



a vision for a

Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Feasibility Study Report



Nottinghamshire
County Council



Sherwood Forest Regional Park Vision

A future for the Sherwood Forest Area where community based projects, economic re-generation and environmental enhancement thrive together in this inspiring natural setting.



Report Commissioned by:

The Feasibility Study was undertaken jointly by Hallam Environmental Consultants Ltd. and Sheffield Hallam University for Nottinghamshire County Council, under the aegis of a Steering Group of key stakeholders drawn from the Project Management Board (PMB) who provided day to day guidance and advice. The PMB was initially set up to take forward the Sherwood Living Legends Big Lottery Bid, and has provided strategic guidance on this Feasibility Study.

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Key Sherwood Forest Area Assets include:

Major Visitor Attractions

Four of the top five Nottinghamshire attractions are in Sherwood



The Major Oak

A Unique and Iconic Natural Environment



Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve

Major Historical Assets



Newstead Abbey

Well Established Local Communities with a Strong Community Identity



Edwinstowe Village Hall

Diverse Mix of Land Uses



Management Working with the Environment



Using traditional methods

Opportunities in Sherwood Include:

Regeneration



Sherwood Energy Village on the Site of former Ollerton Colliery

Retention and Capitalisation of Assets



The restored Mill, Rufford

Restoration and Enhancement of the Historic and Natural Environment



Pond restoration



Tree planting



Rammed Earth Construction

A Quality Place to Live in and Around



Budby

A Positive Place for Investment



Center Parcs Head Office, Ollerton

Capitalising on Positive Brands:

Robin Hood



Sherwood Forest



Photographs courtesy of Keith Harrison, Nottinghamshire County Council and the Forestry Commission.

1. Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a Feasibility Study undertaken into the establishment of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park and makes recommendations regarding the way forward.

The key question being addressed in this Feasibility Study is whether identifying the Sherwood Forest Area and surroundings as a Regional Park would bring about transformation changes and add value to what is already being done. Underlying the above question are two further questions i.e.:

- Would better collaboration across the Sherwood Forest Area have synergistic benefits for locally-focused activity, by unlocking investment, bringing organisations together etc.?
- Would a Sherwood Forest Regional Park allow beneficial projects to be delivered which may otherwise be unlikely to succeed?

Core to the proposal are the intrinsic assets of the Sherwood Forest Area, i.e. the unique and iconographic landscape with its historic, cultural and ecological associations, and the local communities in and around the Forest. The Feasibility Study considers how to better capitalise on these economic, environmental and social assets for the benefit of the people and the environment of the region. Implicit in the Regional Park proposal is the use of environmental enhancement as a mechanism for social and economic improvements within the Regional Park and wider Sub-Region.

The Feasibility Study shows that establishing a Regional Park for Sherwood Forest will provide a development, planning and promotional mechanism to add significant value to existing partnerships, facilitate long term and balanced growth for the area and ultimately raise the value of Sherwood Forest's assets to unprecedented levels.

Improved collaboration across Sherwood Forest through a Regional Park will provide:

- Joint working, economies of scale and greater impact.
- Physical and conceptual links between sites and assets, ultimately making the value of the whole Regional Park far greater than the sum of its parts.
- Greater opportunities to unlock investment and lever regional and national funding sources by contributing to regional and national objectives/targets.
- Increased significance and context for individual projects that may otherwise be viewed as being merely of local benefit or as being ad hoc and without wider strategic value.
- A step change in marketing potential and opportunities.
- Maximum impact of Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood brands.
- Opportunities to effectively engage the private, public and voluntary sectors towards delivering common objectives.
- Greater facilitation of environmental enhancement and improved recreation facilities on the back of regeneration and other economic development.

By establishing a Regional Park for Sherwood Forest, partners and stakeholders will have the mechanism for taking a **strategic and long term approach** which will:

- Provide a powerful, unified and single voice – acting on behalf of a wide range of partners - to champion and influence.
- Give a balanced approach to the long term development and enhancement of Sherwood Forest.
- Identify gaps in services, assets and linkages.
- Identify and promote key strategic priorities for the benefit of the wider region.
- Develop a critical mass of assets at key nodes or gateways.
- Facilitate greater control of visitor movements through Sherwood Forest by providing and promoting gateways that have the capacity to cope with large numbers of visitors whilst discouraging access to sensitive / privately owned areas.
- Ensure physical and conceptual connection of sites and assets.
- Provide opportunities to develop the Sherwood Forest Area's Green Infrastructure.
- Ensure proactive rather than piecemeal or reactive development of the area.
- Provide a framework for rural business to thrive.
- Maximise opportunities for influencing planning policy and (in some cases) drawing on Section 106 funds towards Regional Park priorities.
- Facilitate the development of long term approaches to quality assurance, especially in terms of leisure, recreation and tourism related investments, to ensure a consistently high standard of investment and visitor experience throughout the Regional Park.

Establishment of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park will have a positive impact on hearts and minds, especially:

- The internal and external image of the area.
- Local people's perception of the value of the Sherwood Forest and its role in the future of the area.
- The overall attractiveness of the area to visitors and investors, helping attract and retain talented people in the area. This ultimately leads to improved economic performance and stability in the area.
- Recognition of the landscape as a positive asset for residents and visitors.
- Generating a sense of place whilst retaining local distinctiveness.
- General health and well being of the local population.

The benefits of a Regional Park extend beyond the boundaries of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park. Consultation has identified that there are common goals that people wish to see being achieved in the Sherwood Forest Area and a general desire to take things forward. A vision and objectives for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park have been developed.

Now would be an opportune time set up a Regional Park in Sherwood Forest, as it would capitalise on the momentum developed by the Living Legends Lottery Bid, and influence emerging regional and sub-regional objectives.

A Way Forward and outline Action Plan have been proposed in this Feasibility Report and detailed in a separate Business Plan. The proposal is for a small public / private / voluntary partnership run Regional Park which builds on and utilises existing fora. Recommendations are made regarding governance, delivery, boundaries and initial outputs etc. Likely funding costs and associated benefits are outlined, and key constraints and critical success factors are detailed.

2. Context and Brief (The Challenge and Opportunity)

2.1 Introduction

This report provides a summary of the findings of a study into the feasibility of establishing a Regional Park in and around Sherwood Forest. It evaluates the potential benefits and costs of setting up a Sherwood Forest Regional Park and drawing on the experience from established Regional Parks it makes recommendations for the best way forward.

The key question being addressed in this Feasibility Study is whether identifying the Sherwood Forest Area and surroundings as a Regional Park would bring about transformational changes and add value to what is already being done in the Area.

Underlying the above question are two further questions, i.e.:

- Would better collaboration across the Sherwood Forest Area have synergistic benefits for locally-focused activity, by unlocking investment, bringing organisations together etc.?
- Would a Sherwood Forest Regional Park allow beneficial projects to be delivered which may otherwise be unlikely to succeed?

Core to the Feasibility Study are the intrinsic assets of the Sherwood Forest Area, i.e. the unique and iconographic landscape with its historic, cultural and ecological associations, and the local communities in and around the Forest. The Feasibility Study considers how to better capitalise on these economic, environmental and social assets for the benefit of the people and the environment of the region. In particular it asks - would a Sherwood Forest Regional Park be an appropriate mechanism for this?

Implicit in the Regional Park proposal is use of environmental enhancement as a mechanism for social and economic improvements within the Regional Park and wider Sub-Region. A key role for the Regional Park will be to encourage the appropriate use of historical and environmental assets as away of promoting the Sherwood Forest Area.

The Feasibility Study included consultation with key stakeholders within the region, a focused audit of the Sherwood Region, and the review of and consultation with established Regional Parks. Details of the methodology are set out in Section 2.4.

The report format follows the study brief (as set out in Section 2.2 - Terms of Reference), this report covers the following:

- Study Objectives and Methodology (Section 2)
- Background to the Regional Park Concept (Section 4 and 5.2)
- Why Consider a Regional Park for Sherwood Forest? (Section 5)
- Assets, Opportunities and Challenges (Section 6)
- Added Value of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park (Section 5.3)
- Critical Success Factors (Section 6.4)
- Why a Regional Park Now (Section 5.5)

- Vision for the Regional Park (Section 7.1)
- Themes and Objectives (Section 7.2)
- Outputs and Outcomes (Section 6.5)
- Governance and Delivery (Section 8)
- Boundaries (Section 9)
- Funding (Section 10)
- The Way Forward / Delivery Plan (Section 11)

Recommendations are made at the end of each main section and in the final report summarised in a concluding section.

2.2 Terms of Reference

The brief for the Feasibility Study was to:

1. Examine the policy framework, baseline data, studies, information and organisational structures in the Sherwood Forest Area and identify the key issues.
2. Identify and assess the challenges and opportunities for achieving the partnership vision and objectives.
3. Define an agreed partnership vision with core aims and objectives.
4. Identify options for governing and delivering the vision and objectives.
5. Develop and evaluate the delivery and governance options.
6. Identify the preferred governance and delivery option to be taken forward with partners.
7. Formulate an indicative Action Plan for the preferred option that identifies and timetables its stages of development.

2.3 Team and approach

Key elements of the approach:

- Testing the concept.
- Does the idea of a Regional Park around Sherwood Forest have potential?
- Could a Regional Park make a positive contribution to regional, sub-regional and local objectives?
- How would a Sherwood Forest Regional Park work?
- Is there stakeholder support for a Regional Park?
- What lessons can be learnt from elsewhere?
- What key assets could a Regional Park capitalise upon?

- What are the issues and opportunities for Sherwood Forest of a Regional Park?
- Prepare an output that provides a succinct and concise overview of the issues, identifies next steps and which can be used to build partner support and take the concept forward (i.e. this Report and the Business Plan).

The Feasibility Study was undertaken jointly by Hallam Environmental Consultants Ltd. and Sheffield Hallam University for Nottinghamshire County Council, under the aegis of a Steering Group drawn from key stakeholders who provided day to day guidance and advice.

At key stages interim reports were presented to the Sherwood Project Management Board (PMB), a team drawn from key stakeholders within the Sherwood Forest Area comprising representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The recommendations agreed by the PMB form the basis of the report and the business plan. The PMB membership is shown in Appendix 1.

2.4. Methodology

The Feasibility Study used a mixture of complementary methods and approaches which ran in parallel:

- Sherwood Forest Area audit,
- Consultation with key stakeholders from within the region,
- Review and analysis of established Regional Parks,
- Scoping of options,
- Development and testing of options,
- Review and refinement of preferred options,
- Reporting and dissemination.

This work had into two distinct stages:

- Stage 1: Scoping, development of vision and initial consensus building
(December 2007 to February 2008)
- Stage 2: Refinement of vision, development of proposal, Business Plan and gaining acceptance
(March to May 2008)

A more detailed outline of the Methodology is given in Appendix 2 and is summarised in Figures 1 and 2 below:

Figure 1 Project Approach – Stage One

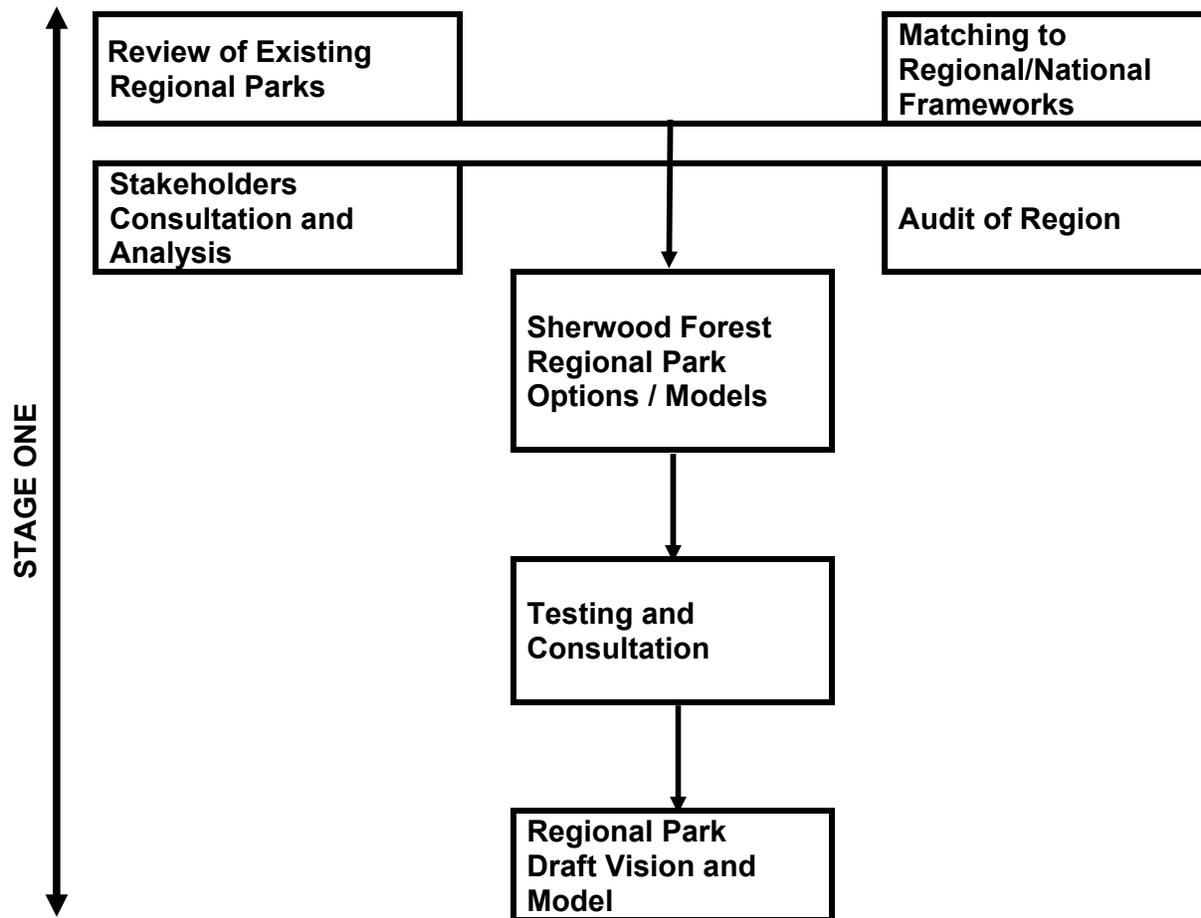
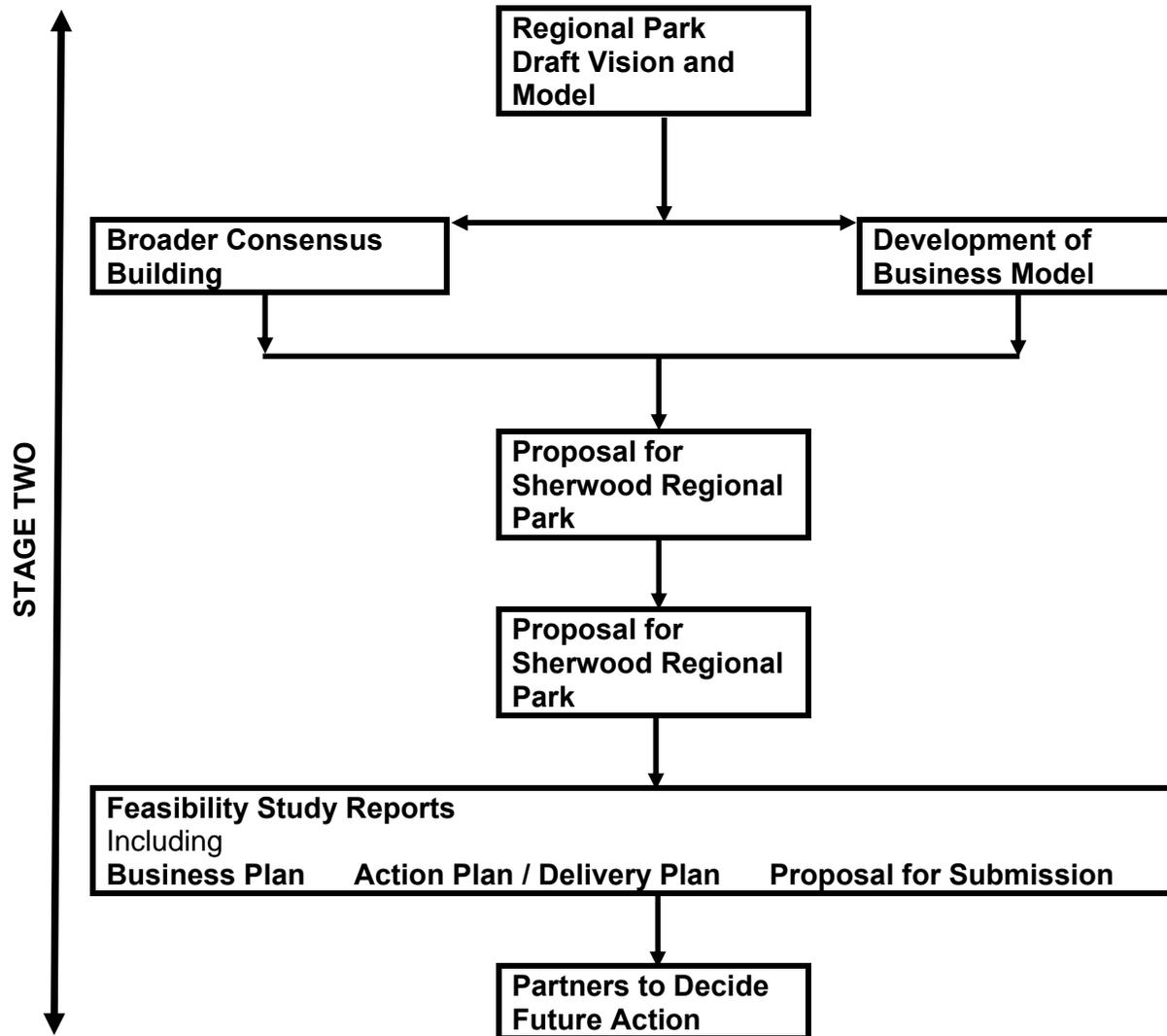


Figure 2 Project Approach – Stage Two



3 Consultation

3.1 Consultation Approach

There were two main elements of consultation:

1. Consultation with key stakeholders within the Sherwood Forest Area and surroundings
2. Consultation with key individuals in established Regional Parks

Consultation within the Sherwood Forest Area involved key individuals from seven broad stakeholder types, see Figure 3.

Figure 3 Main Stakeholder Types



Over 200 individuals were consulted. A full list of consultees can be found in Appendix 3.

A variety of forms of consultation were used including:

- One to one meetings,
- Phone and e-mail based consultation,
- Presentation to existing fora,
- Conference and stakeholder engagement events,
- An information leaflet, and
- A Briefing Note.

The main underlying study questions were:

- What are the area's current conditions/assets (economic/environmental/social)?
- What are the existing strengths of the area economic/environmental/social?
 - What is truly distinctive about the area?
 - What is important to stakeholders?
- Gaps and opportunities?
 - What are the main opportunities for the area?
 - What are the main issues confronting the area?
- Current activity - existing and proposed projects?
- New ideas and opportunities – how would a Regional Park help?
- Extent of the Regional Park – what should be the boundary?
- Challenges to developing the concept of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park?
- Governance and delivery?

3.2 Summary Points from Local Consultation - what Stakeholders want from a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

The following themes were identified by consultees as what they would like a Sherwood Forest Regional Park to deliver for the Area:

- The importance of the unique Sherwood Forest environment and the need to capitalise on this.
- The need for joined-up thinking.
- Regeneration and economic development within the Park and surroundings.
- Increased economic competitiveness with other regions.
- Working with partners to promote connectivity and cooperation.
- The need for a consistent strategic approach across the Sherwood Forest Area.
- Encouragement of community participation at all stages.
- Optimising the use of environmental assets within the Area.
- Interconnectivity (across the economic, environmental and social spectrums).
- An enhanced visitor economy.
- Improved branding and identity of the Area.
- Improved quality of life and sense of place for local communities.
- Improved leisure and recreational facilities.
- Improved transport links and the local infrastructure.
- Providing a more sustainable environment for business, communities and visitors.
- The need for help in realising opportunities, not for planning restrictions.

A summary of the key objectives identified in early consultation and the feedback on a Sherwood Forest Regional Park from the main consultation events run towards the end of the Feasibility Study is included in Appendix 4.

3.3 Further Consultation and Buy-In During Inception

It is the experience of other recently established Regional Parks that initial consultation and buy-in is key to success and time needs to be allocated over a fairly long period during the initial establishment of the Regional Park, to communicate the message to potential stakeholders and to secure broad buy-in.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the following organisations be consulted further as part of the initial establishment of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park:

Consultation Prior to Inception: the following should be consulted regarding funding and how the objectives of a Regional Park can match emerging sub-regional and regional objectives:

- East Midlands Development Agency,
- Alliance Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership (SSP) or sub-regional replacement,
- East Midlands Regional Assembly, and
- Government Office for East Midlands.

Consultation at Inception: additional consultation should take place with the following to achieve buy-in and to refine the objectives:

- Relevant Local Authorities (at a senior level), i.e. Nottingham City Council, Gedling Borough Council, and Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood District Councils,
- Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire,
- Experience Nottinghamshire and East Midlands Tourism,
- Country Land and Business Association,
- Local Chambers of Commerce.

Consultation during the Inception Year: other consultees who are priorities early on in the Inception Year should include (further consultees are listed in Appendix 3):

- Key existing fora, trusts and organisations within the Sherwood Area, including:
 - Sherwood Trust,
 - Greenwood Community Forest Partnership,
 - Sherwood Habitats Forum,
- Local Chamber of Commerce,
- Federation of Small Businesses, and
- Derbyshire County Council.

4 Regional Parks Background and Concept

4.1 The UK Regional Park Concept

Regional Parks are not National Parks nor Theme Parks, nor Country Parks. Regional Parks are used to define distinctive and extensive areas where management and spatial planning can bring about regionally significant economic, environmental and social benefits.

UK Regional Parks do not have a fixed definition. Individual Regional Parks develop their own definition and vision based on their local characteristics, needs and aspirations. Notwithstanding their core focus, all Regional Parks use environmental enhancement as a foundation for their social and economic improvement programmes.

Unlike National Parks, a Regional Park is not a planning designation. A Regional Park is a mechanism for realising the opportunities within its area and capitalising on the area's assets.

4.2 Lessons from Other Regional Parks

Based on a review of 27 UK and international Regional Parks, the following key messages for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park were:

- Regional Parks encourage and require collaboration between partner authorities.
- Economic development and regeneration are the key factors for main funding rather than environmental projects *per se*.
- Environmental projects can benefit on the back of regeneration funding.
- Regional Parks can offer a route for leveraging regional and national funding that would not otherwise be accessible.
- Building on positive key assets (environment, historic, local communities etc.) is key to improving the area and its perception.
- Provide a framework within which to create a linked network of active and passive recreational assets offering something for everyone.
- Can achieve step change in the marketing potential of a local area as part of a larger regional asset.
- Combine opportunities for recreation and tourism with regeneration activity.
- Capitalise on the natural environment, and have sustainable development as the linking theme.

See Appendix 5 for a full list of reviewed Regional Parks

Table 1 Lessons from Other Regional Parks for Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Case Study Example	Rationale	Governance	Funding	Lessons for Sherwood
Emscher, Germany	Utilisation of environment assets for large-scale regeneration and restoration of contaminated land alongside the Emscher River.	Governance by partnership of key factors including: 20 municipalities, inter-municipal working groups, and federal government. Delivery by: Projekt Ruhr GmbH, Emscher Association, Regional Association Ruhr.	Initial funding from Government of North-Rhine/ Westphalia. Funding for a regional network of open space, recreation and cultural sites. Reuse of buildings. Extensive utilisation of private and public funding, regional, national and inter-European programmes.	Scale of the approach. Opportunities for changing mindsets. Loosely defined boundary. Environmental focus for integrating regeneration projects. Re-using derelict industrial buildings.
East Lancashire	Establish physical framework for positive transformation as a regional asset. Increased prosperity, improved living environment. Promotion of healthy lifestyles and community involvement.	Lancashire Economic Partnership - Lead Partner takes responsibility for implementing strategic goals of the Regional Park. Partners include local councils, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, British Waterways and Mid Pennine Arts.	Initial £5 million SRB (NWDA) funding, ended March 2007. Carried forward as Green Infrastructure programme of Central Lancashire City Region Development Programme (CLCR).	Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership is lead organisation. Partners from broad spectrum. Initial public funding. Strong community involvement in projects.
Mersey Waterfront	Opportunity flowing from Objective 1 status and desire to use positive assets to improve image and perception of area. Opportunity to capitalise on improved water quality and regeneration of historic waterfront. Strong economic development remit as well as environmental and recreation enhancement.	Independent Board with Private Sector Chair, and Management Group comprising Local Authorities with 3 supporting advisory groups reporting to main Board. Wirral Borough Council designated the accountable body. The Mersey Partnership (Sub regional development agency and Destination Management Organisation) host Executive.	Initial £8.5m NWDA grant 2003 to 2007. £20m (NWDA + EU) for succession period to 2010. Initial project funding 1:1 public/private, now 1:10 public/private.	Strong RDA driver. Substantial initial public funding. Strong use of themes of and for projects, especially Windows. Good use of private sector. Flexible boundary – has increased in extent.
River Nene	Response to central government plans for 100,000 new homes in Northamptonshire.	Community Interest Company - strategic environmental partnership.	Operating costs. Initial funding (85%) from DCLG (Growth Area Funds) continued until other forms of funding are available.	Initially wholly publicly funded, national govt. support. Central grant disbursement for environmental development.
Wigan Greenheart	To provide a sustainable gateway to the regional countryside. Link together environmental, visitor and commercial attractions in a rural setting. Radically change the image of the area. Regeneration.	Located wholly within and led by Wigan Borough Council. Partnership Board includes representatives from local and sub-regional organisation, and community representatives. A Steering Group consisting of ten of the partners meets quarterly to give strategic guidance.	Key funding from Regional Agencies and European Union.	Small Park with strong links to surrounding towns, where most of benefit will accrue. The Importance of building on positive environmental assets for surrounding regeneration areas.

5 Why a Regional Park in the Sherwood Forest Area?

5.1 Relevance of a Regional Park to the Sherwood Forest Area?

As recognised in the current Regional Spatial Strategy (2005):

“in Sherwood the distinctive landscape character and the scale of ecological, historic and woodland interest combine to create areas that are special to the people of the East Midlands

the distinctive character is threatened by pressure from a range of factors.

Co-ordinated action is required to ensure that such distinctiveness is retained”.

A Regional Park has relevance to the Sherwood Forest Area because:

- It is a way of recognising a distinctive landscape,
- It offers a strategic overview for the area,
- It enables joined up thinking and improves efficiency and equity,
- It joins together town and country, business and the environment in and around Sherwood Forest,
- It harnesses and develops the area under the positive brands of Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood,
- It can be used to improve where we live and where we work, by making the best use of, and enhancing, the unique natural environment,
- It offers a mechanisms for recognising and utilising positive local assets (environmental, historical, communities etc.) at a strategic level, as part of wider regeneration and restoration initiatives.
- It offers a way of helping projects and programmes succeed within a regional framework, and
- It offers an exciting way of linking the economy, culture, heritage and the arts with the natural environment, helping to forge or reinforce a positive new identity for the region.

5.2 Development of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Concept

The concept of a Regional Park has been around since the 1960s but it is in the last 10 years that a large number of Regional Parks have been set up in the UK.

A Regional Park for the Sherwood Forest Area was first proposed in 1969 when it was recognised that that this was an attractive area which would benefit from a new rural planning approach. The concept of a Regional Park for the wider Sherwood Forest Area has been raised on a number of occasions over the last 40 years. In the last five years there has been increasing interest in a Sherwood Forest Regional Park, culminating in this Feasibility Study. Table 2 overleaf provides a short chronology of the Evolution of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Concept. More detail can be found in Appendix 6.

Table 2 Development of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Concept

Year	Event	Outcome
1217	Sherwood Forest designated as Hunting Forest	Earliest documented record of the recognition of this distinctive landscape
1969	Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Sub-Regional Study	Advocates Regional Park type strategic approach to the Sherwood Forest Area
1969	County Council request to Countryside Commission	Seeks designation of Sherwood Forest. Highlights the potential new rural planning techniques for the area
1972	The Future of Sherwood Forest	Interim report for NCC and CC study
1974	Sherwood Study	Advocates Sherwood Forest as an Area of Special Historic and Landscape Significance
1988	The Plan for Sherwood Forest	An update of the 1974 Study, and response to changes and pressures on the area. Plan becomes a material consideration in Local and Strategic Plans
2000	Sherwood Study: A Vision for Sherwood Forest	Highlights the importance to tourism, investment and jobs of the natural features and cultural interest of the Sherwood Forest
2003	Destination East Midlands, the Regional Tourism Strategy	“Integrating Sherwood Forest” listed a Special Project to improve regional performance as a visitor destination
2004	Experience Nottinghamshire mission statement	Includes Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood
2004	A Vision of the Future of Sherwood Forest	Outlines the potential for environmental repair, maintenance, restoration and enhancement of the resource of the Sherwood Forest Area
2005	County Council supports the concept of a Regional Park	Backed by a wide range of stakeholders, who also backed pursuit of Living Landmarks Lottery funding for the Sherwood: The Living Legend project
2007	Multi-sector partnership submitted £65m bid to the BIG Lottery Fund	Focus on economy, community, health, education and recreation, built on the legend and popularity of Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest
2007	BIG Lottery bid reaches national final	Partnership’s wider, 50-year vision for Sherwood Forest as a Regional Park receives continued support
2007	Sherwood Forest Regional Park Feasibility Study Commissioned	This report is a culmination of the Feasibility Study

Common themes throughout the development of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park concept are:

- Sherwood Forest is a unique and iconographic area with valuable environmental and social assets,
- The area has great potential, and strengths on which it can build, and
- There is a need for quality improvements, and a need for greater integration.

5.3 Adding Value through a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Experience from established Regional Parks shows that a Regional Park for Sherwood Forest will provide a unique development, planning and promotional mechanism for the area. This mechanism will add significant value to existing partnerships, facilitate long term and balanced growth for the area and ultimately raise the value of Sherwood Forest assets to unprecedented levels.

Improved collaboration across Sherwood Forest through a Regional Park will provide:

- Joint working, economies of scale and greater impact.
- Physical and conceptual links between sites and assets, ultimately making the value of the whole Regional Park far greater than the sum of its parts.
- Greater opportunities to unlock investment and lever regional and national funding sources by contributing to regional and national objectives/targets.
- Increased significance and context for individual projects that may otherwise be viewed as being of just local benefit or as being ad hoc and without wider strategic value.
- A step change in marketing potential and opportunities.
- Maximisation of the impact of Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood brands.
- Opportunities to effectively engage the private, public and voluntary sectors towards delivering common objectives.
- Greater facilitation of environmental enhancement and improved recreation facilities on the back of regeneration and other economic development.

By establishing a Regional Park for Sherwood Forest, partners and stakeholders will have the mechanism for taking a **strategic and long term approach**, which will:

- Provide a powerful, unified and single voice – acting on behalf of a wide range of partners - to champion and influence the following:
 - Key projects and developments,
 - Important planning and policy documents such as Local Transport Plans, and
 - Funding priorities for the region.
- Give a balanced approach to the long term development and enhancement of Sherwood Forest Area,

- Identify gaps in services, assets and linkages,
- Identify and promote key strategic priorities for the benefit of the wider Regional Park,
- Develop a critical mass of assets at key nodes or gateways,
- Facilitate greater control of visitor movements through Sherwood Forest by providing and promoting gateways that have the capacity to cope with large numbers of visitors whilst discouraging access to more sensitive or privately owned areas,
- Ensure physical and conceptual connection of sites and assets across the Sherwood Forest landscape,
- Provide opportunities to develop the area's Green Infrastructure,
- Ensure proactive rather than piecemeal or reactive development of the area,
- Provide a framework for rural business to thrive,
- Maximise opportunities for influencing planning policy and (in some cases) drawing on Section 106 funds towards Regional Park priorities, and
- Facilitate the development of long term approaches to quality assurance, especially concerning leisure, recreation and tourism related investments, to ensure a consistently high standard of investment and visitor experience throughout the Regional Park.

Establishment of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park will have a positive impact on hearts and minds, especially in relation to:

- The internal and external image of the area,
- Local people's perception of the value of the Sherwood Forest and its role in the future of the area,
- The overall appeal of the area to visitors and investors, helping to attract and retain talented people, leading to improved economic performance and stability in the area,
- Recognition of the landscape as a positive asset for residents and visitors,
- The generation of a sense of place whilst retaining local distinctiveness, and
- The general health and well being of local people.

5.4 What a Sherwood Forest Regional Park is and is not

As indicated in Section 4.1 **a Sherwood Forest Regional Park would**

- Recognise the value and assets of the area and capitalise on them,
- Provide a consistent strategic overview,
- Add value to the area,
- Help attract funding,

- Build on and improve collaboration,
- Utilise the positive brands of Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest, and
- Be a mechanism for realising opportunities within the area.

A Sherwood Forest Regional Park would NOT

- Have planning powers,
- Be another layer of bureaucracy,
- Replace existing authorities, or
- Be a Theme Park, National Park or Country Park.

5.5 Why a Sherwood Forest Regional Park Now?

There are several reasons why now is an opportune time to establish a Sherwood Forest Regional Park, including:

- The Living Legend bid has established a momentum for action,
- A consensus and partnerships have been developed,
- The current Regional and Sub-Regional Reviews mean that it is an ideal time for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park to influence the emerging agendas,
- The successful completion of the Sherwood Initiative via area partnerships provides a strong foundation which can be built upon,
- A Sherwood Forest Regional Park will be a suitable mechanism for meeting a number of emerging policy areas, including:
 - Green Infrastructure,
 - Bridge between growth points / growth zones,
 - Landscape recognition, and
 - Regeneration,
- A Sherwood Forest Regional Park joins together three growth points / growth zones and is the high quality environment to support the surrounding regeneration and development,
- There is a growing consensus on the need to capitalise on the environmental assets of Sherwood Forest, for conservation, recreation, tourism, development etc., and
- The Sherwood Forest Area provides an ideal location for meeting national and international agendas including those concerning climate change, healthy lifestyles etc.

Recommendation

- **That a Regional Park be established in the Sherwood Forest Area**
- **That now is an opportune time to establish a Sherwood Forest Regional Park**

6 The Sherwood Forest Area: Assets and Opportunities

6.1 Strengths & Assets

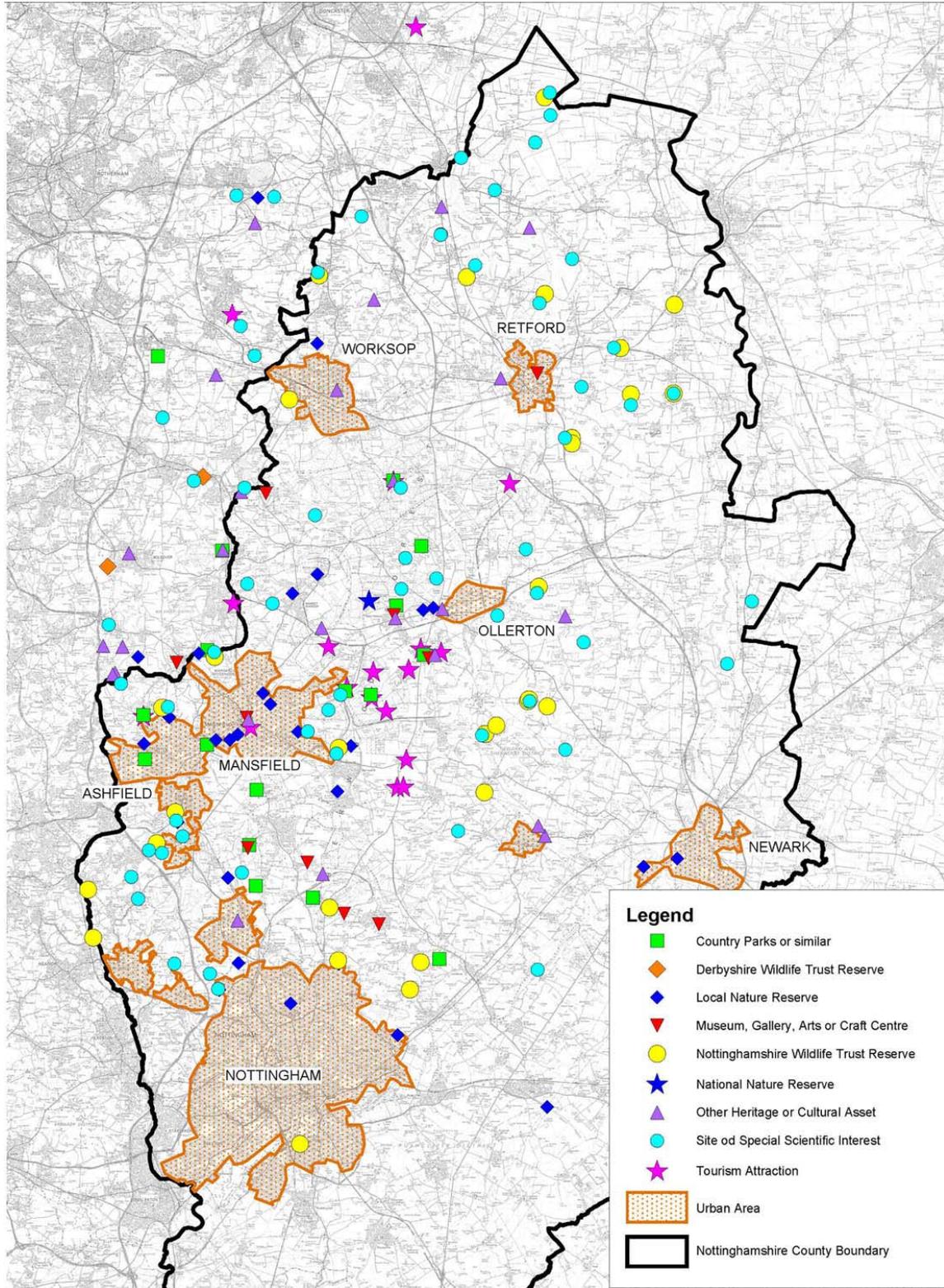
The Sherwood Forest Regional Park Area and surrounding zone of influence/benefit contain a wide range of environmental, recreation, heritage, cultural and tourism assets. As shown in Figure 4, a key strength of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park is the wide range of assets located across the area and the opportunities these can and could provide (see Section 6.2).

Key strengths of the Sherwood Forest Area include:

- An outstanding natural environment with national and international designations,
- An internationally renowned historical site,
- Internationally known brands – Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest,
- Strong and diverse local communities - unique culture and heritage,
- A strong sense of place and sense of pride,
- Existing destinations which provide a range of tourism and leisure opportunities – with capacity for expansion,
- Existing regeneration activity in and around Sherwood Forest – the Forest could form a link between growth points / growth zones,
- High quality landscape and internationally important wildlife habitat,
- Accessible important recreational assets,
- The quality and flexibility of its multifunctional land assets, and
- The economic importance of its land-based industries.

Further details regarding the assets in and around Sherwood Forest can be found in Appendices 7 and 8 and shown in Figure 4 overleaf. The legend for Figure 4 is shown opposite.

Figure 4 Assets of the Sherwood Forest Area



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6.2 Opportunities

As indicated in Section 5.3, a Sherwood Forest Regional Park would be a way to:

- Improve collaboration across the Sherwood Forest Area,
- Provide partners and stakeholders with a mechanism for taking a strategic and long term approach, and
- Have a positive impact on hearts and minds.

Other opportunities also include:

- A more strategic approach to existing assets, improving linkages and synergy,
- Re-creation and linking of fragmented habitats,
- A landscape approach to management, which is based on the local historic and ecological assets,
- Climate change responses,
- Linking up existing visitor centres,
- Sherwood Forest-wide access – via multi-user trails,
- To create a better place to live and work, through regeneration,
- To attract and retain expertise,
- To create a greater sense of place and pride,
- To improve local communities through targeted lead projects, and
- To develop the brand.

6.3 Challenges and Gaps

- To overcome the perception issue for parts of the area i.e. post-industrial landscape,
- To improve accessibility and linkages to surrounding settlements - Sherwood Forest is an undercapitalised asset which could be developed,
- To overcome limited access to parts of the area and discontinuity of user routes,
- To improve visibility of Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood as a brand for tourists - geographical spread an issue,
- To reduce lack of connectivity,
- To integrate thinking,
- To link fragmented assets – environmental, social, tourism, economic etc.,
- To address the need for investment in public realm in surrounding towns and to capitalise on architectural and cultural heritage,
- To overcome [some] reluctance to the development of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park by a minority of stakeholders through quick wins and demonstrable added value through a Regional Park approach,

- To develop and regenerate the area whilst respecting and enhancing its unique historic and environmental assets,
- To improve the efficiency of partnership working in the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Area, and
- To secure sufficient resources to deliver an ambitious and far-reaching programme of investment in the Regional Park.

6.4 Critical Success Factors for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Experience from other Regional Parks in the UK, Europe and North America has shown that there are a number of factors that are critical to the success of a Regional Park (Table 3). Most of these factors are well established within the Sherwood Forest Partnership, or can be relatively easily incorporated into a Regional Park Framework.

Table 3 Critical Success Factors for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Critical Success Factor	Action Required
Place making	<p>The place needs to make sense – Sherwood Forest is a place that is readily recognised and accepted as a destination.</p> <p>Any future refinement of the Regional Park boundary should take account of the place that is Sherwood Forest and not be constrained by administrative boundaries.</p>
Credibility	<p>Establish strong support and a track record of delivery as soon as possible.</p> <p>Think carefully about where the Regional Park administration will be based to maximise influence and help attract a diverse range of partners.</p>
Simplicity	Prioritise what the Regional Park will do.
Know your strengths and build on them.	Maximise the value and impact of your strengths, and create a strong foundation for the future, in particular the powerful Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood brands.
Partners working for the greater good of the Regional Park.	Establish Terms of Reference (or similar) to ensure all partners understand and accept that they are to work for the wider interests of the Regional Park rather than specific interests or geography.
Strong Leadership	<p>Identify an influential, respected and willing individual to act as a figurehead and/or Chair for the Regional Park.</p> <p>Establish a dedicated and skilled team of individuals elected to the Board or Management Group to support the Chair.</p> <p>Appoint a Director to the Regional Park who is a good communicator, commands respect and has experience in working with public, private and voluntary sectors.</p>

Table 3 cont. Critical Success Factors for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Critical Success Factor	Action Required
Widespread ownership from key public, private and voluntary sector partners.	<p>No Regional Park gets all the required partners on board from the outset. First and foremost, get support and ownership from those partners that are most important or influential i.e. without whom the Regional Park may not progress.</p> <p>Work hard to engage partners in all sectors – but especially the private sector – by understanding what’s in it for them, and targeting their involvement accordingly.</p> <p>Once key partners are on board, others will follow.</p>
Building on positive local assets.	<p>Utilising local environmental, historical and community based assets as foundations to broader socio-economic development and regeneration. Linking environmental enhancement and in some cases protection in all development projects.</p>
Capturing local hearts and minds.	<p>Build on local pride and ownership of Sherwood Forest’s special places by prioritising activities in these areas and dealing with long standing community needs.</p> <p>Ensure community engagement touches all Regional Park activities by empowering community involvement in all aspects from local projects to strategic planning and prioritisation.</p>
Flexibility and adaptability.	<p>The Regional Park plans and partnership need to be flexible enough to adapt to change and capitalise on new (often unforeseen) opportunities as they arise.</p>
Mainstreaming Regional Park plans and priorities into Sub-Regional Strategies.	<p>As the Regional Park develops and matures, it should seek to increasingly influence policy and developments and mainstream its own priorities into key sub-regional plans.</p>
Understanding branding and using it to maximum effect.	<p>Differentiate between branding the Regional Park programme and branding or promoting the Regional Park place – they are two entirely different entities.</p> <p>Understand your target audiences.</p> <p>Build consensus amongst partners around your brand values at the earliest possible opportunity.</p>
Being ambitious.	<p>Establishing a Regional Park provides the momentum and enthusiasm to drive real ambition into an area. Ensure partners are ambitious and take this opportunity to make a step change in investment, promotion or other Regional Park related activities.</p> <p>To be ambitious, there must be sufficient resources in place.</p>

Table 3 cont. Critical Success Factors for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Critical Success Factor	Action Required
A long term approach.	Partners in the Sherwood Forest Regional Park area are already experienced in long term planning.
Quality, quality, quality.	<p>Ensure everything associated with, or branded as part of the Regional Park is of the highest possible quality.</p> <p>Actively encourage design competitions.</p> <p>Establish Design Benchmarks.</p> <p>Develop pan-park quality assurance schemes.</p>
Being creative and brave.	A Regional Park provides the framework to do some creative and brave projects that might not otherwise be considered. Take this opportunity, and push the profile of Sherwood Forest to new limits.

6.5 Outputs and Outcomes from a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

A key output of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park is a transformation change for the Sherwood Forest Area. Achieving these transformational changes will be a key measure of the success of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park and the success of the area.

In order to achieve the Regional Park objectives, the following specific transformational changes will be required in the Sherwood Forest Area. Outputs and outcomes of the Regional Park are linked to these changes.

Transformational changes fall into two types:

- Changes which result from direct interventions by the Regional Park, and
- Changes which a Regional Park seeks to influence.

The main identified transformational changes are listed in Table 4 overleaf.

Table 4 Transformational Changes resulting from a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

Direct Interventions	Areas of Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effecting regeneration and economic development within the Park and broader area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing economic competitiveness with other regions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with partners to promote connectivity and cooperation within the Park and across the broader area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving interconnectivity (across the economic, environmental and social spectrums).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalising on the Sherwood Forest Area's unique sense of place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the visitor economy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively encouraging community participation at all stages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving transport links and the local infrastructure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing and optimising the use of environmental assets within the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing Green Infrastructure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling a consistent approach within the Park's boundaries. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the branding and identity of the area. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the quality of life and sense of place for local communities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a more sustainable environment for business, communities and visitors. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing Green Infrastructure. 	

All projects will be subject to a thorough appraisal process and agreement by the Regional Park Management Board before an approval is given. Appraisal will be in relation to how well the proposal meets the objectives of the Regional Park and any associated funding stream.

6.6 Early Outputs and Outcomes

Key early outputs of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park are a series of signature projects which provide a clear visual presence for the Regional Park and show what a Regional Park can achieve.

Suggested early outputs include:

Community Empowerment

- Local community engagement events,
- Setting up of Community Panels,
- Youth Area for activities for young people, and
- Use of the Forest for health and recreation activities.

Culture, Heritage and History

- Further development of Sherwood Forest-wide events e.g. historic, cultural and theme weekends.

Economic Development and Regeneration

- Environmental enhancement and new leisure provision and access improvements in and around the Sherwood Forest Area linked to development.

Image, Identity and Profile

- Improved promotion of Sherwood Forest as a place to live, work and visit.

Natural Habitats and Landscapes

- Promotion of sustainable forest management,
- Mainstream habitat re-creation and enhancement, and
- Linkages of fragmented habitats.

Recreation

- Improvement of multi-user trail – greater connectivity, and
- Use of the area for health and recreation activities.

Visitor Economy

- Establishment of design benchmarks,
- New Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre,
- Further development of Sherwood Forest-wide events e.g. theme weekends, and
- Development of closer tourism links between Sherwood Forest and the City of Nottingham.

Recommendations

- **A key role for a Regional Park Director would be to identify and agree projects with key partners, to develop a detailed action plan for 2010-2013 accordingly, and secure the necessary project funding.**
- **Further consultation with key actors regarding the early Regional Park outputs and outcomes they wish to see in the medium to long term.**

7. Sherwood Forest Regional Park Vision and Objectives

7.1 Vision for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park

***A future for the Sherwood Forest Area
where community based projects,
economic re-generation and
environmental enhancement
thrive together in this inspiring natural setting.***

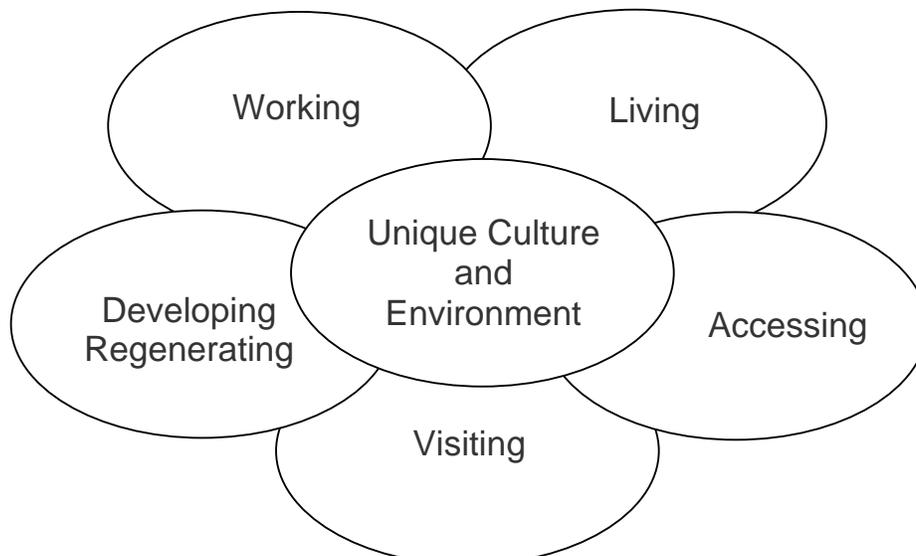
The vision builds on existing visions for the area including the Big Lottery vision. It incorporates the wishes of consulted stakeholders and includes good practice from existing Regional Parks.

The above vision is built on four key interlinked aims which form the foundation for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park:

- Economic, environmental and social regeneration,
- Creating a sense of pride and place, local community improvements and a new air of optimism,
- Re-creating the Sherwood Forest environment as a living and working environment, and
- Enhancing access for visitors and residents.

The vision and objectives build on the relationship between the assets and users of Sherwood Forest Area and the core for all activities is the high quality Sherwood Forest Environment and Local Community Engagement, see Figure 5.

Figure 5: Linking Themes and Assets in Sherwood Forest



7.2 Core Objectives

The following seven core initial objectives have been identified for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park:

Community Empowerment (Sustainable Communities)

To facilitate community awareness, empowerment, understanding and wellbeing, and create opportunities for sustainable and healthy lifestyles.

Culture, Heritage and History

To conserve and celebrate the culture, heritage and history of the region and encourage appropriate uses.

Economic Development and Regeneration

To encourage economic development and regeneration that will benefit local communities and the local economy whilst respecting the environment.

Image, Identity and Profile

To strengthen Sherwood Forest and Robin Hood as an iconic brand and identity for both visitors and locals.

Natural Habitats and Landscape

To conserve and enhance the nature and landscape of the region.

Recreation

To encourage recreation that respects the environment of the region.

Visitor Economy

To facilitate the development of Sherwood Forest as a visitor destination whilst respecting the environment.

The above objectives form the basis of the projects and outputs for the delivery of the Regional Park. See the Business Plan and Delivery Programme for details.

8 Governance and Delivery

8.1 Capacities Required by a Governing Body

The key capacities required to govern a Sherwood Forest Regional Park are:

- Financial accountability,
- The ability to develop and maintain partnerships,
- Independence and flexibility,
- The ability to facilitate the Regional Park objectives and outputs,
- The ability to influence other key agendas and investment strategies, and
- The ability to monitor, and to act quickly and respond.

8.2 Maintain Status Quo or Establish a Sherwood Forest Regional Park Management Board

Two options were considered as part of the Feasibility Study:

- 1 To maintain the status quo of informal partnership arrangements, and
- 2 To establish a management board for the Regional Park

The advantages and disadvantages of each approach are set out below:

Option 1: Continuation of the informal partnership arrangements currently in place within the area

Advantages:

- Various partnerships are already in place throughout the Sherwood Forest Area, and
- No additional costs or structures are required.

Disadvantages:

- Relatively poorly resourced,
- No dedicated executive team,
- Absence of direct political representation on many fora and therefore lack of strategy ownership,
- Risk that the Regional Park concept remains little more than an agenda item for discussion at partner authority meetings,
- No private sector involvement to help raise the profile and champion the strategy, and
- Missed opportunity to establish collaborative mechanism and no single unified voice for the area.

Option 2: Establishment of a new Sherwood Forest Regional Park Governance Structure including a Management Board

This would involve a more radical formalisation of the governance and management arrangements and the establishment of a Management Board to take responsibility for promoting and championing the potential of the Sherwood Forest Area and for overseeing and leading project development.

Advantages:

- Aids the development and management of projects within Sherwood Forest as an identifiable area,
- Provides greater independence,
- Provides political representation and championship,
- Provides a dedicated executive team to help project manage the delivery of key projects and facilitate longer term planning and investment,
- Cross public, private, voluntary sector inputs may be capable of unlocking the potential of the Sherwood Forest assets in a way that might not be possible for the public sector acting alone, and
- Provides a mechanism for a direct feed into regional and sub-regional delivery structures and access to both future Single Programme and European Programme funding.

Disadvantages:

- A comparatively more expensive structure to resource than the less formalised Steering Group structure, and
- Would require increased level of political support and longer term management commitment.

Recommendation

Formalising the management and governance structure has been the preferred route in other Regional Parks as this provides the impetus for change and success.

Recommendation

- **The establishment of a formal Governance Structure for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park subject to agreement on costs and structures**

8.3 Establishment of Governance Structures

Formalisation of governance for a Regional Park may best be achieved as a series of evolutionary steps. In other Regional Parks it has taken several years for structures to be formalised. The immediate aims should be to build momentum, undertake detailed action planning and seek dedicated programme funding. This could be achieved by a small dedicated team and by re-structuring the PMB team to extend / broaden representation (see Business Plan and Section 8.5 for details).

8.4 Potential Governance Options

There are three basic types of governance operated in other UK Regional Parks:

1. Local Authority controlled,
2. Partnerships involving a core team drawn from public, private and voluntary sectors, and
3. Private/independent companies.

Other governance options which may be worth considering in the longer term include Development Trusts, Community Interest Companies and Social Enterprises.

Table 5 Some Advantages and Disadvantages of Different Governance Models

Governance model	Advantages	Disadvantages
Local Authority Controlled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political accountability • Financial accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially bureaucratic • Perceived lack of independence • Seen as a potential threat by some stakeholders
Public/ Private/Voluntary Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy-in from stakeholder groups • Accountability to a range of stakeholders • Drawing on a broader range of experience • Potentially accessing the dynamism of the private sector • Greater perceived independence and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially too large and unwieldy
Private/Independent Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to respond rapidly to emerging issues • Potentially accessing the dynamism of the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private companies may be perceived to be furthering their own ends • Problems of access to some funding streams • Less accountable?

Recommendation

- **That a public/private/voluntary partnership is the most appropriate Governance Structure for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park.**
- **That a public/private/voluntary partnership governance model which builds on existing fora within the area would be the most accountable and efficient governance model in the establishment of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park.**
- **In the longer term, investigate the establishment of a Development Trust, Community Interest Company or Social Enterprise as the Governance Structure for Sherwood Forest Regional Park.**

8.5 Proposed Governance Model and Management

The recommended governance model for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park is a public / private / voluntary partnership, which could operate via a community interest company or by a quasi public organisation (executive/management board). The latter is recommended as the preferred initial model for the Regional Park, although as the Regional Park evolves the governance structure should be periodically reviewed and other models considered, as appropriate.

Analyses of existing Regional Parks indicate that the following are the minimum requirements for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park Governance structure which could be able to deliver the desired outputs for the Regional Park:

- Director
- Chair (and Deputy-Chair)
- Executive/Management Team (initially made up of at least a Director and PA, with ideally a Project Officer (at least part-time) and seconded support or bought-in expertise in areas such as marketing and community engagement)
- Management Board (to make decisions), supported by:
- Advisory Groups (on key topics/aspects – based on existing fora where appropriate).

The Management Board will comprise up to 15 members and be composed of the following:

- Director,
- Chair and Deputy Chair,
- Advisory Group Champions, and
- Other Co-opted Members as necessary.

The relation between the above elements of governance is shown in outline in Figure 6 below and in more detail in Figure 7. Details of the roles and responsibilities of the key elements of the management team are provided overleaf.

Figure 6 Key Elements of Proposed Governance and their Relationships

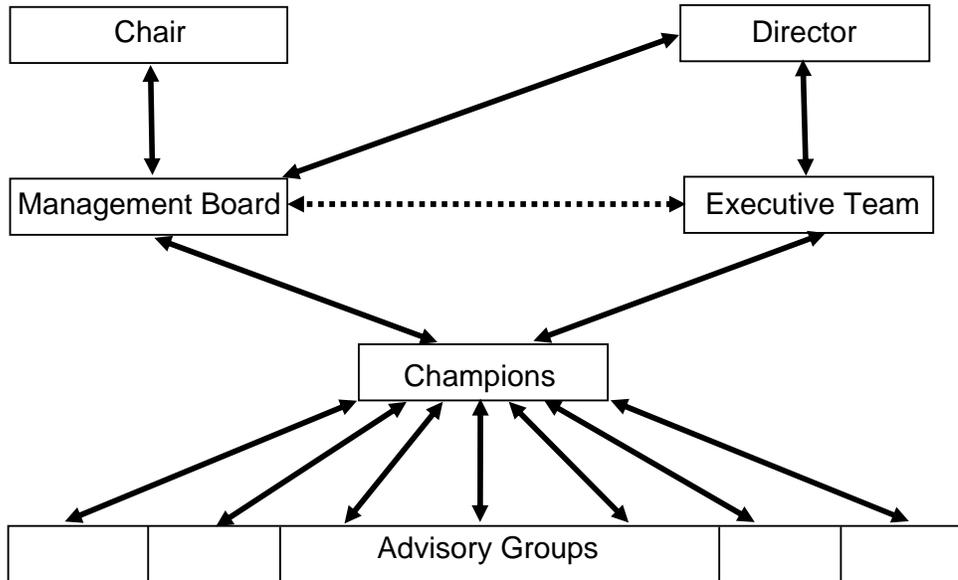
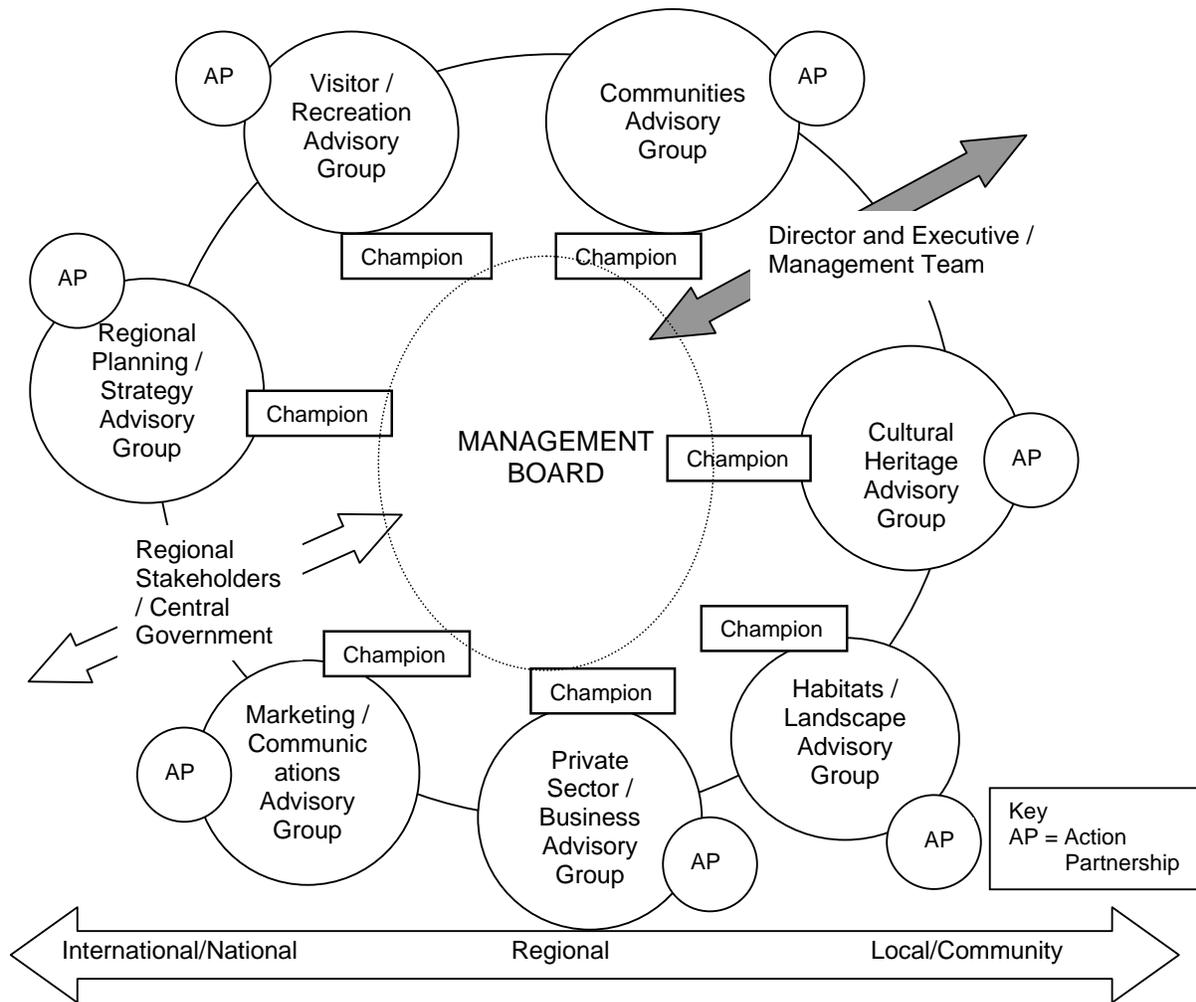


Figure 6 overleaf gives a more detailed indicative representation of the governance model. This sets out the way that governance may operate with a central management board and links between different sectors via advisory groups.

Figure 7 Indicative Schematic Representation of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Governance Model



Adapted from Mersey Basin Campaign 2002 reviewed structure

8.6 Roles of Key Governance and Delivery Posts

Director

- To assume overall responsibility for day to day management of the Regional Park,
- Providing operational management and delivery of the Regional Park Strategy as developed by the Management Board and Chair,
- Managing the Executive Team,
- Consulting and engaging at a senior level with key stakeholders to secure buy-in to the Regional Park,
- Reporting to the Chair and Management Board,

- Working with the Chair to actively promote and champion the Regional Park and its priorities to partners, stakeholders and the media, and
- Providing ongoing development of the Regional Park priorities and securing external funding for projects and key activities.

Further details on the role of the Director during the inception/commencement of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park are given in the Business Plan.

Executive Team

- Delivering the Regional Park Strategy and its projects/ programmes,
- Providing support to Management Board, Chair and Director as appropriate,
- Liaising with stakeholders and the media,
- Liaising with advisory groups, action partnerships and partner organisations, and
- Working with community groups to ensure their active engagement in Regional Park development.

Chair / Deputy Chair

- To act as a motivator, figurehead and lead on the establishment and development of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park,
- To be a sounding board for Regional Park Director,
- Managing the Management Board,
- Ensuring the independence of the Regional Park from any stakeholder,
- Providing the vision for developing the Regional Park Strategy, and
- Driving forward the Regional Park agenda.

Experience from other Regional Parks has shown real benefits in appointing a high profile figure, ideally from the private sector, as Chair or Deputy Chair, as a way of offering credibility to the private sector.

Management Board

- Developing the Regional Park Strategy,
- Agreeing on programmes, projects and targets,
- Approving the financial strategy,
- Acting as the accountable body (see Section 10 Funding and the Business Plan for details regarding financial accountable bodies),
- Monitoring and reviewing the Regional Park,
- Implementing an Appraisal Process and approval of individual projects,

- Promotion and dissemination of Regional Park activities and priorities within own organisations/partnerships, and
- Ensuring that wider interests of the Regional Park are a priority, rather than any particular sector, area of interest or geography.

All projects will be subject to a thorough appraisal process and agreement by the Management Board before an approval is given. Appraisal will be in relation to how well the proposal meets the objectives of the Regional Park.

Champions

- Acting as the link between the Advisory Groups and the Management Board,
- Communicating but not representing the Advisory Group per se,
- Consulting with and on the Regional Park Strategy, and
- Providing expert advice as appropriate.

Advisory Groups

- Advising the Regional Park on their specialist area.

Action Partnerships

- Running projects under the auspices of the Regional Park or in conjunction with the Regional Park.

Recommendations

- **Agreement of the above model as a basis for the initial Formal Governance Structure for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park.**
- **Setting up of a working group to refine and develop the initial practical governance structure (see Section 11 Way Forward).**
- **Agreement on the appointment of an independent high profile figure, ideally from the private sector, as Regional Park Chair.**

8.7 Principles for Governance

The following principles / criteria are suggested for the composition of the first phase Park Management Board:

- The size of the Park Management Board should be between 12 and 15 members to allow the Board to operate effectively without being too overburdened (small) or unwieldy (large),

- Members should reflect the broad range of skills and knowledge needed to support the growth and development of the park itself,
- Each member operates with a degree of independence and autonomy from any specific area or interest so that the overall interests of the Park are best served,
- Dynamic and successful leaders are appointed as chair and deputy chair for the Park by the current Project Management Board to drive forward the first phase of the Park's development, the positions being time-limited,
- Other Park Management Board members selected through a recruitment process, advertising for people who are committed to the principles of a Regional Park and offer a diversity of skills, knowledge and experience. Again, their appointments will be time-limited.

It is recommended that Park Management Board members will act as the champions and liaise with the advisory groups in line with their specialist skills and knowledge.

It is proposed that, where appropriate, existing fora are asked to form the nucleus of each advisory group so that current networks and expertise can be capitalised on. The role of the advisory groups will be to provide further specialist support and advice and act as a sounding board for reviewing priorities and putting together the annual Action / Delivery Plan.

Each of the advisory groups may have an action partnership associated with it. The action partnerships would facilitate further work and/or run projects. The groups would not be involved in the operational side or approve specific projects. These duties will fall to the Park Management Board and the management team's Steering Group.

The Park Management Board will need to be supported by an executive or management team to help deliver the Park's aims and objectives. The composition of the team will vary as the Park evolves. As a minimum, a Director and a PA / administrative officer and potentially a part-time Project Officer should be appointed to take up posts at the beginning of the Inception Year. One of their roles in the Inception Year will be to identify and secure funding for a small project team to cover the first phase of operation.

This executive team may be made up of people seconded from other organisations to provide specialist support, outside specialist consultants recruited for specific funded projects and people to strengthen the core team e.g. a fundraiser or finance officer.

The executive team will need to possess an understanding of project delivery, multi-agency co-ordination, contract administration and land assembly. The team will need to have or be able to draw on detailed knowledge of regeneration, development, environmental and community issues.

The initial Executive Team needs to have the capacity to develop, co-ordinate and administer programmes. The team may need to be augmented to meet the requirements of emerging projects. It is, however, proposed that individual project management be undertaken by Action Partnerships with relevant expertise. Inputs from the Executive Team will vary and will need to be tailored to local circumstances and range from a total delivery package being contracted to an individual organisation, to the co-ordination of a range of multi-agency inputs.

It is proposed that the Director and Executive Team in the first instance be employed on a fixed term contract basis. A four year contract would fit in with the recommended review period. The Director and Executive Team will be accountable to the Management Board and Chair for programme delivery arrangements, organisation of payments, grant claims and overall monitoring and compliance.

Details of the proposed Initial Delivery model (2008-2013) can be found in the Business Plan.

8.8 Potential Longer Term Governance

The Governance Model should be reviewed, initially as part of the Inception Year and on a regular basis beyond this (a maximum of 5 year intervals).

9 Sherwood Forest Regional Park Boundaries

9.1 Boundary Objectives and Issues

Some established Regional Parks have clearly defined boundaries, others do not. Consultees have indicated a preference for a clearly defined Sherwood Forest Regional Park boundary. A variety of opinions and concerns have been stated.

In developing an initial Sherwood Forest Regional Park boundary it is important that the following is understood:

- That it is intended that the **benefits of the Regional Park extend to communities and areas beyond the boundary,**
- That **a Regional Park boundary is not fixed and will change** (increase/decrease) as the park objectives evolve,
- That communities and parishes bordering the Regional Park be, in time, offered the option to join the Regional Park,
- That links to surrounding towns and cities are critical to the success of a Regional Park, and
- That, in time, consideration is to be given to extending the Regional Park boundary beyond the county boundary and so maximise linked assets etc.

The approach used to establish the potential Regional Park Boundaries was based on that used in the River Nene Regional Park. A series of initial conceptual boundaries were developed based on the boundary principles stated in Section 9.2 and informed by:

- Analyses of baseline surveys,
- The emerging vision and Objectives of the Regional Park,
- Views of key stakeholders,
- The search area and alternative search area suggested at the start of the Feasibility Study (see Appendices 9 and 10), and
- The consultant teams' own experience.

There were a variety of views on boundaries, therefore five different approaches were initially considered (Section 9.3). These were later refined into three basic options (Section 8.4). Further consultation was then undertaken to identify an agreed inception boundary.

9.2 Boundary Principles

The Project Management Board agreed that the following principles should be used in combination to establish a working boundary for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park:

- The natural area of Sherwood,
- The historic Forest boundary,
- The current visual landscape of Sherwood Forest,

- Inclusion of regeneration areas around the rural core of Sherwood Forest,
- Inclusion of settlements with strong historic linkages to Sherwood Forest,
- Inclusion of key assets, ecological, recreational, historical, visitor etc. and
- Building on previous Sherwood Forest boundaries as used in planning strategies and other strategies, e.g. 1974 and 1988 Sherwood Plans, 2006 Sherwood Vision etc.

9.3 Initial Boundary Options Investigated

The following boundary options were considered:

- Option 1: A character-based approach combining historical evidence, geology and modern natural/countryside character,
- Option 2: Visual perceptions (a landscape approach based on main access points),
- Option 3: An assets-based approach involving an audit of key resources, nodes and linkages,
- Option 4: A regeneration approach, and
- Option 5: A core area approach.

The initial boundaries produced using the above options were assessed in terms of their effectiveness of meeting the seven objectives of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park, as set out in Section 7.2, and their advantages and disadvantages. See Table 6 for summary. A more detailed analysis of boundary options can be found in the two boundary option working papers.

None of the five boundary options on its own fulfils the full range of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park objectives. A mixed criteria approach, which considered a range of boundary options and factors, was therefore used to come up with boundaries which met the proposed Sherwood Forest Regional Park objectives.

Table 6 Boundary Options – Advantages and Disadvantages

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1 Natural Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character Areas recognised by professionals and used in spatial planning. • Boundary includes urban areas that are in need of (and qualify for) regeneration investment. • Character Area is similar to Sherwood Advisory Group Study area and Living Legend Connected Forest boundary. • Follows the historic boundary of the brand • Historical authenticity and ecological integrity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not necessarily readily recognised by the public as a distinct cohesive area. • Inclusion of non-forest urban areas. • Choice of boundary may exclude regeneration areas in the north of the county. • Parts of the historical forest are now heavily urbanised - possible distorting effect on public perception of Sherwood Forest Regional Park.
2 Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear visual Sherwood Forest identity. • Branding and signage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of urban areas and regeneration areas – impacts on funding. • Road safety issues in using major roads as boundaries.
3 Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds on existing resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear geographical identity. • Exclusion of regeneration areas. • Focus on current tourism and environmental assets, rather than regeneration and potential assets.
4 Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added value - regeneration and community benefits. • Financial benefits via regeneration funding. • Extension of the effects of regeneration and community investment aid to a large area of the county, extending the area of expectation, influence and potential positive perception. • Similar to Alternative Search Area boundary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extensive Regional Park covering a large proportion of the county with lack of clear perceived Sherwood Forest identity. • Less historical authenticity than Option 1. • Lack of modern day geographical authenticity.
5 Core Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More recognisably a Sherwood Forest Area. • An area with relative cohesion. • Historical planning precedent - an administrative pedigree and purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of regeneration areas • Will not achieve the more wide-reaching geographical, environmental and economic objectives.

9.4 Further Boundary Options Considered

Three hybrid options were submitted to further analysis and consultation:

- 1 A small Regional Park based on the Sherwood Forest rural core – building on the 1974 and 1988 plan areas and large enough to contain core assets (i.e. The Heart of the Forest).
- 2 A wide Regional Park boundary based on the rural heart but extending west, north and south into bordering urban regeneration areas that lie within the natural Sherwood Character Area and the historic Sherwood Forest Area, and
- 3 A combined approach including a core (The Heart of the Forest) with a wider boundary.

Table 7 Advantages and Disadvantages of Boundary Options

Options	Approach	Advantages and Disadvantages
<p style="text-align: center;">Option 1 Small Regional Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small rural Regional Park which is used to provide benefit for the surrounding urban areas, which would lie outside the Regional Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readily identifiable. • Based on current perceptions of the heart of the Forest. • Strong credibility and brand.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of urban and regeneration areas. • Perceived exclusivity. • Does not achieve the objectives of the Regional Park within its boundary. • Potential funding issues. • Needs a mechanism to allow 'qualifying' communities, projects and locations outside the park to participate.
<p style="text-align: center;">Option 2 Broad Regional Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide boundary including regeneration areas, potentially following historic Sherwood Forest boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases the potential for obtaining funding. • Includes communities with a strong connection to the Forest.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes areas not recognisably Sherwood Forest. • Potential confusing to tourists and visitors.
<p style="text-align: center;">Option 3 Heart of the Forest with Broader Boundary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines the Heart of the Forest (option 1) with the broader boundary of Option 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retains the identity and branding advantages of the Heart of the Forest first option, and uses this for visitor branding. • Broader boundary meets the full range of Park objectives.

9.5 Inception Regional Park Boundary

Consultation identified the ‘Heart of the Forest with Wider Boundary’ as the preferred option and as a boundary which meets the boundary principles set out in Section 9.2.

The recommended inception Sherwood Forest Regional Park Boundary, subject to refinement in the Inception Year (Year 0), is shown in Figure 8.

The proposed inception boundary has three main elements:

- A Heart of the Forest area,
- A wider proposed inception boundary, and
- A broader sub-regional zone of Regional Park potential influence/benefit.

The Heart of the Forest is based on the previous boundaries used in the 1974 and 1988 Sherwood Plans. This area is dominated by land which is in public ownership and or land which is subject to existing conservation designation (National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest etc.) and contains key visitor, ecological and historical assets (See Appendix 8). This area is one which was widely viewed by consultees as being the heart of Sherwood Forest. Its designations and ownership mean that in this part of the Regional Park there is a stronger emphasis on protection of key environmental and visitor assets and on traditional land management etc.

The proposed inception boundary is based on the Natural England Joint Character Area (i.e. combined Natural Area and Countryside Character Area) and the proposed study area defined by the Sherwood Advisory Group (see Appendix 9). This boundary has clear linkages to historic Sherwood Forest boundaries and the natural habitat boundary formed by underlying geology and is similar to that used in other recent regional projects, such as the Connected Forest and Living Legend bid. The boundary has been extended to include the whole of bordering urban towns and their growth zones and regeneration zones as well as key assets (see Appendix 8).

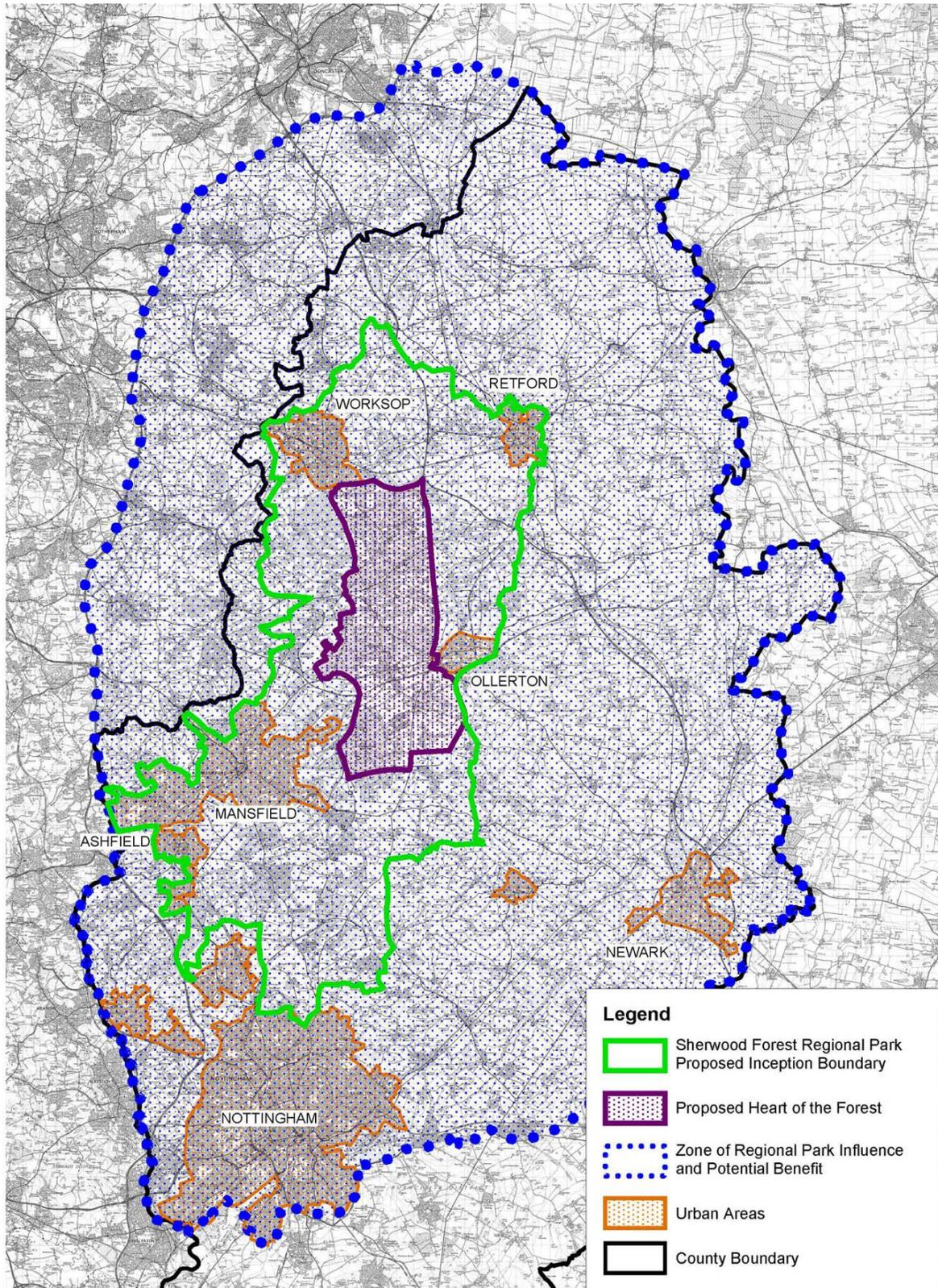
As indicated previously, the benefits of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park extend to communities and sites beyond the inception boundary. As such, a broader zone of Regional Park potential influence/benefit is shown. This zone includes linked areas with clear association to the Regional Park which could potentially benefit from such an association. The potential zone of benefit includes the whole of Nottinghamshire west of the Trent as well as Nottingham City and bordering parts of Derbyshire and South Yorkshire. The zone includes complementary assets which could benefit from an association with Sherwood Forest Regional Park Brand e.g. Creswell Crags, as well as key entry points to the areas such as Robin Hood Airport.

Two technical reports providing more detail on the boundary analysis have been produced.

Recommendations:

- **That the priority should be making the Regional Park happen and ensuring early wins, rather than detailed analysis of boundaries.**
- **That the Heart of the Forest with wider boundary be used as the inception boundary for Sherwood Forest.**
- **That there is consultation and refinement of the boundary during Year 0.**
- **That the boundary be periodically reviewed as the Regional Park objectives evolve.**

Figure 8 Proposed Commencement Sherwood Forest Regional Park Boundary



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10 Funding

10.1 Costs of Setting Up and Running a Sherwood Forest Regional Park 2008-2013

The costs given in this report are indicative and are based on costs of setting up other UK Regional Parks and the costings used by existing organisations within the Sherwood Forest Area. The estimates may need to be revised as a result of decisions made during the Inception Stage. These estimates and assumptions are used for the purposes of developing the Inception Plan for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park.

The costs indicated in the funding profile are based on the following series of assumptions:

Director and Executive Team

- That the minimum team required to develop and manage a Sherwood Forest Regional Park would be a Director, PA and part-time Project Manager.
- That the above team will be supplemented by part-time seconded experts, for example the use of expertise from Experience Nottinghamshire or East Midlands Tourism to aid with the marketing and raising the visitor profile of Sherwood Forest (such secondments are not included in the costings).
- If the Regional Park is successful then the Executive Team will need to be increased at some point during Years 1 to 3 (2010 to 2013).
- That a key role of the Executive Team during the Inception Year (Year 0) will be to secure funding for the next three years.
- That key staff will take up their positions at the commencement of the project.
- That all staff will be appointed initially on fixed term contracts, extended as necessary.
- That a “host” agency will need to be identified to act as the employer.

Operating costs include:

- Support services (finance, graphics, HR, admin, IT, etc),
- Hospitality,
- Stationery and postage,
- Travel expenses,
- Equipment and materials,
- Establishment costs are included for the Inception Year including an allocation of £5,000 for recruitment, and
- Office accommodation costs based on local available office space. This is included as a separate heading.

Salaries quoted are typical rates for similar posts in other Regional Parks.

- Please note that appointing the appropriate person, with a broad range of expertise as Director of the Regional Park is critical to the success of the Park.
- It is assumed that salaries will rise by up to 5% each year. Full cost recovery rates are based on salary costs plus 25%.

Consultation

- Consultation costs will be dependent on the number and type of consultation events which take place and their location.
- Costs are based on recent experience of consultation within the Sherwood Forest Area.
- It is assumed that each year there will be a major consultation/ fora event and a series of smaller local consultation events.

Strategic Framework

Whilst it is not necessary to have a strategic framework in place from the outset, it is recommended that during the initial business planning period (2008-2013) a framework is developed to establish key thematic and spatial priorities and set the longer term agenda for Sherwood Forest Regional Park. Experience from other Regional Parks has shown that this is a valuable exercise and one that benefits from external support from a multi-disciplinary team of consultants with skills in the following fields:

- Planning
- Design
- Ecology
- Landscape
- Leisure and Tourism
- Marketing and branding

The cost is likely to be in the order of £100,000.

Publicity & Marketing

- Publicity and marketing costs will be dependent on whether the expertise can be seconded to the project or needs to be bought in.
- Includes a Communication Plan in Year 0 of £5,000.
- Promotion of the Regional Park is a critical element of its success. There is a variety of existing publicity and marketing mechanisms which can be used, but a separate marketing budget will be required.

- A small separate budget of £10,000 for Year 0 to Year 3 has been provisionally allocated. The final amount will be dependent on the marketing and communications priorities to be agreed by the Management Board.
- The development of the Regional Park Brand is also recommended as a key priority, and an initial budget estimate of £10,000 in Year 0 has been allocated to this.

Evaluation

- A sum of £25-75,000 is recommended to evaluate the success of the Regional Park in meeting its forecast outcomes in Year 3 (2013). This amount is based upon the costings of reviews of existing Regional Parks by independent consultants (which range between £25,000 and £100,000, although £30,000 will provide a good evaluation by a respected firm of consultants) and will be dependent on the requirements of the review.

Pre-inception Expenditure

- It is assumed that (as agreed by the Steering Group) pre-inception activities will be undertaken by a nominated Working Group and seconded staff. Costs have therefore not been included in the costings.
- It is assumed staff costs of £10-15,000 will be required to see the project through to inception and maintain momentum and contact with stakeholders.

Indicative costings for Inception Year (Year 0 – 2009-10) to Year 3 (2012-2013) are shown in Table 8 overleaf.

Table 8 Indicative Minimum Core Funding Requirements

Indicative Costs	Costing for Key Stages			
	Inception Year (2009-10)	Year 1 (2010-11)	Year 2 (2011-12)	Year 3 (2112-13)
Executive Team Salaries *1 with 5% PA increase built in (full charge costing (+ 25% salary))	Director £50K (£63K) PA £16 (£20K)	Director £53K (£66K) PA £17K (£21K)	Director £56K (£70K) PA £18K (£23K)	Director £59K (£74K) PA £19K (£24K)
Office Core Costs *2 (Based on typical local office space)	16-20m2 office - £4K	16-20m2 office - £5K	16-20m2 office - £6K	16-20m2 office - £6K
Operating Costs	Running costs - £4K Set up costs - £10K	Running costs - £5K	Running Costs - £6K	Running costs £8K
Travel and Hospitality	£3K	£3K	£3.5K	£4K
Consultation (Annual Forum + small events)	£6K	£6K	£6K	£6K
Publicity and Marketing	£10K	£10K	£10K	£10K
Branding	£10k			
Strategic Framework			£100K	
Technical Support		£20k	£20k	£20k
Evaluation				£25-75K
ESTIMATED ANNUAL TOTAL	£130K	£136K	£244.5K	£ 152K (excluding evaluation)

*1 Core executive team costs shown above exclude a part-time Project Officer, indicative costs for such a post are shown in Table 9.

*2 Office costs may be provided “in kind” by the host agency, and may not therefore require direct additional funding.

10.2 Additional Executive Team Costs

If, as recommended, a part-time Project Officer is included as part of the initial Executive Team then additional salary costs of £12,000 to £15,000 are likely. The implications of such a post on the core running costs of the project are shown in Table 9.

It is envisaged that additional staff will be employed during Year 1 to 3, but under the minimal model it is assumed that these will be part-time seconded staff and their costs will be paid by the seconding organisation. These costs have therefore not been included in the funding model.

Table 9 Indicative Funding Requirements for a part-time Project Officer

Indicative Costs	Costing for Key Stages			
	Inception Year (2009-10)	Year 1 (2010-11)	Year 2 (2011-12)	Year 3 (2012-13)
Additional Executive Team Salaries with 5% pa increase built in (full charge salary + 25% oncosts)	PT Project Officer £12K (£15K)	PT Project Officer £13K(£16K)	PT Project Officer £14K(£18K)	PT Project Officer £15K (£19K)
ESTIMATED ANNUAL TOTAL If a part-time Project Officer is included	£145K	£152K	£262.5K	£ 171 K (excluding evaluation)

10.3 Pre-Inception Funding

Pre-Inception, the Regional Park requires the establishment of a remit for the funding strategy, so that in the Inception Year an overall funding strategy can be produced which includes establishing the criteria for project support and core funding.

It is proposed that a Working Group be established to take the proposal through to inception, to consult further with potential funding bodies and to secure core funding. It is assumed that staff costs of £10-15,000 (including recruitment costs) will be required to see the project through to inception and maintain momentum. It is recommended that the current administrative arrangements are retained during the Pre-Inception Period.

Core to the Pre-Inception Stage is the establishment of core funding, at least for the Inception Year (Year 0 – 2009-10) but ideally through to Year 3 (2012-2013). In order to gain core funding it will be necessary to rapidly engage the interests of the East Midlands Development Agency, East Midlands Regional Assembly, and Alliance Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership (or its replacement) and demonstrate that a Sherwood Forest Regional Park Programme would be an appropriate mechanism for achieving emerging regional and sub-regional objectives.

Obtaining funding will only be achieved if the proposed Sherwood Forest Regional Park has credibility and it can be shown that it will contribute added value, both in its creativity and the innovativeness of its outlook and projects and the efficiency and effectiveness of its management. There is a need to prove that a Regional Park will not be duplicating what is already being undertaken, indeed there may be opportunities to slim down the number of bodies carrying out associated work.

10.4 Inception Core Funding

As indicated in Section 10.2, consultation with regional and sub-regional funding bodies will need to be required to secure start-up funding and support for the executive team. This must be secure funding of the core project team and board, ideally until 2013.

Most UK Regional Parks receive their core funding during their inception period from the relevant Regional Development Agency – either wholly or in part. In a few cases support has been obtained from Central Government, and in only two cases Local Authorities in England contribute towards core funding costs (see below). Potential funding sources are shown in Table 10.

Table 10 Potential Funding Sources

Potential Funders	Inception Funding	Core Funding	Project Funding
EMDA	√	√	
EMRA	√	√	
Nottinghamshire County Council	√	√*	
EU		√	√
District and Borough Councils		√*	√
Section 106 Agreements			√
Forestry Commission			√
Natural England			√
Defra			√
Environment Agency			√
English Heritage			√
Sherwood Trust			√
Other Trusts			√
Lottery Funding			√
Landfill Tax			√
European Regional Development Fund (Interreg)			√

* In two English Regional Parks, Lee Valley and Colne Valley, Local Authorities provide funding towards the core running of the Park (e.g. Colne Valley Regional Park where Local Authority members contribute financially towards marketing, publicity and the running of the visitor centre – approximately £40000 annually).

Beyond the Inception Stage several Regional Parks have used capitalised revenue as an important funding source.

The River Nene Regional Park has identified the following potential routes through which it can secure income and sustainable investment:

- Development and infrastructure expansion related contributions.
- Chargeable event hosting (research & development).
- Project grants, Government & European grants including Lottery, Intereg and EU.
- Core funding term awards e.g. Defra, Regional Development Agencies and strategic fund holder for environment funds in the region.
- Fee earning activities.

- Carbon credits.
- Establishment of a membership fee.

The above options are worthy of further investigation as potential longer term sources of funding.

10.5 Project Funding

There may be potential to attract some 'seed corn' funding for the 'quick win' signature projects from specific partners in the Pre-Inception Year. This will enable the Park to start to achieve its objectives from the beginning of the Inception Year.

Potential funders identified during work on the Feasibility Study are shown in Table 9. They will need to be consulted further during the Pre-Inception Year when the business plan has been accepted.

Project Funding initially requires the identification of existing projects which could be transferred (re-badged), while funding streams (sub-regional / regional / national / EU) which could support flagship or pilot projects are identified. This would be followed by applying for funding, with continued identification of further flagship or pilot projects and the funding streams which could support them.

10.6 Key Funding Priorities and Considerations

The following **funding priorities** have been identified:

- To engage and maintain the interests of regional and sub-regional bodies.
- To demonstrate the relevance of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park as a mechanism for achieving emerging national, regional, sub-regional and local objectives/targets.
- To encourage private sector participation and sponsorship.
- A particular effort should be directed at engaging and obtaining the endorsement of potential funding bodies. This could be carried out in conjunction with the raising of the Regional Park profile.
- In conjunction with Local Authorities, to investigate the use of Section 106 agreements etc. for funding or the provision of resources.
- To explore the use of LEADER programmes for collaborative and partnership projects.
- To secure the secondment of an experienced officer or other person on a part-time basis to advise and assist in the procedural aspects of the Regional Park, with wages being paid by employee's host organisation.
- To effect short-term secondment of Local Authority Officials with funding experience to set strategic bids for funding in motion.

Funding considerations include:

- To investigate with potential funding bodies the possibility of hosting 'pilot projects'.
- To involve Grant Awarding Bodies by inviting them to address meetings informing members of their projects and how SFRP could interact.
- Office premises and associated facilities to be provided for by partnership member, in return for public relations and associated publicity.
- To allow the occasional utilisation of partners' Communications / Public Relations staff for developing publicity material, including a web site.
- To utilise partners' internal and external communications networks such as magazines, e-newsletters and other forms of communication, either electronic or hard copies, to maximise publicity at minimal cost.
- It is recognised that obtaining grant funding for capital projects is easier than for revenue funding. Therefore a sustainable approach should be adopted in the design and construction of infrastructure projects. Thus initial investment should be in 'long life' infrastructure ensuring minimal maintenance during its expected lifetime.
- Long-term employment of a dedicated Strategic Funding Officer for the Regional Park.

10.7 Key Funding Recommendations

Recommendations:

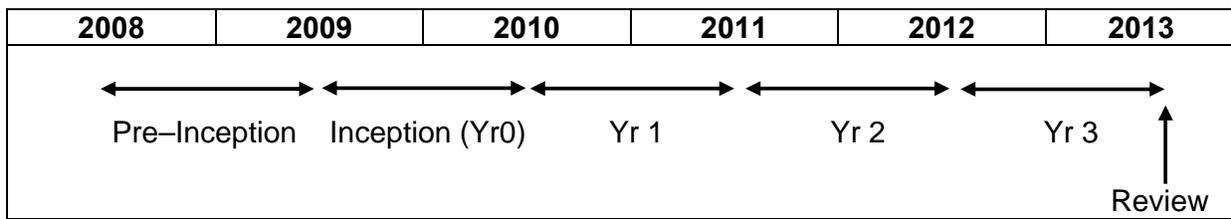
- **That pre-inception costs of £10,000-15,000 are agreed between key partners to ensure momentum is maintained.**
- **That East Midlands Development Agency and other key funding bodies are approached by Project Management Board for Inception and Delivery Years 1-3 core funding as set out in Table 8.**
- **That Inception/Shadow Management Board members consider direct financial contributions to core funding and indirect contributions in kind such as office accommodation, specialist expertise etc.**
- **That during the Inception Year, a detailed action plan is developed with clear indications of project funding requirements.**
- **A key role of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Director, with the support of the Management Board, will be to secure project funding for Delivery Years 1 to 3 (2010-2013).**

11 Action Plan and Way Forward 2008 - 2013

The detailed proposed way forward is set out in the Business Plan. The Business Plan focuses on the first phase of operation of the Park from pre-inception to 2013 (Figure 9).

It is proposed that the Inception Year should start in April 2009 as, by this date, the Regional and Sub-Regional Reviews will have been completed and a new Sub-Regional Agency will be in place. This will allow the Regional Park objectives and outputs to be matched to the emerging regional/sub-regional objectives. An April 2009 start date would also allow time for a Working Group to take the project from the Feasibility Study to inception and to secure further buy-in and core funding. During this Pre-Inception Phase it is important that funding be provided to support the Working Group, to maintain momentum and maintain contact with stakeholders.

Figure 9 Indicative Scheme for the Inception Stages of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park



The Commencement Business Plan provides a detailed Regional Park Delivery Plan in its Appendix.

The suggested main actions for Pre-Inception, Inception and Years 1 to 3 are set out in Table 11 overleaf.

Table 11: Key Actions During the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Inception (2008-2013)

Year	Actions				
	Governance	Financial	Strategic	Projects	Monitoring
Pre-Inception 2008-09	<p>Establish Working Group to take the proposal through to inception.</p> <p>Signing of Memorandum of Agreement by key stakeholders.</p> <p>Consult stakeholders on key appointments.</p>	<p>Consult with potential funding bodies.</p> <p>Establish inception core funding.</p>	<p>Maintain momentum.</p> <p>Administrative support continues.</p> <p>Mapping Regional Park objectives to emerging strategic policy.</p>	N/A	N/A
Inception (Yr 0) 2009-10	<p>Establish governance model and hosting arrangements.</p> <p>Appoint Chair, Director, PA and possible Project Officer.</p> <p>Establish Management Board.</p> <p>Quarterly Management Board meetings.</p>	<p>Secure Core funding through to 2013.</p> <p>Establish financially accountable structures.</p> <p>Prepare strategic funding bids and negotiating partner funding.</p>	<p>Production of initial Sherwood Forest Regional Park Plan.</p> <p>Communications and branding strategy.</p> <p>Promotion and marketing Strategy.</p>	<p>Identify and agree initial signature projects.</p> <p>Identify Action Partnerships.</p> <p>Establish project accountability framework.</p>	<p>Establish monitoring framework.</p> <p>Annual forum.</p> <p>Annual reporting.</p>
Year 1 2010-2011	<p>Quarterly Management Board meetings.</p> <p>Quality assurance and review.</p>	<p>Strategic and partner funding bids.</p> <p>Demonstrate financial reliability.</p>	<p>Strategic Plan implemented.</p> <p>Development of Physical and Conceptual Linkages to and in the Regional Park.</p>	<p>Initiate initial signature projects.</p> <p>Project management and development.</p>	<p>Annual forum.</p> <p>Annual reporting.</p>

Table 11: Key Actions During the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Inception (2008-2013) continued

Year	Actions				
	Governance	Financial	Strategic	Projects	Monitoring
Year 2 2111- 2012	<p>Quarterly Management Board meetings.</p> <p>Quality assurance and review.</p>	<p>Strategic and partner funding bids.</p> <p>Demonstrate financial reliability.</p>	<p>Period review.</p> <p>Begin to fill in strategic gaps.</p> <p>Strategic Framework Development</p>	<p>Initial signature project delivery in place.</p> <p>Project management and development.</p> <p>Demonstrate ability of Regional Park to deliver projects.</p> <p>Project reporting and review.</p>	<p>Annual forum.</p> <p>Annual reporting.</p>
Year 3 2012- 2013	<p>Quarterly Management Board meetings</p> <p>Review Governance Structures</p> <p>Review location of management team</p> <p>Decision on the future of the Regional Park –modify strategies, exist strategy etc.</p>	<p>Strategic and partner funding bids.</p> <p>Demonstrate financial reliability.</p> <p>Review financial structures.</p> <p>Consider awarding power status for Regional Park.</p>	<p>Review of Regional Park strategy.</p> <p>Strategic review of inception stages.</p> <p>Review future of Sherwood Forest Regional Park, and options.</p>	<p>Project management and development.</p> <p>Project reporting and review.</p> <p>Initial signature project delivered.</p> <p>Review project selection criteria and project management.</p>	<p>Annual forum.</p> <p>Annual reporting.</p> <p>End of Inception Stage review.</p>

It is recommended that a critical review be conducted towards the end of the first phase of the Regional Park (i.e. Year 3 - 2013) to look at how the Park is functioning. This will include feedback from users and stakeholders and may include some scenario testing.

The outcomes of the review should be tested against the following outcomes for future development of the Park and a new business plan be developed accordingly:

- Successful and able to expand,
- Successful and potential to expand,
- Successful but hold current level of activity and operation,
- Less successful and need to refocus / develop new impetus,
- Less successful but need to expand (geographically / resources / stakeholders / partners), or
- Unsuccessful and wind down operation.

Highlighted early actions needed to launch and promote the Sherwood Forest Regional Park within its first phase of development are indicated in Table 10. A detailed Annual Action Plan for the Inception Year (09/10), including agreed priorities and costs, will need to be developed and approved during the Pre-Inception Year.

Experience from other Regional Parks in the UK, Europe and North America has shown that there are a number of factors that are critical to the success of a Regional Park (see Table 6 in Section 6.4). Most of these factors are well established within the Sherwood Forest Partnership, or can be relatively easily incorporated into a Regional Park Framework.

The delivery of some of these **critical success factors** within the Pre-Inception and Inception Years provides the focus for early actions and an initial action plan (see Table 9 for details).

Several **Signature Projects** should be developed which will give the Regional Park some 'quick wins'. These will form the first outputs for the critical success factors and underlying objectives. It is proposed that some can be drawn from existing planned projects which already have associated funding. Others can be undertaken with little funding but will have added benefits in setting standards for the Park's identity and profile (See Table 12).

Following on from the Action Plan a more detailed proposed delivery programme is given in the Business Plan Appendix. It addresses how the core issues of Regional Park governance and finance and each of the seven key objectives can be met from pre-inception to initial operation and review, *i.e.* from 2008 to 2013. It can be used to develop annual action plans and annual performance plans.

Table 12 Inception Action Plan

Objective / Core Issue	Critical Success Factor	Action Required	Signature Project
Image, Identity and Profile	Understand branding and use it to maximum effect.	Differentiate between branding the Regional Park programme and branding or promoting the Regional Park place. Understand the target audiences. Build consensus amongst partners around brand values.	Experience the Park - Themed Weekend Events
Image, Identity and Profile	Place making	Sherwood Forest is a place that is readily recognised and accepted as a destination.	Connecting City and Forest
Community Empowerment / Governance	Widespread ownership from key public, private and voluntary sector partners.	No Regional Park gets all the required partners on board from the outset. First and foremost, get support and ownership from those partners that are most important or influential i.e. without whom the Regional Park may not progress. Work hard to engage partners in all sectors – but especially the private sector - by understanding what's in it for them, and targeting their involvement accordingly. Consider the development of a Community Peoples Panel to act as a sounding board for project and programme development.	Connecting Communities – Community Panels
Community Empowerment	Capturing local hearts and minds.	Build on local pride and ownership of Sherwood Forest's special places by prioritising activities in these areas and dealing with long standing community needs. Ensure community engagement touches all Regional Park activities by empowering community involvement in all aspects from local projects to strategic planning and prioritisation.	Experience the Park - Themed Weekend Events Connecting Communities Youth Action
Image, Identity and Profile	Quality, Quality, Quality.	Ensure everything associated with, or branded as part of the Regional Park is of the highest possible quality. Actively encourage design competitions. Establish design benchmarks. Develop pan-park quality assurance schemes.	New Visitor Centre Regional Park Quality Scheme Regional Park Innovative Design Mark

12 Summary of Key Recommendations

12.1 Key Action Points During Pre-Inception

The following actions are recommended for taking a Sherwood Forest Regional Park through to inception:

- A proposed inception date of April 2009, as by this point the Regional and Sub-Regional Reviews will have been completed and the Alliance SSP replacement organisation will be in place.
- To set up a Working Group to facilitate the inception of the Regional Park ASAP, its membership to be drawn from as wide a selection of public/private/voluntary organisations as possible.
- To revise the Project Management Board membership to reflect the broader public/private/voluntary sector interests within the area, and use the PMB as a basis for establishing a Regional Park Management Board.
- To appoint Chair and Deputy Chair of the Management Board.
- To agree the mechanism by which Regional Park key posts will be appointed.
- To consult further with potential funders regarding both core funding and project funding.
- To review the emerging regional and sub-regional targets and map these to the Sherwood Forest Regional Park objectives, and to use these results to demonstrate the practical relevance of a Regional Park in achieving spatial targets.
- To consult with possible Regional Park hosting organisations.*
- To maintain contact and involvement of consultees and keep them informed of progress.
- Administrative support needs to be provided to support the pre-inception activities. If possible existing administrative support should be maintained.

* It is recommended that the Regional Park initially be hosted within an established regional agency as this will provide a strong foundation upon which the Regional Park can build. It is suggested that it may be advantageous for the Regional Park to be hosted within an organisation outside a Local Authority, as it is important for securing private and voluntary sector buy-in that the Regional Park be seen to be independent of Local Authorities.

12.2 Summary of Recommendations Made in the Feasibility Report

The following key recommendations regarding a Sherwood Forest Regional Park have been made in the earlier sections of this report. (The contexts of the recommendations, i.e. the relevant sub-sections of the report, are indicated):

Recommendation 1 (Section 3.3 p. 12)

It is recommended that the following organisations be further consulted as part of the initial establishment of a Sherwood Forest Regional Park:

Consultation Prior to Inception: the following should be consulted regarding funding and how the objectives of a Regional Park can match emerging sub-regional and regional objectives:

- East Midlands Development Agency,
- Alliance Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership (SSP) or sub-regional replacement,
- East Midlands Regional Assembly, and
- Government Office for East Midlands.

Consultation at Inception: additional consultation should take place with the following to achieve buy-in and to refine the objectives:

- Relevant Local Authorities (especially Chief Executives and Leaders), i.e. Nottingham City Council, Gedling Borough Council, and Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood District Councils,
- Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire,
- Experience Nottinghamshire and East Midlands Tourism,
- Country Land and Business Association, and
- Local Chambers of Commerce.

Consultation during the Inception Year: other consultees who are priorities early on in the Inception Year should include the following: (Further consultees are listed in Appendix 3).

- Key existing fora, trusts and organisations within the Sherwood Forest Area, including:
 - Sherwood Trust,
 - Greenwood Community Forest Partnership, and
 - Sherwood Habitats Forum,
- Local Chamber of Commerce,
- Federation of Small Businesses, and
- Derbyshire County Council.

Recommendation 2 (Section 5.5 p20)

- That a Regional Park be established in the Sherwood Forest Area.

Recommendation 3 (Section 5.5 p20)

- That now is an opportune time to establish a Sherwood Forest Regional Park.

Recommendation 4 (Section 6.6 p. 28)

- That a key role for a Regional Park Director would be to identify and agree projects with key partners, to develop a detailed action plan for 2010-2013 accordingly, and secure the necessary project funding.

Recommendation 5 (Section 6.6 p. 28)

- That further consultation should take place with key actors regarding the early Regional Park outputs and outcomes they wish to see.

Recommendation 6 (Section 8.2 p. 32)

- The establishment of a Formal Governance Structure for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park subject to agreement on costs and structures.

Recommendation 7 (Section 8.4 p. 34)

- That a public/private/voluntary partnership is the most appropriate Governance Structure for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park.

Recommendation 8 (Section 8.4 p. 34)

- That a public/private/voluntary partnership governance model, which builds on existing fora within the area, would be the most accountable and efficient governance model to establish the Sherwood Forest Regional Park.

Recommendation 9 (Section 8.4 p34)

- In the longer term, investigate the possibility of a Development Trust, Community Interest Company or Social Enterprise as the Governance Structure for Sherwood Forest Regional Park.

Recommendation 10 (Section 8.6 p. 38)

- Agreement of the proposed model as a basis for the initial Formal Governance Structure for a Sherwood Forest Regional Park.

Recommendation 11 (Section 8.6 p. 38)

- Setting up a working group to refine and develop the initial practical governance structure.

Recommendation 12 (Section 8.6 p. 38)

- To appoint an independent high profile figure, ideally from the private sector, as the Regional Park Chair.

Recommendation 13 (Section 9.5 p. 46)

- That the priority should be making the Regional Park happen and ensuring early wins, rather than detailed analysis of boundaries.

Recommendation 14 (Section 9.5 p. 46)

- That the Heart of the Forest with wider boundary be used as the inception boundary for Sherwood Forest.

Recommendation 15 (Section 9.5 p. 46)

- That there is consultation and refinement of the boundary during Year 0.

Recommendation 16 (Section 9.5 p. 46)

- That the boundary be periodically reviewed as the Regional Park objectives evolve.

Recommendation 17 (Section 10.7 p. 56)

- That pre-inception costs of £10,000-15,000 are agreed between key partners to ensure momentum is maintained.

Recommendation 18 (Section 10.7 p. 56)

- East Midland Development Agency and other key funding bodies to be approached by Project Management Board for core funding for Inception and Delivery Years 1-3 as set out in Table 8.

Recommendation 19 (Section 10.7 p. 56)

- Inception/Shadow Management Board members to consider direct financial contributions to core funding and indirect contributions in kind such as office accommodation, specialist expertise etc.

Recommendation 20 (Section 10.7 p. 56)

- During the Inception Year, a detailed action plan is developed with clear indications of project funding requirements.

Recommendation 21 (Section 10.7 p. 56)

- A key role of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park Director, with the support of the Management Board, will be to secure project funding for Delivery Years 1-3 (2010-2013).

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Sherwood Forest Regional Park Vision

A future for the Sherwood Forest Area where community based projects, economic re-generation and environmental enhancement thrive together in this inspiring natural setting.