

Newlands

Land regeneration for the 21st Century in the Mersey Belt



Newlands (New Economic Environments through Woodlands) is a unique £23 million scheme transforming derelict land into thriving, durable community woodlands. Funded by the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) this is the 21st Century face of land regeneration: carefully planned, intelligence-led, partnership-driven, delivering widespread public benefits and enhancing the environment. Newlands will improve the quality of life for millions of people, delivering open and natural areas for community enjoyment and recreation, and benefits for business and tourism.

objectives

- To create more than 400 hectares (ha) of community woodland in the Mersey Belt to support the social and economic regeneration of the area (phase one 2003-2009); improving access to open space, improving public health, promoting community cohesion, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and creating local enterprise.
- To improve the region's economy and its living and working environment.
- To enhance the image and attractiveness of the area to investors.

actions

- Regenerating brownfield land to woodland.
- Extending woodland cover to support the aims of the England Forestry Strategy.
- Providing open spaces for tourism and recreation, and contributing to improved quality of life.
- Improving conditions for wildlife and contributing to regional Biodiversity Action Plan targets.
- Assisting community development and neighbourhood renewal.

achievements

As of February 2007 Newlands Phase One has:

- Created the unique Public Benefit Recording System (PBRS) as an aid to site selection and targeting investment.
- Secured the regeneration of 186 ha of brownfield land and is on target to regenerate a total of 385 ha using innovative processes.
- With Lancashire Wildlife Trust purchased a 106 ha ex-gravel quarry.
- Invested approximately £6,750,000 of NWDA funding and secured a further £3,100,000 of match funding.
- Made strong contributions to the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy 2006 and Regional Forestry Framework.
- With the Mersey and Red Rose Community Forests, developed 'Green Streets' targeting deprived areas of Manchester, Salford and Merseyside.
- With Groundwork NW, undertook community consultation on the regeneration of more than 400ha of land.
- The impact of Newlands at a local and regional level is significant and wide reaching: land values are increasing, Housing Market Renewal areas and deprived wards are being improved and business is being attracted to some of the key economic hubs of the region.

background

- 23% of all derelict land in the UK is in England's Northwest – more than any other region.
- The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution estimates that 60% of all derelict land is also contaminated by chemicals and other pollutants.
- The North West is the least wooded region in England, with woodland cover currently at just 6.5%, compared with a national average of 8%, and a European average of 33%.
- NWDA was determined to respond to the findings of the Land Reclamation Review and achieve a step change in the quantity of regeneration objectives delivered in the region.
- The Forestry Commission was chosen to lead across the Northwest on regeneration proposals where forestry or community woodland was the most appropriate land use.
- To ensure the widest public benefits from the investment and regeneration, NWDA has funded 20 years of long-term management and the Forestry Commission has taken out 99 year leases on all sites.
- In 2006 the NWDA gave £4.7m to transform the Lower Irwell Valley (LIVIA) in Salford, Greater Manchester, into one of Europe's largest City Parks – with enhanced access routes, sculpture trails, outdoor classrooms, informal play areas and a mountain bike course.
- Phase two is under development and, once approved will extend across the region to cover Cumbria, Lancashire and the rest of Cheshire.

quotes

"Newlands is a step-change for land reclamation, because by adopting a joined-up approach we are able to deliver across a broad range of objectives, from regeneration to healthy living, and investment in biodiversity" Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive NWDA

"By joining forces with local communities, Newlands will become a prime example of the very best of grass roots regeneration and we are looking forward to this exciting challenge." Lord Clark, Chairman of the Forestry Commission.

"..bringing a new lease of life to the Northwest's urban areas, through a combination of environmental improvement, derelict land reclamation and, vitality, the development of new opportunities for leisure and recreation." HM Government's Sustainable Communities Plan

partners

Forestry Commission
Northwest Development Agency
Groundwork Northwest
Community Forests Northwest

funding

NWDA £23 million over 5 years
EU Obj 1 ICEP £116,192
Biffaward £510,204

lessons learnt

- Securing derelict brownfield sites is exceedingly difficult and time consuming.
- Expertise and resources need to be in place from the start; roles and responsibilities and lines of communication need to be clear.
- Intelligence-led and strategic site selection enhances economic benefits.
- A co-ordinated approach enables skills to be developed to secure delivery.