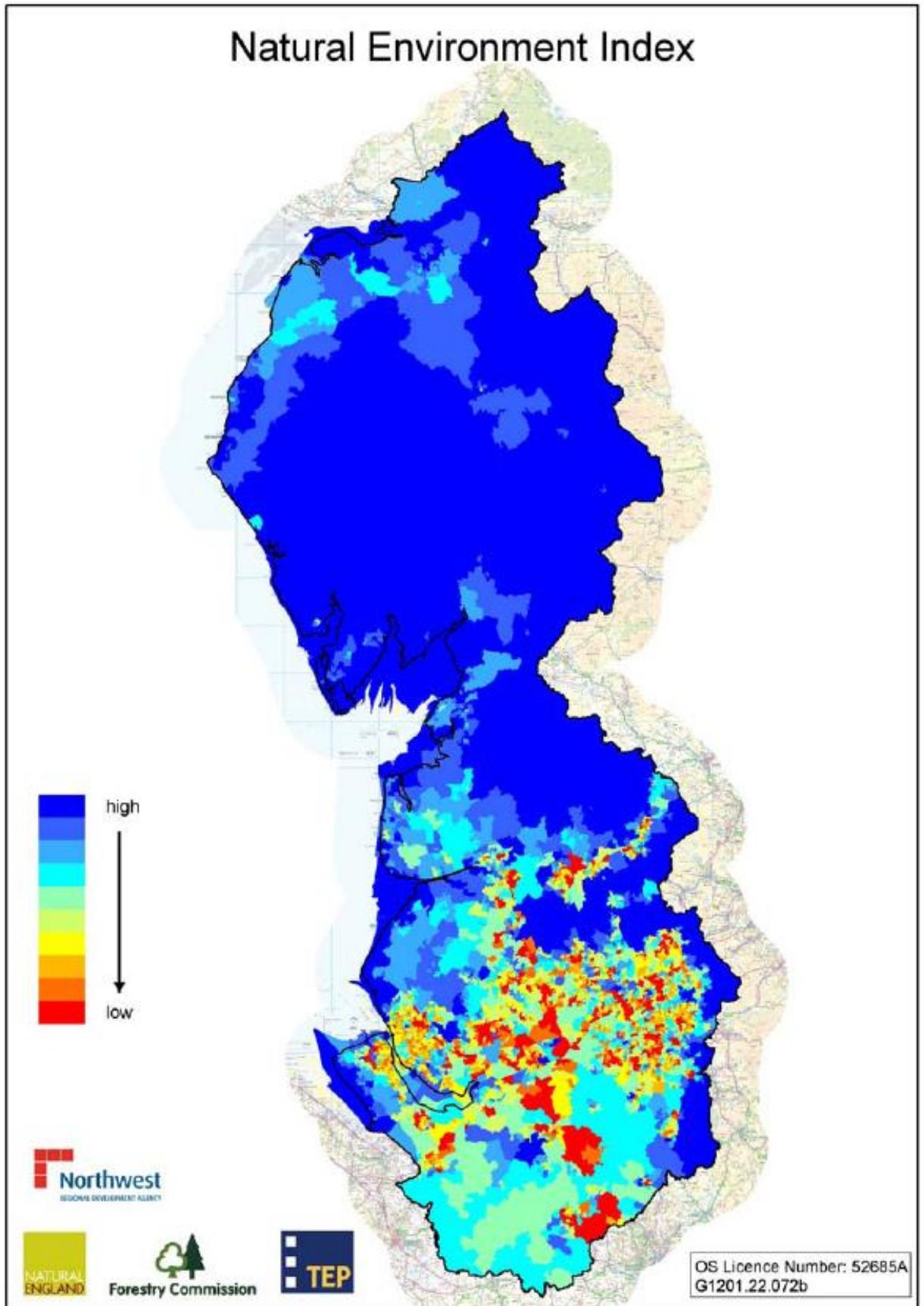
Whilst the IMD represent an accepted good indication of socio-economic condition, there is no national equivalent index for measuring the quality of the environment. In order to address this, a methodology to identify those communities that are not only deprived but also experience poor quality or a lack of natural environments has been developed in the region under the Natural Economy North West project that NE is a major stakeholder in. This 'Natural Environment Index' (NEI) of environmental value, whilst still limited by available data, represents a much better measure than the Living Environment aspect of IMD. By analysing against IMD mapped data, NEI data can be used to identify places where the most socio-economically deprived areas correspond with those areas that have low, or poor quality, NEI.

*A example map of Natural Environment Index across the region, graded from high to low quality, is included below. Links to the full report, 'Identifying Spatial Relationships Between Natural Environment Quality and Multiple Deprivation' containing further maps and the methodology, and to the report's executive summary are contained within section 8.*

The regional picture of natural environment value is similar to that of socio-economic deprivation, with a band of low natural environment value across the Merseybelt and East Lancashire. The south of the region has a generally lower environmental value than the north, and there are fewer isolated 'pockets' of low natural environment value than with socio-economic deprivation. (*Identifying Spatial Relationships Between Natural Environment Quality and Multiple Deprivation*, TEP 2007: 44)

As a general summary; areas with poor natural environmental value, or low NEI scores, occur across the region, centred around the M65 Blackburn to Burnley corridor and East Lancashire former mill towns; a strip running south from Preston to Chorley; Blackpool; the Chester – Wirral area; Northwich to Crewe; Macclesfield; Frosham Bridge area; the Mersey belt with central, east and south Merseyside; and Greater Manchester. With rural weighting applied to the NEI, additional areas with low natural environment value are clearer within Cheshire, West Lancashire, and in Cumbria the west coast from Whitehaven to the Solway Firth and the area between Carlisle and Penrith.

**As stressed earlier, the availability to NE of information on need does not remove the onus which is on the applicant to evidence the lack of access to the natural environment which it seeks to address through its proposal.**



## 6. Priority groups

It will be our **priority to fund** projects that will bring lasting change for our **target beneficiaries** in terms of their opportunity to access, enjoy and engage with the natural environment. Our target beneficiaries are:

- i) People currently under-represented in terms of contact with the natural environment including disabled people, the young, black and ethnic minority communities and older people.
- ii) Non geographic priority groups identified through existing or new policy, strategies and formal studies, e.g. those experiencing poor health.
- iii) Communities and individuals experiencing social exclusion through disability, unemployment, age or economic and social disadvantage.
- iv) People disadvantaged by where they live through lack of access to the natural environment.

## 7. Key regional strategies

The above priority groups can be identified thematically through reference to the Department of Work and Pensions report [Opportunity for All](#) and the Natural England [Diversity Review](#) and '[Outdoors For All? – Diversity Action Plan](#)'

Applicants are advised to consider how their applications complement and integrate with the themes, aims and objectives of local, regional and national strategies and plans. Demonstration of this fit within an application will be required. Such key regional strategies include:

The North West Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy  
<http://www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/Planning/RegionalPlanning/>

Agenda for Growth – Regional Forestry Framework  
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infid-7bajaw>

Local Biodiversity Action Plans  
<http://www.biodiversitynw.org.uk/actionplans/>

North West Health Inequalities Strategy (North West Strategic Health Authority - Spring 08) / Community Health Profiles  
<http://www.northwest.nhs.uk/>  
[http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?QN=P\\_HEALTH\\_PROFILES](http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?QN=P_HEALTH_PROFILES)

Regional Rural Delivery Framework  
<http://www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/EnvironmentRural/RegionalRuralPolicy/>

Greater Manchester: Rural Development Programme in England  
[http://www.manchester-enterprises.com/documents/RDPE\\_GM\\_implementation\\_plan.pdf](http://www.manchester-enterprises.com/documents/RDPE_GM_implementation_plan.pdf)

Action for Sustainability – North West Sustainable Development Framework  
<http://www.nwrpb.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment>

Red Rose Forest Plan

<http://www.redroseforest.co.uk/>

Mersey Forest Plan

<http://www.merseyforest.org.uk/>

Consideration should also be given to the Local Strategic Partnerships. These, in conjunction with Local Authorities, should have Sustainable Community Strategies in place, which should be focused on integrating social, economic and environmental issues.

Local Greenspace Strategies, produced by local authorities, should be referred to in 'ground truthing' the need for natural greenspace where a project seeks to provide new, or improve existing, provision.

Other local or sub-regional strategies that should be consulted where appropriate include planning documents such as Local Development Frameworks and Area Action Plans.

Within the North West region, there are three community forests and their forest plans set out their vision over a 40 year timespan. The community forests aim to realise social, economic and environmental improvement, provide a focus for involving people in regenerating land, establishing a greener, more attractive and accessible environment in which to live and work. Red Rose Forest is Greater Manchester's Community Forest, covering 75,000 hectares of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Salford, Trafford and Wigan. A wide partnership is involved in the delivery of its Plan, including six local authority partners. Pennine Edge Forest is the Community Forest initiative on the eastern edge of Greater Manchester covering the other four districts - Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport and Tameside. It is a partnership of the four local authorities, Groundwork Trusts, BTCV, United Utilities, Forestry Commission and North West Development Agency. Mersey Forest is the largest of the twelve Community Forests, covering 115,000 hectares of Merseyside and North Cheshire, and including nine partner local authorities.

The two largest Forests, Red Rose and Mersey, are also lead partners in the establishment of the Green Infrastructure Unit in the North West, with Natural England and other key regional stakeholders. The unit is developing the concept of green infrastructure and the connections between urban green space, urban-rural fringe and the wider countryside, encouraging a more systematic approach to planning and managing green space across local authority boundaries, so that a coherent network is created. The unit circulates information and stimulates debate among local and regional stakeholders. *A link to the unit's website and the North West Green Infrastructure Guide is given in section 8.*

Emerging sub-regional initiatives include the Regional Park vision for the Croal Irwell Valley and the Weaver Valley masterplan. The Croal Irwell vision, prepared by the Red Rose Forest and the Greater Manchester local authorities of Salford, Bolton and Bury seeks to reinforce green space links from the centre of Salford out to the urban fringes and countryside of the northern Greater Manchester area. It aims to coordinate and integrate a number of important existing strategies and programmes for social and environmental regeneration. The Mouth of the Weaver Masterplan is a vision that seeks to improve the multi-functional, recreational, economic and environmental use of the area, with projects that respond sympathetically to its landscape characteristics. Examples include supporting wildlife habitats, creating

more opportunities for water-based recreation, and improving the settings of business parks and industrial units in the area.

There are many Area Based Initiatives (ABIs) operating in the region seeking to address different aspects of its social, economic or environmental issues. Such initiatives, driven by funding cycles and shifting priorities in national and regional government are changing constantly, so a brief overview is difficult to provide. *A link to the Regional Coordination Unit's webpages on ABI's is contained in section 8.* Applicants are invited to provide knowledge on the existence of ABIs applicable to their project.

Access to Nature is only one scheme to be funded through the BIG Lottery Fund's Changing Places programme. Other Award Partners for Changing Places are running schemes that have either have some crossover with Access to Nature's priorities, targets and outcomes, or would provide potential alternative sources of funds for those projects that are either unsuccessful in securing funds through Access to Nature or where Access to Nature is not the most appropriate scheme for a project. *Links to the other Award Partner's scheme websites can be found at section 8.*

## 8. Sources of advice & information

### Contacts

| Regional Adviser   | Project Support   |
|--|---|
| Gareth Lawler<br>Natural England<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Bridgewater House<br>Whitworth Street<br>Manchester<br>M1 6LT<br><br>Telephone: 0300 060 1822<br>Email:<br><a href="mailto:gareth.lawler@naturalengland.org.uk">gareth.lawler@naturalengland.org.uk</a> | Val Walmsley<br>Natural England<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Bridgewater House<br>Whitworth Street<br>Manchester<br>M1 6LT<br><br>Telephone: 0300 060 1842<br>Email:<br><a href="mailto:val.walmsley@naturalengland.org.uk">val.walmsley@naturalengland.org.uk</a> |

### Access to Nature webpages

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/accesstonature>

### Indices of Multiple Deprivation

\* Communities and Local Government – IMD data and comparison. Searchable by region, local authority, LSOA name or code, postcode and by searchable map

<http://www.imd.communities.gov.uk/>

Communities and Local Government – IMD homepage

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/>

Communities and Local Government – IMD 2007

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation07/>

Office for National Statistics – searchable by postcode or area name

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination>

### Super Output Areas

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/geography/products/geog-products-area/names-codes/soa/index.html>

**Urban / Rural Classification**

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp>

**Population statistics**

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/default.asp>

**North West Regional Intelligence Unit**

<http://www.nwriu.co.uk/>

**Regional Coordination Unit – Area Based Initiatives (ABI)**

<http://www.rcu.gov.uk/abi/> &

<http://213.121.210.181/abi/>

**Geographic Information**

Natural England WebMap (internal use only)

<http://webmap/>

MAGIC

<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

Nature On the Map

<http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk/>

**Green Infrastructure**

<http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk/>

<http://www.pbrs.org.uk/>

**Natural Environment Index (NEI) / Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)**

<http://www.naturaleconomynorthwest.co.uk/>

Report – ‘Identifying Spatial Relationships Between Natural Environment Quality and Multiple Deprivation’. Under ‘Resources / Reports / PBRs’

<http://www.naturaleconomynorthwest.co.uk/download.php?Identifying%20Spatial%20Relationships%20-%20Report.pdf>

Executive summary

<http://www.naturaleconomynorthwest.co.uk/download.php?Identifying%20Spatial%20Relationships%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

Other NEI / ANGSt

[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/north\\_west/ourwork/naturaleconomy.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/north_west/ourwork/naturaleconomy.aspx)

<http://www.nwda.co.uk/news--events/press-releases/200701/northwest-to-make-more-of-beau.aspx>

[http://www.pbrs.org.uk/applications\\_content.php?ID=63](http://www.pbrs.org.uk/applications_content.php?ID=63)

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/greenspace/greenspacestandards.aspx>

**Local Development Frameworks**

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/genpub/en/1115311947782.html>

**Other Changes Spaces Big Lottery Fund Award Partners**

Big Lottery Fund – funding programmes, including Changing Spaces

[http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/all\\_open\\_programmes-uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/all_open_programmes-uk)

Groundwork UK – ‘Community Spaces’

<http://www.community-spaces.org.uk>

Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) – ‘Local Food’

<http://www.localfoodgrants.org/>

Building Research Establishment – ‘Community Sustainable Energy Programme’

<http://www.communitysustainable.org.uk/>

MIND – 'Ecominds'

<http://www.mind.org.uk/ecominds/>

**Selected other grant schemes and funding providers**

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/English/>

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/funding/index.htm>

<http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/england/index.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/>

<http://www.entrust.org.uk/>

<http://www.sitatrust.org.uk/nature-funding>