



Evaluation of the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Programme 2011



Blaenavon 'Forgotten Landscapes' April 2011 (R Clarke)

Summary Report

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This report presents an assessment of the achievements of the landscape partnership programme to date. This assessment has been compiled with the active engagement of those involved in the delivery of the programme on the ground, together with the support of HLF staff and independent advisers who support the partnerships. The report also explains why this participative approach to evaluation has been adopted, how it has been implemented and how well it has worked.

Landscape partnerships

The Landscape Partnership programme was launched in 2004, as a successor to the previous 'Area Schemes' programme. Landscape Partnerships is the only current HLF programme to focus specifically on the countryside. The partnerships which deliver the work typically comprise a mix of statutory agencies, local authorities, NGOs and community organisations. The lead partner - which enters into the formal agreement with HLF - is most often either a locally constituted trust or limited company, or else a local authority. Programme priorities encompass conservation and restoration (of both the natural and built heritage), community participation in local heritage, access and learning, and training in local heritage skills. Schemes are delivered through a number of discrete projects, all of which are located within a particular landscape area, defined by its own distinct character. The average scheme area is 260km².

Landscape partnerships are active in all parts of the UK, with individual HLF awards ranging from £0.5m – £1.96m (an average of £1.4m per scheme). The programme is still very much in its growth stage – and so although £66.3m has been allocated to date, only £19m of this sum has been drawn down by the partnerships so far. The table below gives the numbers and spend to date of the schemes at different stages:

Numbers and funding status of Landscape Partnership Schemes as of 1 April 2011			
Status	No.	Second-round award (total)	Percentage of HLF funds drawn down
Completed Schemes	5	£7.7m	86%
Mature Schemes	8	£13.9m	62%
Schemes in mid-delivery	11	£16.8m	19%
Schemes in early delivery	10	£10.8m	6%
Scheme under assessment	1	£1.4m	
Schemes in development	10	£17.2m	
Totals	45	£66.3m	

The ten schemes in development have received a first-round pass, and are currently developing their proposals, which they will in due course present in a 'Landscape Conservation Action Plan' (LCAP). The development phase typically takes 12 -18 months; scheme delivery lasts between three and five years.

A participative approach to evaluation

Earlier work suggested that an external evaluation across the whole landscape partnership programme was unlikely to be cost effective. This is due to the complex multi-objective and multi-project nature of the schemes, with individual projects often dispersed across the partnership area, and because many outcomes are intangible and difficult to quantify. It was agreed that better results could be obtained, and delivery enhanced, if schemes themselves took a central role in evaluation, embedding monitoring and evaluation within their project planning systems.

In July 2010 the Centre for European Protected Area Research (CEPAR) and the Countryside Training Partnership (CTP) were commissioned by HLF to support landscape partnerships in their evaluation work and at the same time to pull together this national picture of landscape partnership performance to date. Over the last eight months the project team have:

- Produced supplementary evaluation guidance for landscape partnerships (complemented by the establishment of a dedicated website) (see Appendix I).
- Been in direct contact with all schemes, mostly by telephone and e-mail, but also through a number of site visits.
- Taken a lead role in national and local workshops.
- Reviewed evaluation plans contained within new LCAPs.
- Collected both output and outcome data from all partnerships, encompassing the full range of landscape partnership activities (see Section 3 and Appendix III).
- Completed a supplementary study of the achievements of six partnerships that had recently completed or were nearing completion (Section 4).

Achievements of partnership schemes to date

Chapter 3 of the report summarises the outputs and outcomes which have been delivered by landscape partnerships in terms of benefits to heritage and benefits to people. The table below presents some of the measurable outputs which have been achieved to date. The bulk of this delivery is down to the 13 schemes which have now completed or are classified in the table above as 'mature'. It is too early to draw many conclusions regarding the achievements of the 21 schemes which are in early or mid-delivery and of course the 11 schemes which are in development or under assessment have yet to deliver any outputs. If these younger schemes perform in a similar way to the mature and completed schemes, then we would expect the funding already allocated to deliver up to three or four times what has so far been achieved.

In the main report output data are complemented by notes describing some of the less tangible outcomes which partnerships have reported, illustrated by case studies. While individual partnerships have developed some interesting approaches to evaluation - going beyond for example conventional participant surveys and including oral and video testimony - the nature of this evidence means it is variable, unequally distributed amongst schemes and is not comparable between them. This sort of evidence cannot be aggregated over the whole landscape partnership programme, but is an important adjunct to the 'hard' evidence.

Landscape Partnership outputs which have been delivered to date

Heritage benefits

Biodiversity

- 1,900 ha of priority grassland and heath habitat have achieved favourable condition or been restored, and grassland and heath sites have been extended by 134 ha.
- 254 ha of priority woodland habitat have achieved favourable condition or been restored, and woodland sites have been extended by 885 ha.
- 247 ha of priority wetland habitat have achieved favourable condition or been restored, and wetland sites have been extended by 25 ha.
- 80 ponds have been maintained, restored or expanded, while 82 km of river and 56 km of riparian habitat have been restored.
- 936 ha of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh have achieved favourable condition or been restored.
- 34 km of hedgerows and 20 ha of traditional orchards have achieved favourable condition or been restored.
- Nearly 5,500 trees have been planted.
- 17 partnerships have undertaken projects directed at the conservation of individual species.
- 401 wildlife surveys have been undertaken, covering a total area of over 10,000 ha.
- One third of the landscape partnership schemes report their biodiversity achievements on the Biodiversity Action Reporting System.

Built and archaeological

- Nearly 4,000 sites and buildings have been surveyed or recorded - including nearly 400 listed buildings and 850 Registered Sites or Monuments.
- 56 built heritage features have been repaired or restored.
- 278 built heritage features have been conserved.
- 365 built heritage features have been interpreted -including 207 Scheduled Monuments and 29 industrial heritage sites.
- 6 historic buildings have been adapted for a new use.
- 31 km of dry stone walls have been repaired or restored.
- Partnerships have engaged with a wide range of built heritage, the most common types falling into the categories: domestic, defence, religious, memorial, commercial and civil structures.

Artefacts and archives

- 13 schemes have delivered projects which have resulted in new catalogues in museums or archives.
- 7 projects have resulted in an exhibition open to the public.
- 14 projects have created or improved museum or archive interpretation.
- 6 projects have led to restoration and/or safe storage of existing collections or archives.

'Intangible' heritage

- All schemes have included projects relating directly or indirectly to local traditions, customs, or character. 2 schemes include projects relating to language or local dialect.

Landscape Partnership outputs which have been delivered to date

People benefits

Community participation

- Nearly 1,000 schools, colleges and universities have been involved and 35,000 pupils/students have had an opportunity to benefit from the programme.
- Over 500 youth and community groups have been involved, benefiting over 7,000 individuals.
- There have been nearly 800 school visits to site and 400 outreach visits to schools.
- Nearly 1,000 family or adult learning activities have taken place.
- 44 cultural tradition projects and 44 oral history projects have been undertaken.
- 22 new spaces for learning have been created.
- Over 150,000 people have benefited from participation or learning activities.
- Over 14,000 volunteers have been involved so far in the work of landscape partnerships, contributing the equivalent of over 20,000 work days.

Access

- 1,441 ha of open access areas have been made more accessible to visitors
- 484 km of footpaths had been created or improved.
- 63 km of bridleways and 25 km of cycle tracks had been created or improved.
- 72 nature or heritage trails had been created or improved.
- 28 items of disabled equipment had been provided or improved.
- 1,350 people had benefited from guided walk or health projects.

Learning:

- 148 interpretation boards have been provided or improved and 54 new audio, tactile and British Sign Language interpretation projects delivered.
- 165 new leaflets or guides/booklets have been produced and 24 new websites are in place.
- The partnerships have produced 94 DVDs and set up 10 community archives.

Training & skills

- Training delivered to volunteers: 887 courses, 1250 people, a total of 3,870 training days.
- Training delivered to land managers and rural businesses: 175 courses, 2,600 people, a total of 2,769 training days.
- Training delivered to partnership staff: 128 courses, 157 people, a total of 2,257 training days.
- At least six partnership training programmes led to formal accreditation.

Advice and support

- 57 farmers and landowners have been engaged and 1,302 advisory visits have been made.
- 227 advisory reports or management plans have been produced, and 171 management plans have been put in place.
- 203 project grants have been awarded and 85 agri-environment scheme and other grant applications facilitated.

Employment

- 93 internal FTE jobs and an estimated 68 external jobs have been created.
- 10 internal FTE jobs and an estimated 41 external jobs have been safeguarded.

Most of the physical landscape works, access and interpretive provision and research or archive outputs can not only be quantified, but can also be regarded as outcomes, particularly where future maintenance or use has been properly planned for. Schemes have also provided evidence of ‘soft’ outcomes likely to continue beyond the end of HLF funding – for example in terms of community engagement, volunteering, enhanced skills, or local jobs. These also indicate an enduring legacy resulting from landscape partnership work. Examples of longer term legacy have also been drawn from the earlier Area Schemes programme, which provide evidence of impact some years after HLF funding has ceased.

Our overall conclusion is that the landscape partnership schemes have delivered significantly, and in a broadly balanced way, across the programme’s four priorities. Evidence collected to date suggests that overall the programme is on track to achieve the aggregate output targets identified in the second round applications. Many project activities will result in long term benefits to our heritage, while there is good evidence to show that the impact on local communities, private landowners, third-sector organisations and statutory agencies as well as a diverse range of individuals, has in some instances been profound and can be expected to endure. The programme has been effective in delivering ‘people’ benefits at the same time as conservation outcomes over the natural and built heritage at a landscape scale. The programme depends on local enterprise and is focused on local needs; it leaves a legacy both of conserved heritage and strengthened civil society.

The strengths of the programme include the way multiple projects with multiple goals are focussed on a specific landscape area, the way the programme enables people to engage with their local landscape, and the broad nature of the partnerships. It is clear that individual schemes deliver significant benefits over and above what would be achieved by funding a number of discrete projects. Collaboration between communities and other partners is resulting in locally generated, ‘bottom up’ initiatives, and this ensures projects are targeted on local heritage and locally perceived needs. The LCAP approach (which has been implemented comparatively recently) offers many benefits, and there is an opportunity to build on this in the future.

Wider benefits and challenges

The landscape partnership programme is proving to be one of the most significant manifestations of a ‘landscape approach’ to heritage, and as such is an important element in the delivery of UK international obligations, in particular the European Landscape Convention. The legacy of landscape partnership working accords well with developing national priorities and policies both in broad terms (for example in securing local engagement and participation in delivery of ecosystem services) and as an important contributor to local and national targets (for example those contained in Biodiversity Action Plans). Landscape partnership activities are also congruent with a number of important initiatives in cultural and natural heritage conservation, particularly in terms of critical priorities such as climate change adaptation. In England, for example, the landscape partnership programme anticipated key elements of the recently published Natural Environment White Paper in its emphasis on empowering citizens, consumers and civil society as a whole, and on enabling local action.

The principal challenge to the programme now is the financial crisis faced by many partner organisations. Ongoing scrutiny is required to ensure that HLF funds are providing additional heritage benefits, rather than being used to substitute for shortfalls in partner resources. The landscape partnership approach presents particular challenges in terms of leadership and coordination, and a number of schemes are facing new difficulties relating to lead body commitment.

Although not directly linked to evaluation, the project team have two recommendations to make regarding the programme as a whole. Firstly, that the albeit loosely applied but nonetheless somewhat arbitrary geographical size limits for partnership areas might usefully be removed, and that scheme areas should be more overtly linked to accepted landscape character areas, and / or to local perceptions of locality. Secondly, that the programme should (without changing the current breadth of the programme) re-focus on just two priorities: heritage and people. This would reflect the way, in practice, that the programme is defined jointly by works to the natural and built heritage, and by helping people to engage with heritage. Most individual projects contribute to two or more of the existing priorities, and it is suggested that in the future wherever possible projects should contribute explicitly to both heritage and people.

Programme evaluation in the future

Drawing together this evaluation, and working with the partnerships over the last eight months, has confirmed the value of a participative and collaborative approach to evaluation. There is a real opportunity to build on this in coming years, not least because partnership managers and other stakeholders accept that effective evaluation is the best way of ensuring enduring legacy. This process will be facilitated through an appropriate mix of sticks and carrots:

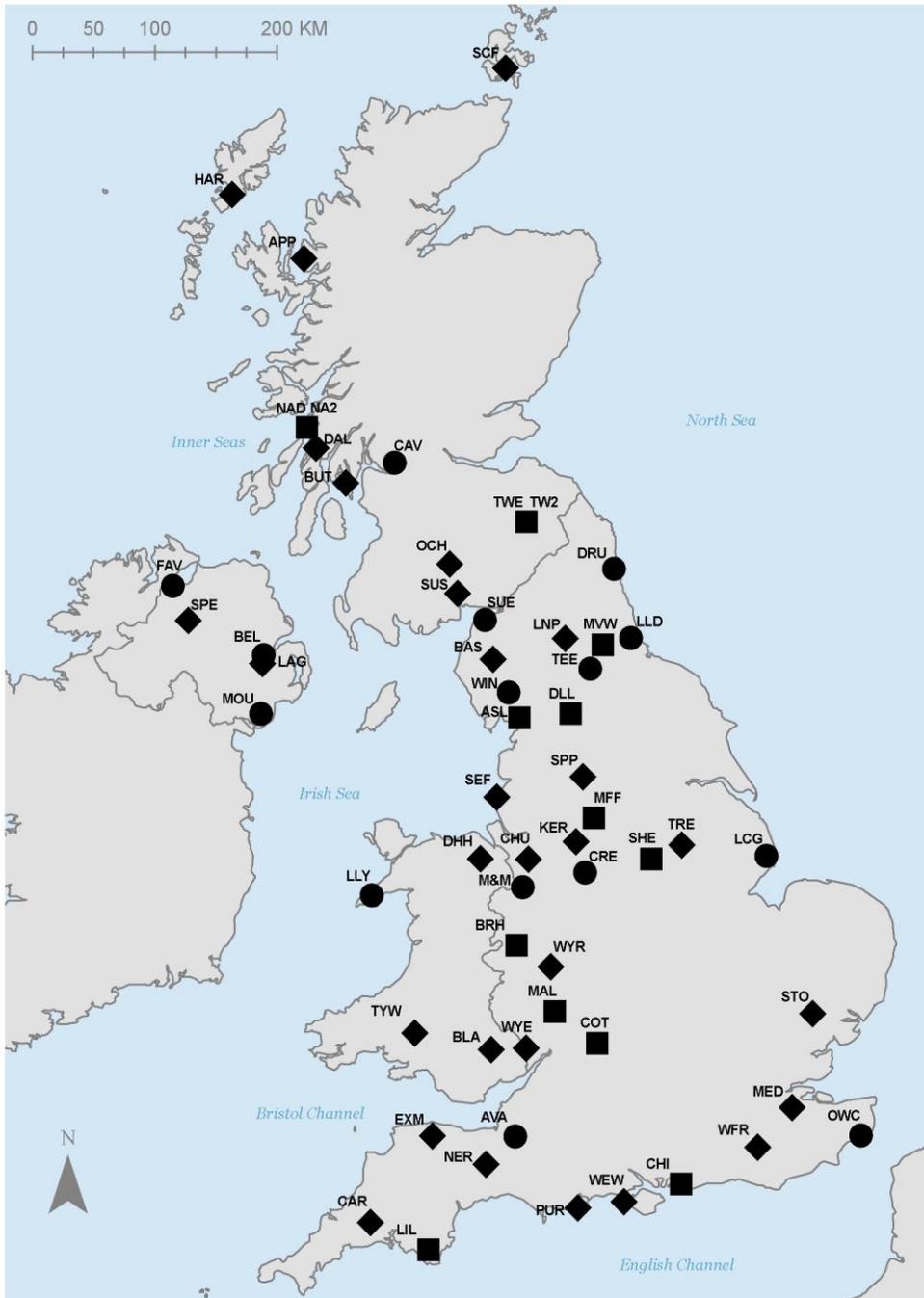
- Best practice needs to be shared and partnerships need appropriate and ongoing support in their evaluation work. National workshops for new schemes should be continued and regional or country workshops should be facilitated for all landscape partnerships wherever possible.
- Partnerships should be encouraged to take on the challenge of incorporating monitoring and evaluation processes in their LCAP, and should be offered advice on these prior to submission. Monitoring and evaluation needs to be embedded within each project plan from the outset, specifying anticipated outputs, identifying outcomes and explaining how these might be captured. Appropriate baseline data should be collected at an early stage.
- The desirability of a standard set of data categories for use by all landscape partnerships should also be investigated. There may be value in linking such categories to the outputs achieved through other HLF funded programmes through a common set of data codes.
- HLF should not grant second-round awards until it is clear that evaluation has been properly thought through. This includes intelligent allocation of resources for monitoring and evaluation activities.
- Partnerships should be required to collect and submit output and outcome data with their second-round submissions, at delivery mid-point, and with their final reports. This would mark a change from the current 'snapshot' approach of a fixed submission date for all partnership regardless of the stage they have reached.
- All partnerships now use GIS and HLF needs to ensure that it receives shape files with all second round applications. For completed schemes if no longer available these could be created relatively easily from maps to enable spatial analysis of the whole landscape partnership programme.
- Now that all applications, LCAPs and monitoring reports are being submitted electronically, HLF should establish a central electronic archive of all such documents.

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University of London Birkbeck
www.bbk.ac.uk/environment/research/cepar

Countryside Training Partnership
Edale, Derbyshire
www.countrysidetraining.co.uk



Code	Scheme title	Code	Scheme title
APP	Applecross (Wester Ross) Landscape Partnership	LNP	Living North Pennines/ Unique North Pennines Landscape Partnership
ASL	Arnside-Silverdale Limestone Heritage Project	M&M	Meres & Mosses of Shropshire & Cheshire
AVA	Wet & Wonderful - Avalon Marshes Landscape Partnership	MAL	Malvern Heritage Project
BAS	Bassenthwaite Reflections Landscape Partnership	MED	Medway Gap 'Valley of Vision'
BEL	Belfast Hills Landscape Partnership	MFF	Moors for the Future
BLA	Forgotten Landscapes - Blaenavon Landscape Partnership	MOU	Mourne Mountain Landscape Partnership
BRH	Blue Remembered Hills Landscape Partnership	MVW	Mineral Valleys - Wear Valley , A Vital Landscape
BUT	Discover Bute/ Isle of Bute Landscape Partnership	NAD & NA2	Nàdair 2 - Argyll Islands Landscape Partnership 1 & 2
CAR	Caradon Hill Area Heritage Project	NER	Neroche Project within the Blackdown Hills
CAV	Clyde & Avon Valley Landscape Partnership	OCH	Ochils (Hills & Hillfoots) Landscape Partnership
CHH	Habitats & Hillforts of Cheshire's Sandstone Ridge	OWC	Over the White Cliffs Landscape Partnership
CHI	Rhythms of the Tide - Chichester Harbour Landscape Partnership	PUR	Carving a Foundation for the Isle of Purbeck/ Purbeck Keystone Project
CHU	Churnet Valley Living (Staffordshire Moorlands) Landscape Partnership	SCF	Scapa Flow Landscape Partnership
COT	Caring for the Cotswolds	SEF	Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership
CRE	Limestone Journeys/ Creswell Crags Landscape Partnership	SHE	Sherwood Initiative
DAL	Dalriada Project	SPE	Sperrin Gateway/ Five Parishes Landscape Partnership
DHH	Heather and Hillforts/ Y Grug a'r Caerau	SPP	South Pennines Watershed Landscape / Pennine Prospects
DLL	Dales Living Landscape	STO	Managing a Masterpiece: The Stour Valley Landscape Partnership
DRU	Druridge Bay Coal & Coast Project	SUE	Sule Way - The Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership
EXM	Exmoor Moorland Landscape Partnership	SUS	Sulwath Connections - The Scottish Solway Coast and River Valleys
FAV	Faughan Valley Landscape Partnership	TEE	Heart of Teesdale / Tees Vale & Barnard Castle Vision Landscape Partnership
HAR	Isle of Harris Landscape Partnership	TRE	Trent Vale Landscape Partnership
KER	Kerridge Ridge & Ingersley Vale Landscape Partnership	TWE & TW2	Tweed Rivers Heritage Project 2
LAG	Lagan Valley Landscape Partnership/ Lagan Landscape	TYW	Tywi Afon yr Oesoedd/ Tywi, a River Through Time Landscape Partnership
LCG	Lincolnshire Coastal Grazing Marshes	WEW	West Wight Landscape Partnership / Through the Eyes of the Needles
LIL	Life into Landscape/ South Devon Area Scheme	WFR	Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership
LLD	Limestone Landscapes (Durham)	WIN	Windermere Reflections Landscape Partnership
LLY	Llyn Coastal Heritage Project/ Partneriaeth Tirlun Llyn	WYE	Overlooking the Wye - Wye Valley Landscape Partnership
		WYR	Grow with Wyre/ Wyre Forest Landscape Partnership

Area Scheme (HLF Strategic Plan 1)
 Landscape Partnership (HLF SP2)
 Landscape Partnership (HLF SP3)

The UK distribution of Landscape Partnerships and their predecessor Area Schemes