



Ouse Washes  
The Heart of the Fens

## INTRODUCTION

## Understanding the Landscape Partnership Scheme Area

### About Landscape Partnership schemes

Landscape Partnership schemes are funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) through its Landscape Partnership (LP) programme. The LP programme's overarching aim is to provide grants for the conservation and enjoyment of areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the UK.

The Landscape Partnership programme contributes significantly to the UK's commitment to implement the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which aims to strengthen the protection, management and planning of landscapes. The ELC has adopted a definition of landscape which usefully underpins the landscape partnership philosophy (ELC 2000, article 1):

*'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'*

The Landscape Partnership programme seeks to conserve the landscape heritage - both natural and cultural - in distinctive landscapes, at the same time delivering benefits for people within and beyond the areas the LP schemes cover, in particular in terms of the way people understand, perceive and relate to the landscapes they live or work in, or visit. In so doing, LP schemes create a holistic and balanced approach to the management of landscape heritage at a landscape-scale and help people to connect with it, thereby leading to continued activity and a lasting legacy. Landscape Partnership schemes are expected to deliver benefits across all four LP programme outcomes:

#### The four Landscape Partnership programme outcomes

- To conserve or restore the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character.
- To increase community participation in local heritage.
- To increase access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage.
- To increase training opportunities in local heritage skills.

LP schemes are led by partnerships of local, regional and national organisations with a range of interests in the area. Through this partnership approach a portfolio of smaller projects are brought together, each of which will deliver multiple benefits. As such, the benefits of the scheme as a whole will be of significantly greater value than the sum of its parts, together providing for long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for the LP area.

### Introduction to the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme

The Ouse Washes: The Heart of the Fens Landscape Partnership (OWLP) scheme focuses on a unique, largely man-made landscape, straddling the border between Cambridgeshire and Norfolk in the heart of the Fens. The landscape area stretches for 48.5km between Denver at the northern end and Fen Drayton Lakes to the south and covers a total of 243 km<sup>2</sup>. It includes the whole of the Ouse Washes including the WWT Welney reserve and the two RSPB wetland reserves (Fen Drayton lakes and Ouse Fen) to its south as well as surrounding low-lying, agricultural land and small communities.



**Landscape Character Assessment**  
 OUSE WASHES: THE HEART OF THE FENS LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

Terrain Model  
 337/LA/011

*The Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership area. Image created by Sheils Flynn for OWLP; © Crown Copyright and database rights 2013 Cambridgeshire County Council Ordnance Survey Licence 10023205.*

The OWLP area is highly distinctive and has a very strong sense of place arising from its very specific and unique historic, wildlife and cultural origins and significance. The OWLP area is a coherent unit in terms of its landscape, environmental and historic values and the social and cultural associations with it. This is a predominantly rural area, where huge open skies, expansive views, strongly linear landscape features, isolated settlements and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity prevail. The area's cultural context permeates its heritage features and its social history. Its subtle but distinctive sense of place is much more significant than any notion of prettiness or 'natural beauty'. A significant amount of the area consists of highly productive agricultural land, much of it around or below sea level. It also encompasses an expanding network of internationally designated washlands and other wetland areas, together forming one of the UK's largest wetland sites. The area also contains abundant, nationally significant and well-preserved palaeo-environmental and archaeological deposits, as well as strategically significant historic drainage features designed on a grand scale.

*"A place that links the stories of the past and the possibilities of the future"*

The name of the scheme reflects the national importance of the area, with the 'Ouse Washes' forming the 'heart' of the Fens: it reflects the unique and important role the rivers of the Bedford Level have played and are still playing in the drainage of the Fens and in the prevention of flooding of huge tracts of valuable agricultural land and numerous settlements both within and well beyond The Fens. In addition, the 'heart' also refers to the wetlands in the area, together forming a nationally significant wetland and wildlife area and a core area in the fen-wide ecological connectivity network of wetland habitats as promoted through the 'Fens for the Future' Strategy, crucial for the survival of a large number of significant and rare flora and fauna species.



*Aerial view of the internationally significant washlands of the Ouse Washes, looking north along the 17<sup>th</sup> century New Bedford River: together they form part of the UK's largest drainage scheme in history, still functioning as originally intended. Kite Aerial Photography © Bill Blake Heritage Documentation.*

## Origins of the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership

The seeds for the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership (OWLP) were sown back in December 2010, at a series of workshops hosted by the then Fens IBDA (Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area). This brought together interested stakeholders and a list of potential projects for the whole of the Fens and illustrated that there was a distinct cluster of projects and ideas in and around the Ouse Washes. Cambridgeshire ACRE subsequently proposed to instigate a Landscape Partnership bid for this area as a natural progression from this work, and offered to develop and lead in the submission of a stage 1 application to the HLF. All those who had put forward a project as part of The Fens IBDA process were invited to attend the first steering group meeting in March 2011.

Two further steering group meetings were held in 2011, with representatives from a wide range of organisations, including statutory agencies, local authorities, parish councils, charities and community groups, together representing all different interests in the landscape. In addition, a well-attended workshop was held in April 2011. This workshop focused on: discussions about what people feel is special about the landscape and its heritage; further project ideas; and partners' involvement with the partnership and scheme development.

Furthermore, in the autumn of 2011, consultants from Big Society Funding were brought in to discuss the scheme with all partners involved, help work up projects and draft information for the Stage 1 application.

Cambridgeshire ACRE submitted the Stage 1 application in February 2012. The HLF response on the stage 1 bid was very positive, with approval given in July 2012. The Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership Scheme received an earmarked first-round pass of £995,600, which included a grant of £90,500 for the development towards the stage 2 bid. Permission to start was given in October 2012, with a Programme Manager in place by December 2012.

## Composition of the Partnership

The partnership consists of a wide number of organisations with interests in the Ouse Washes landscape, together embracing all of the heritage interests of the project area. The partnership is not driven by the vision of one organisation but is broadly based and there to serve the interests of the community.

A total of 26 key organisations are either on the board and/or are involved as project delivery partners and have all signed a Partnership Agreement (see textbox). The partnership is led by Cambridgeshire ACRE, which has extensive experience at developing and managing community partnership schemes.

The Landscape Partnership Board has been responsible for the scheme's development and consists of 15 representatives from 14 different organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Together, they cover the main interests in the landscape. There is a particular strong emphasis on local community representation from both the Norfolk and Cambridgeshire parts of the OWLP area (Table below). The Board has met regularly and have ensured a timely decision-making process throughout the development phase.

## Key Organisations in the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership: on the OWLP Board and/or Project Delivery Partners

- Arts Development in East Cambridgeshire (ADeC)
- Bill Blake Heritage Documentation
- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
- Cambridge Archaeological Unit
- Cambridgeshire ACRE
- Cambridgeshire Association for Local History
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Diocese of Ely
- Ely Museum
- Environment Agency
- Fen Skating Association
- Fens Museum Partnership
- Green Light Trust
- Manea Parish Council
- Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners
- Mepal Parish Council
- Mike Petty
- Natural England
- Prickwillow Engine Trust
- Rosmini Centre
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Sutton Parish Council
- Welney Parish Council
- Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)
- Wildlife Conservation Partnership (WCP)
- Workers' Educational Association (WEA), Eastern Region

*Overview of the types of land use interests represented on the Project Board.*

<b>Interest in the Ouse Washes landscape</b>	<b>Number of representatives on Board (note that some Board members represent more than one interest)</b>
Local Communities & Parishes	4
Wildlife & Environment	3
Tourism & Waterways	2
Historic Environment & Historic Research	2
Local Farmers and Business Owners	2
Public Access	1
Education	1
Museums	1
Churches	1

In addition to the above key organisations, the Partnership also contains a wider 'Partner Forum' of c50 organisations, together spanning the public, private, voluntary and community sectors within the project area, providing an excellent and extensive network to ensure a successful scheme. These

organisations have all taken an active interest in the scheme and have been kept informed of progress through emails, social media and other means of communication.

### **Purpose of the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership**

The OWLP scheme aims to deliver multiple benefits to the natural and historic environment and the local communities in the area, delivering across all four LP outcomes. The ambitions of the partnership are clearly reflected in the OWLP scheme's overarching vision:

#### **Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme's VISION**

- A place managed for the needs of all its inhabitants and visitors;
- A place for people to thrive and wildlife to flourish;
- A place that links the stories of the past and the possibilities of the future.

Through joint working as part of the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership (OWLP), the partnership hopes to derive a range of benefits, the main ones which are:

#### **Strengthening partnership working across the area**

Unlike many other LP schemes, the area covered by the OWLP scheme is not currently part of a landscape designation (e.g., an AONB or National Park) and thus does not benefit from the management structures and joint promotion programmes already in place for such areas. In addition, the OWLP landscape area covers two counties and five districts, with resulting fragmented management. As a result, the focus of the partnership through the OWLP scheme is on strengthening and further developing partnership working across the area, and the development of integral, holistic and forward-looking management strategies for the area.

#### **Promotion of the area as a visitor destination**

The area is generally not well known and is not yet considered a tourism destination, with relatively few visitors exploring the area. In addition, most locals and visitors alike have limited awareness of the extent, richness and significance of the natural and historic heritage this area has to offer. The current tourism offer is also highly fragmented with a general lack of a joined-up approach. The focus of the OWLP partnership is on the development of well-researched, well-publicized, clearly defined and joined-up visitor promotion and destination marketing materials for the area.

#### **Leaving a strong legacy of community engagement**

The dispersed settlements and farmsteads strung across the area come with a certain level of deprivation: at least part of the OWLP area's communities suffer from low incomes, low educational attainment and high unemployment. This comes with limited public access and engagement opportunities across the area. The OWLP scheme is very community-focused, to encourage greater community empowerment, cohesion and participation. The partner chosen to lead on the scheme, Cambridgeshire ACRE, is a community-based charity, with the majority of the delivery projects also containing strong community-led and/or community-participatory elements. The partnership is keen to leave a legacy of community engagement, with key agencies, other partner organisations and communities working together, jointly co-ordinating effective conservation and green space access management and maintenance, and to encourage community stewardship of local heritage assets.

## Community Engagement and Consultation

Throughout the development phase consultations, events and working groups have been key to ensuring the necessary input and ‘buy-in’ from all partners, stakeholders and the people affected by the scheme:

### Community Consultations

A range of community consultations were organised as part of the Audience & Access Development Planning. In total, 7 consultation events were held in local parishes and 5 in surrounding market towns, obtaining further information from local residents through an online survey. Separate consultations and surveys were conducted with stakeholders and visitors (Table below). A total of 375 responses were obtained, providing significant information about:

- Knowledge, awareness, values and attitudes towards the Ouse Washes landscape and its heritage;
- The audience profiles engaged with the Ouse Washes LP area and heritage;
- Access and engagement barriers, needs and opportunities;

<b>Audience &amp; Access Development Planning: Consultations held, June - August 2013</b>		
<b>Community Consultation</b> ↓	<b>Stakeholder Consultation</b> ↓	<b>Visitor Consultation</b> ↓
<b>Local Communities in LP area</b> ➤ Group discussions in local parishes ➤ Online survey	<b>Board &amp; Delivery Partners</b> ➤ Online survey ➤ Phone and other contact	<b>Day Trippers &amp; Longer term visitors</b> ➤ Face to face interviews at partner sites in OWLP area
<b>Market Towns</b> ➤ Face to face surveys ➤ Online survey	<b>Wider organisations involved in LP area</b> ➤ Online survey	

*Overview of types of consultations held as part of the Audience & Access planning work carried out.*

### Partnership Events

In addition to the events that took place as part of the Stage 1 submission and community consultation work additional events were organised during the development phase to guide the work. The key events were:

- In May 2013 key partners came together and presented their individual projects which helped to exchange information and ideas between groups.
- 60 stakeholders attended a conference in September 2013. Here, the results of the Landscape Character Assessment and Audience & Access Planning work were presented and workshops were held discussing means to overcome barriers to access and engagement and the legacy work of the scheme. Displays were also held and concepts for the OWLP logo were discussed.



*Workshop during well-attended OWLP conference in September 2013. Image courtesy of Chris Holley.*

### **Working Groups**

As part of the development phase, several working groups were formed, bringing in specialist knowledge from the Board and wider partner forum where needed. These working groups focused on the following aspects of the development work:

- To guide the work of and discuss results from the Landscape Character Assessment carried out by our landscape consultants, Sheils Flynn;
- To provide necessary input about the biodiversity and conservation interests into the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP);
- To discuss the direction and sequencing of the destination marketing ambitions for the scheme and those for the OWLP landscape area itself;
- The OWLP also worked closely with the Fenland Ditch Group and the Fens for the Future Partnership in the development of an appropriate Ditch Biodiversity Survey methodology piloted in the agricultural parts of the OWLP area as part of the development phase.

### **Community Events & Social Media**

Additional community feedback has also been obtained through the following channels:

- Stalls at popular local festivals and fetes, to promote the OWLP's scheme: 29 June at Sutton Gault (Gault Day at the Sutton Festival) and 13 July at the Manea Gala. Additional surveys and discussions with local residents were conducted at these events.
- Information about our development phase and community consultations has been widely distributed through various other media, including presentations given at meetings organised by other partnerships; distribution of leaflets; regular articles in the monthly Cambridgeshire ACRE e-newsletters (subscription of >1,000); articles written for partner organisations' newsletters and parish council magazines; and press releases.

- A lot of feedback has also been obtained through our social media outlets, in particular comments received on our OWLP blog posts (<http://ousewasheslps.wordpress.com/>) and our Twitter pages (<https://twitter.com/ousewasheslps>). The number of hits and comments on these social media sites has been high throughout the development phase and has shown continuous growth.



OWLP stand at community event in Manea, July 2013.

### ***Relationships with other projects and initiatives***

During the development phase, the OWLP has exchanged information and ideas with the following partnerships and initiatives:

- Fens for the Future Partnership
- Fenland Ditch Group
- Great Ouse AONB Working Group (Peter Quest; Bridget Flanagan; Helen Boothman)
- Greater Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership
- Greater Cambridge - Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership
- Vision 2030 for Cambridge sub-region (Peter Landshoff; Peter Carolin)
- Friends of Holt Island Nature Reserve, St Ives (Ian Jackson)
- Swavesey Port and Floods: HLF-funded project, Swavesey Video Group (Mike Swain)
- The Horseman's Word: HLF-funded project, Field Theatre Group Littleport (Deborah Curtis)
- Working group to turn the old J H Adams shop in Littleport into a Heritage Centre (with Littleport Society) (Debra Jordan)
- Rich Soil, Rich Heritage: HLF-funded project, The Viva Arts & Community Group, Soham (Frank Crosby)

- Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) (Mike Carter and Mark Hodgkinson)
- Community Sport Activation Fund Partnership, “Sporting Choices in the Ouse Washes Landscape” – Partnership bid led by Cambridgeshire ACRE. This is a bid to Sports England, based around the Ouse Washes LP area, to offer increasing opportunities to participate in a wide range of non-traditional sports, with a particular focus to encourage participation by those that currently have no sporting habit.

This momentum will be sustained throughout the scheme’s delivery phase.

### LCAP: Plan authors

Mark Nokkert, appointed by Cambridgeshire ACRE as the Programme Manager for the OWLP scheme compiled the information in this Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) in collaboration with a range of contributors, which included all project lead delivery partners.

Further information was obtained through commissioned work as well as through direct involvement from a wide range of people from key partner organisations and the wider partner forum. Key contributors of texts or images, or through help with editing work and/or information provision towards this plan include: Alan Akeroyd; James Baddeley; James Baker; Martin Baker; Kirsten Bennett; Bill Blake; Alison Brown; Rachael Brown; Cliff Carson; Mike Carter; Kate Collins; Michael and Lorna Delanoy; Nick Dickson; Eddy Edwards; Chris Evans; Jo Finlow; Bridget Flanagan; Kasia Gdaniec; Anna Grows; David Hoccom; Mark Hodgkinson; Chris Holley; Chris Hudson; Dawn Isaac; Ian Jackson; Bill Jenman; Scilla Latham; Leigh Marshall; Sarah Moore; Kevin Peberdy; Mike Petty; Sarah Poppy; Martin Redding; Paul Separovic; Elizabeth Stazicker; Nicky Stockman; Peter Stroud; Peter Taylor; Catherine Weightman; Andrew Westwood-Bate; Jessica Weyell; Niki Williamson; and Peter Quest.

This document was written in the period from June to October 2013, with consultation carried out on individual sections throughout this period, and on the whole of the report in October 2013. The final document was approved by the Project Board at its last meeting on 31 October and subsequently submitted to the HLF on 11 November 2013.

### Scope of the Landscape Conservation Action Plan

This Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) is the main document accompanying the second round submission to the HLF. It sets out a clear vision and strategic framework for the OWLP area and detailed plans how to deliver benefits for the landscape and its communities. It does this in a structured and logical way:

#### Outline of the Contents of this LCAP

##### 1) Setting the Context:

- A description of the character and significance of the landscape, its heritage and communities (Sections 1 and 2);
- An overview of the existing national, regional and local policies and management strategies relevant to the OWLP area (Section 1).

## 2) Outlining the needs of the landscape:

- An understanding of inherent vulnerabilities and the threats the landscape and communities are facing (Section 3);
- Setting out the opportunities to address these issues, showing which are the priorities and needs of the landscape and its communities (Section 3).

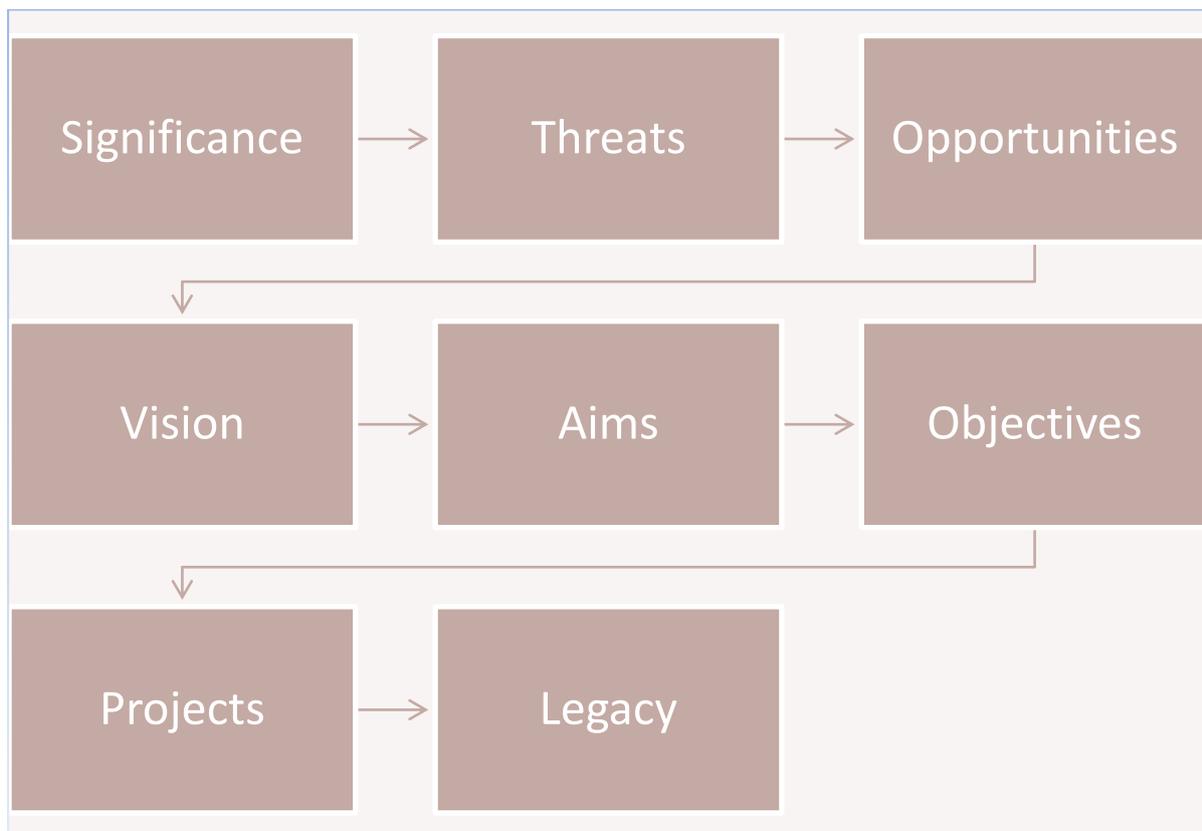
## 3) Presenting the OWLP programme to address these needs:

- An understanding of how the OWLP will address the issues facing the landscape and taps into the opportunities outlined (Section 4);
- Details of the projects the partnership will be delivering in order to address the needs of the landscape, its heritage and communities and which meet the four LP programme outcomes (Section 5 and Appendix 1);
- Details of how the progress of the OWLP scheme will be monitored and its success evaluated (Section 6).

## 4) Sustaining the benefits post-scheme:

- Details of how the OWLP scheme will provide lasting benefits for the landscape and its communities (Section 7).

Visually this can be shown as a logical progression from an understanding of the landscape heritage to project delivery, leading onto a lasting legacy for the landscape and its communities:



Throughout the delivery phase of the OWLP scheme, the LCAP will be a key document for the whole partnership, forming a detailed Action Plan that will illustrate how the needs of the landscape will be addressed throughout the scheme and beyond.

The LCAP will form a key document for the following audiences:

- **HLF:** Through the LCAP the HLF can understand what the partnership tries to achieve and can monitor the progress towards delivery;
- **Central Delivery team:** The LCAP sets out how each delivery partner will carry out its project(s) and how these projects are interlinked, together providing wider-ranging benefits. With the LCAP in place, progress can be tracked and the success of the various projects and the scheme as a whole evaluated;
- **Delivery Partners:** The LCAP provides all delivery partners with details for the delivery of their projects, with their outputs, outcomes and costs, and clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms described.
- **Wider Partner Forum & other stakeholders:** The LCAP sets out how the OWLP intends to create a lasting and sustainable legacy for the landscape and its communities, showing how a wide range of organisations can be involved to help achieve the partnership's ambitions.
- **Wider public:** This document provides local residents and landowners with a clear understanding of what features are important in the landscape, why and to whom these matter. It also reflects the residents' and visitors' needs and wishes for community engagement.

Once approved by the HLF, this document will be distributed widely and made available to the general public through our online resources.

Following approval by the HLF East of England region (expected March 2014) the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme will be delivered over a period of three years, from April 2014 until March 2017. The total budget for delivery will be £905,100 grant funding from the HLF, further matched by £62,950 cash match funding from the Environment Agency, RSPB, WWT and Cambridgeshire ACRE, plus the equivalent of £140,343 in in-kind contributions.

### Gaps and limitations in the LCAP

The sheer quantity of significant heritage in the scheme area (Section 1) and the wide range of needs identified for the landscape and communities (Section 3), combined with a relatively modest budget for delivery (Section 5), mean that it is impractical to address all the issues equally. The process of producing the LCAP has allowed us to focus on the key needs of the landscape and communities that can best be addressed through the specifics of a Landscape Partnership Scheme. Engrained in our Strategic Aims & Objectives (Section 4), however, is the focus of the partnership on using the OWLP scheme as an ideal platform through which a coherent and shared legacy for the future landscape can be assured (Section 7).

A significant amount of consultation has been carried out as part of the development phase and a clear picture of the knowledge, values and needs of local communities has been obtained as a result. Inevitably, there will still be gaps in our understanding on this subject, but increasing our understanding of the different values people place on heritage will remain one of the key aims throughout the delivery phase, to ensure a strong community-founded legacy for the OWLP scheme.

## Key documents to be read with the LCAP

The LCAP summarises the key findings of the additional research undertaken during the development phase as well as other supporting information. Full copies of this information will be made available through a range of online resources (OWLP website; OWLP blog; Cambridgeshire ACRE website):

- **Landscape Character Assessment:** This was carried out by consultants Sheils Flynn. Their results, a well-researched stand-alone report, fed directly into the LCAP (Section 1 of this document, and have influenced other sections such as Section 3 ('Threats and Opportunities').
- **Audience & Access Development planning work:** This work was carried out by Cambridgeshire ACRE, with its unique expertise in providing advice on rural development. The results have shaped the projects and have had an important influence on further defining the needs of the communities. Data obtained through this work will be kept by Cambridgeshire ACRE and made available to all interested parties. Summaries of the results of this work have been incorporated into the LCAP in Appendix 2.
- **Ditch Biodiversity Survey:** This was carried out by two consultants: Jonathan Graham (aquatic plants specialist) and Martin Hammond (invertebrate specialist). The results fed directly into Section 1 and have influenced the scope and outputs of several delivery-phase projects.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Legacy Planning:** This was carried out by James Baddeley, based in Stretham, Cambs. The results fed directly into sections 6 and 7, and also further refined the details of various projects, in particular the description of their expected outcomes.
- **Logo and house style manual development:** This was carried out by Speed, based in Peterborough. This has helped focus the partnership on their communal goals, laying a firm foundation for a range of key delivery-phase projects.

In addition to the above information, other documents have informed the development of the LCAP and the OWLP scheme and are listed in the bibliography. The following has had a particular important influence in the preparation of the LCAP; it is therefore recommended that the below document is read in conjunction with the LCAP:

*Fens for the Future, a Strategic Plan for Fenland: A Proposal for an Enhanced Ecological Network.* Final Report, June 2012.

## Meeting the conditions of the HLF Stage One application

Although HLF were highly positive on the Stage 1 submission, they did highlight a few weaknesses; these have been systematically addressed as part of the development work:

<b>Addressing the HLF conditions following the stage 1 bid</b>
<p>1. <b>Redraw the boundary of the area.</b> The boundary for the stage 1 bid was considered somewhat vague and arbitrary. The boundary needs to be driven by the landscape using natural boundaries and boundaries understood by local people.</p>
<p>The Landscape Character Assessment with further refinement following the Audience &amp; Access Development work addressed this issue and has resulted in a well-thought through boundary surrounding a coherent landscape (Section 1 - 'Context').</p>
<p>2. <b>Develop a fuller and more focussed training programme (HLF Programme 'D').</b> The training 'offer' as described in the stage 1 bid was considered somewhat vague. Need to deliver more training with specific outcomes, linked ideally to recognised accreditation for participants.</p>
<p>Several projects have incorporated additional training elements, or strengthened their training offer to provide a highly structured training programme that addresses the identified skills gap (Sections 4 &amp; 5 and Appendix 1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Barn Owl Recovery</i>: At least two volunteers to achieve accreditation by Natural England as licensees to enable monitoring of Barn owl nest sites. At least one volunteer to obtain accreditation as a 'Restricted C' bird ringer operated through the national bird ringing scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO).</li> <li>- <i>Ditch Survey and training east of the Ouse Washes</i>. This project will provide professional training to landowners and IDB staff to promote a better understanding of the value of ditches and encourage better management.</li> <li>- <i>Wildlife Friendly Farming &amp; Community Engagement</i>: Introduces a 'Nature-Friendly Zone' to recognise the achievements of farmers enhancing habitats for wildlife habitats and promoting the sharing of best practice. This project will also include awareness training of sensitivities of significant archaeological sites in the agricultural landscape, in close cooperation with English Heritage.</li> <li>- <i>Digging Environment &amp; Ouse Washes Archaeology</i>: will provide up to 100 volunteers with tuition by up to 5 professional archaeologists in basic archaeological recording and excavation techniques. Those participating in the fieldwork thereafter for more than five days will receive certificate-accreditation. There will also be the opportunity for further volunteering during the processing of the forthcoming artefacts in the Unit's Cambridge offices, at which time there will be specialist artefact tuition.</li> <li>- <i>Community Kite Aerial Photography</i>: Professional training will be given in the handling of photographic cameras, flying kites for KAP capture, digital image handling and processing, and digital heritage documentation. The processes of image control, rectification, registration and montage production is experienced at a practitioner or technician level.</li> <li>- <i>Great Ouse Wetland Engagement Project</i>: will provide training for 10 volunteers to successfully deliver wildlife engagement activities to the public such as public swan feeds, providing local people with skills and a connection to their local wildlife.</li> <li>- <i>Migrant Links</i>: Training in oral history recording provided in order for volunteers to be able to capture migrant worker experience stories.</li> <li>- <i>Fen Folk Legend and Heroes</i>: This project will provide training in historic research, both online and the use of archival materials, to research and create local community heritage stories.</li> <li>- <i>Hidden Story Trails</i>: A series of workshops will provide a better understanding of the content and use of existing heritage resources, including the significant Bedford Level Corporation archives; participants will be trained how to conduct local heritage research and participate in creating stories and other content that will be 'hidden' in the trails identified for the OWLP and</li> </ul>

<p>presented on appropriately placed interpretation boards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Community Warden Scheme</i>: This will form a key training project within the scheme. It will deliver structured blocks of conservation education sessions to under 18s (Wetland ACEs) and over 18s (Wetland Adventurers), with placements at local WWT and RSPB reserves included within the training, thereby creating well-trained Community Wardens. Of the 48 participants, 12 individuals will obtain accredited units or completion of Entry Level 3 Certificate in Practical Skills in Environmental Conservation, and 25 individuals will be completing the John Muir Award.</li> <li>- <i>Volunteer Training &amp; Marketplace</i>: An essential part of this project will be the provision of a series of training opportunities for both partners and volunteers. This will also include training in social media and filming/interview training.</li> <li>- <i>Ouse Washes Tourism</i>: Will train up to 40 people as ‘Ambassadors’, ensuring ‘frontline’ operators in the tourism sector or those dealing with visitors or local educational establishments understand the Ouse Washes from a variety of angles.</li> <li>- <i>Species Identification and Monitoring</i> project: local people will be adequately trained and become involved in gathering detailed data on feeding habitats, disturbance, breeding success and leg ring codes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 Develop several projects in more detail.</b> Some projects (‘The Fishy Fens’; ‘Wildlife Friendly Farming’; Barn Owl Recovery’) to be developed more fully and either grounded in evidence or dropped.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>‘Wildlife Friendly Farming’</i>: The scheme will lead to tangible improvements on the farms, in the shape of new nature trails, to be opened up to the surrounding communities. Moreover, the project will provide a focus for participating farmers through their joint management of a newly created ‘Nature-Friendly Zone’, in order to deliver an integrated community engagement programme designed to promote awareness of, learning about and on-going access to the area’s unique farm wildlife heritage.</li> <li>- <i>‘Barn Owl Recovery’</i>: Additional research has been carried out, showing the need to focus on the Barn Owls, which highlights this as a priority species on a regional and national level, and an iconic species specifically associated with the linear structures in the area. The project will contribute significantly towards reinforcing the ecological network and connectivity of barn owls and grasslands within and between sites.</li> <li>- <i>‘The Fishy Fens’</i>: project has been dropped and a new conservation project has been created.</li> <li>- <i>Ditch Survey and training east of the Ouse Washes</i>: builds on the success of the Ditch Biodiversity Survey carried out during the development phase.</li> </ul> <p>For further details, see Appendix 1.</p>
<p><b>4 The HLF wished to receive assurance that the signs and interpretation are not simply an exercise in replacing old established ones but provide something new.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those projects which will include new interpretation panels or similar on-the-ground interpretation materials in all cases aim to fill in gaps in knowledge. The Audience &amp; Access Planning work clearly showed a great need with the resident population for more interpretation across the area which the following projects will address: <i>Giving Nature a Home at Fen Drayton Lakes</i>; <i>Great Ouse Wetland Engagement Project</i>; <i>Manea Community Conservation</i>; and <i>Hidden Story Trails</i>.</li> <li>- The <i>Destination Denver</i> project will provide a central electronic display, showcasing the outputs from all projects within the OWLP scheme, at the same time also promoting other Ouse Washes attractions &amp; events and local accommodation providers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5 Produce a single LCAP without other documents.</b> The HLF stressed that there is no need for a separate Audience Development Plan, but relevant information needs to be incorporated into the LCAP.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All consultancy reports written as part of the development work have been incorporated in the submission as supplementary documents, with all relevant information incorporated into the</li> </ul>

<p>LCAP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Audience &amp; Access Development work, undertaken by Cambridgeshire ACRE, has directly fed into the LCAP and influenced the development of the projects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6 Reconsider the timetable for the Development phase.</b> To reconsider the relatively tight, 12 month-appointment of a development officer to work out the details during the development phase.</p>
<p>Working through a strict timetable with clear deadlines set meant that the work was done in a total of 11 months. The Programme Manager ensured timely consultation moments and partnership input to ensure adherence to tight timetable.</p>
<p><b>7 Work out the details of the Development phase.</b> The details were considered rather thin and what needs doing needs to be thought through further.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme Manager developed a detailed Work Plan for the development phase, as well as a separate Work Plan for the development of the LCAP. The latter has been consulted widely with the partnership.</li> <li>- Cambridgeshire ACRE has kept the HLF and HLF-mentor up-to-date of development and changes throughout the development phase.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8 Reconsider the timetable for the Delivery phase.</b> To review the three-year delivery timetable (consider four years), to ensure that sufficient time is given to deliver the outcomes of the bid, especially as the area has no pre-existing partnerships to build on.</p>
<p>This has been extensively discussed by the Board. There was, nevertheless, uniform agreement that we should stick to the three years for delivery of the scheme. The partnership is confident the proposed works can be delivered in the three-year timescale. Also, no further match funding could be found which would be needed if the HLF contribution would go over the £1 million as a result of a 4-year delivery phase.</p>
<p><b>9 Review the absence of Management and Maintenance costs in the budget for any of the four HLF programmes.</b></p>
<p>With the overall cost of the OWLP it was not felt applicable to claim for this additional item. Instead, funding agreements to be signed with all relevant delivery partners will include a stipulation for a 10-year maintenance &amp; management requirement for all capital works (including interpretation) to be a standard requirement and part of the project's long term legacy.</p>
<p><b>10 Further develop the proposals for evaluation.</b> It was suggested to increase the budget for evaluation, the proposed £10K allowance for evaluation considered to be only sufficient for the final end-of-scheme evaluation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- During the development phase it was decided to carry out an independent study into the Monitoring, Evaluation and Legacy Planning for the OWLP scheme (Sections 6 &amp; 7). This has resulted in the inclusion of a mid-delivery review point and other evaluation work in the delivery phase timetable, with associated budget shifts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11 Further develop the Risk Log for the delivery phase.</b> The Risk Log as presented at the stage 1 bid did not reflect the full range of risks that might occur during delivery.</p>
<p>The Risk Log has been developed in much more detail, the details of which have been approved by the Project Board.</p>

## Introduction: Summary

The Ouse Washes: The Heart of the Fens Landscape Partnership (OWLP) scheme focuses on a unique, largely man-made landscape, straddling the border between Cambridgeshire and Norfolk in the heart of the Fens. The area contains highly productive agricultural land, a rapidly expanding network of internationally designated washlands and other wetland areas, abundant, nationally significant and well-preserved palaeo-environmental and archaeological deposits, as well as strategically significant historic drainage features designed on a grandiose scale.

The partnership consists of a wide range of organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, together embracing all of the heritage interests of the project area. The partnership has a strong emphasis on local community representation.

During 2013 additional research was undertaken to inform the development of the LCAP including a Landscape Character Assessment, Audience & Access Development work, Ditch Biodiversity Survey, and a Monitoring, Evaluation and Legacy Planning Framework. Extensive community consultation has ensured the necessary 'buy-in' from partners, stakeholders and local communities. These consultations have provided the necessary information on the knowledge, awareness, values and attitudes towards the Ouse Washes landscape and its heritage; the audience currently engaged as well as the access and engagement barriers, needs and opportunities.