

Total Environment: Progress Report



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Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Telephone 020 7238 6000
Website: www.defra.gov.uk

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<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/local/total-environment/>

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Cover image: Marc Jackson, TeP

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Forewords

Richard Benyon MP – Parliamentary Under-secretary for Natural Environment and Fisheries



The Total Environment initiative was launched almost 18 months ago. On the day of the launch, the Secretary of State for Defra, Caroline Spelman and the then Chairman of the Local Government Association, Baroness Eaton, outlined their shared vision for how Defra and its agencies could work better in partnership with councils. I was very pleased to speak at the 'One Year On' Total Environment summit in October 2011 and hear first-hand the progress of participating places, along with the challenges they face.

The partnership working exemplified by Total Environment can have a real impact. It can change for the better our relationships with one another and with our environment. Such an approach can also deliver real benefits, not only in terms of more efficient and effective use of our valuable resources – people, time and money, but also in terms of how we use our environment; the benefits that we take from it, and how we protect ourselves in the face of extreme events and a changing climate.

I am delighted to see the tangible progress made since the launch of Total Environment and I very much welcome this report. But this is just a start: partnership working is a long-term investment in addressing complex, long-term challenges. We look forward to continuing our close collaboration and to achieving even more in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Benyon."

Sir Merrick Cockell – Local Government Association Chairman



I too was very pleased to participate in the October Summit. To me Total Environment is about supporting councils and their partners who have demonstrated innovation in tackling environmental issues and now want to go even further in delivering better outcomes for their residents.

At the start of Total Environment, councils were looking for a new relationship with central government grounded in the many possibilities offered by the localism agenda and whole place working. We all have stories of professional and organisational silos; of being mired in red tape or of running up against regulatory barriers to innovative working. Total Environment is about being smarter about how we work together across all the tiers of government and with our partners and local people.

It is very encouraging to see the range of projects and what has been achieved to date around the country – from joining up around spatial planning, to streamlining regulatory paperwork, to a whole-place approach to flood risk management, to working more effectively with the voluntary and community sector. At the October Summit I listened to and read with interest the stories and successes directly from participating areas. I am now pleased to share these stories with you.

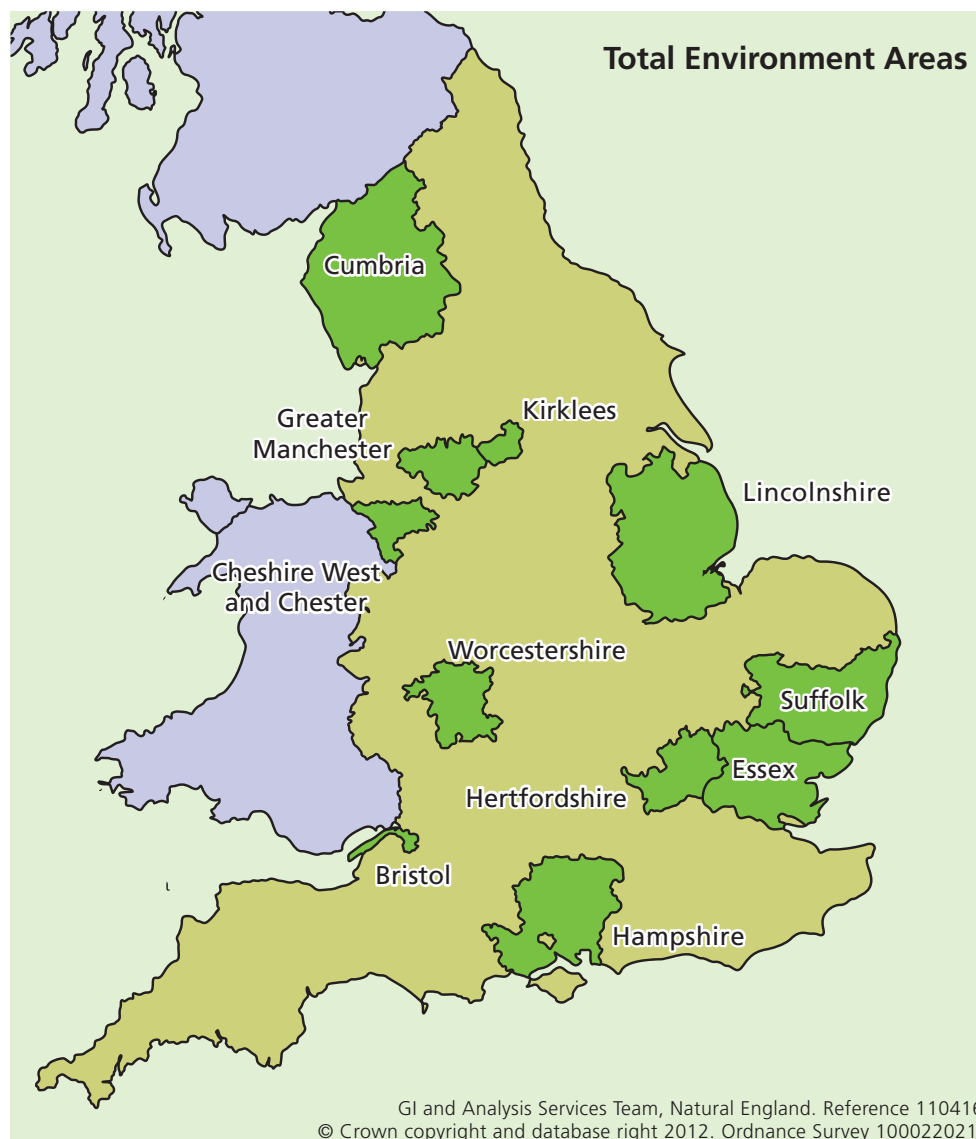
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Merrick Cockell".

Total Environment

1. What is Total Environment?

The 'Total Environment' initiative was launched by the Defra Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman and the Local Government Association Chairman, then Baroness Eaton, in October 2010. The impetus came from a group of local authorities seeking support from Government to take forward the approach adopted through the Total Place¹ work and apply it to their most complex environmental challenges.

Total Environment was therefore conceived to bring together Defra, three of its agencies (the Environment Agency, Natural England and in some cases the Forestry Commission) and the Local Government Association to work with and support local areas to develop new and more ambitious approaches to addressing major local environmental issues which require input from a number of agencies and sectors.



In keeping with Government's decentralisation and localism priorities, local areas have set their own agendas for this work, with the partners on hand to support their ambitions. There are 11 core Total Environment areas across the country:

¹ See <http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/>

- Bristol,
- Cheshire West and Chester,
- Cumbria,
- Essex,
- Greater Manchester,
- Hampshire,
- Hertfordshire,
- Kirklees,
- Lincolnshire,
- Suffolk, and
- Worcestershire.

Thematic interests and objectives vary across the areas according to their local priorities; however most areas have focused on cross-cutting themes which require close working across a range of agencies and sectors, such as developing local green infrastructure, addressing flooding and coastal erosion risk management, or aligning funding for environmental priorities.

2. Progress and the Purpose of this Report

As part of the Total Environment 'One Year On' summit, hosted by Defra in October 2011, local authority leads were asked to provide feedback in respect to their projects and achievements over the year. These were compiled as a summit meeting paper.

Building on these valuable individual contributions, this report picks up on an action from the summit, to raise the profile of Total Environment – by reflecting the progress and achievements of the initiative to date. The report has been structured according to key thematic interests across all Total Environment areas and is exemplified by relevant place-based examples, both in the main narrative and the Annex, which provides a brief summary of all projects being undertaken, along with area contacts.

As the initiative has only been running for 18 months, it is important to acknowledge that many areas' projects are 'works in progress' rather than the finished article. Although a number of tangible outcomes have already been 'banked', the report is also very much about the journey towards the desired outcomes. It is recognised that the level of capacity building and consensus required for projects to even start is a significant challenge in itself.

Total Environment is set to continue. At the summit, renewed support for the initiative was offered to the participating areas by Defra, the Defra agencies and Local Government Association (LGA). In support, a Total Environment webpage² has been established, and there is an LGA hosted Total Environment Knowledge Hub³ to share key documentation and views. But this initiative is not just about action in the participating places, it's about encouraging and inspiring a partnership approach elsewhere; this progress report complements this suite of Total Environment information sharing.

² <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/local/total-environment/>

³ Available at <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/totalenvironment> This replaces the Total Environment Community of Practice – all current content and members will transfer across.

3. Innovative Approaches to Local Challenges – Key Themes

The environmental themes that the areas have chosen to concentrate on vary from place to place; however, there are some particularly prevalent themes, most notably green infrastructure, flood and coastal risk management and working with the voluntary and community sector. This section will focus on each of these, illustrated by place case-studies and supported by ‘in brief’ summaries.

3.1 Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure (GI) is the most common theme across the participating areas. Green infrastructure has the potential to deliver many different functions, including enhancing ecological networks, resilience to climate change, supporting economic growth and regeneration, and improving public health and quality of life. This cross-cutting importance of GI therefore lends itself very well to the multi-agency approach that the Total Environment initiative has sought to foster.

To support those areas interested in green infrastructure, Defra hosted a workshop in June 2011, also bringing together the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Local Government Association. The discussion allowed the local areas to articulate their GI ambitions and to identify common views and ‘asks’ of Defra and agencies. Such asks included increasing strategic leadership, i.e. ministerial support, and securing Defra/agency buy-in to local GI strategies. Coincidentally this discussion took place on the same day the Government’s Natural Environment White Paper⁴ was published which highlighted the strategic importance of green infrastructure, and went some way to address the workshop requests by setting out commitments to promote

the development of GI amongst Total Environment authorities and through the establishment of a national GI partnership (more details under Next Steps).

Image: Chris Thomas, Miltoncontact.com



What is “Green Infrastructure”?

Green infrastructure refers to the living network of green spaces, water and other natural features in both urban and rural areas (and connecting these areas).

It is often used in an urban context to cover the functions of strategically planned trees, parks, gardens, green transport corridors, allotments, cemeteries, woodlands, rivers and wetlands. In a rural context, it might refer to the environmental services provided by farmland, woodland, wetlands or other natural features.

The functions of such areas include water and flood management, wildlife habitat, recreation, and can support economic growth, public health and well-being.

4 The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature – <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

Worcestershire is one of a number of Total Environment areas to have made green infrastructure enhancement the central tenet of their endeavours. Worcestershire County Council, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission became aware that they were making separate contributions into the spatial planning system on the delivery of local green infrastructure. As well as the potential duplication of effort, it was perceived that opportunities to fully engage with GI planning decisions were being missed. Recognising the potential for improvement, the partners met to discuss and map their existing processes, including estimating the staff time and costs involved. They then considered how they could re-engineer the process if working as a single team. Obstacles were encountered, including having to adapt from long-standing organisational approaches and balancing statutory/non-statutory responsibilities; however these were resolved through partners focusing on the long-term desired GI outcomes and working creatively to find solutions to resolve the differing approaches.

This resulted in the creation of joint advice statements – to be prepared in advance of a development to inform master-planning and pre-application engagement. The intention being that by better collaborative working and communication, including sharing staff expertise across organisational boundaries, there would be clearer, coordinated messages from the outset. It is also set to improve efficiencies by having fewer iterative conversations with developers.

Worcestershire – in brief

Issue: Potential duplication and missed opportunities to feed into the planning system on green infrastructure due to separate council and agency processes.

Actions: Partners mapping their existing processes, talking through obstacles and the design of joint advice statements.

Outcomes: Improved use of staff resources, along with more co-ordinated and strengthened messages to benefit local green infrastructure developments.

Next steps: Involve other stakeholders in advice statement preparation and to develop ways of tangibly measuring the effectiveness of the statements. Trial approach to include working with developers, increased engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership.

A number of next steps are proposed: to prioritise the development sites that would most benefit from their preparation of the joint advice statements; to include other stakeholders in their preparation – i.e. the local wildlife trust and developers, and also to develop indicators to demonstrate the tangible value of the new working method. Green infrastructure enhancement is also one of a number of collaborative working themes currently being explored under a Worcestershire Total Environment community budget (see the ‘in brief’ box on page 13 regarding community budgets).

Those working in **Hertfordshire** have also focused on influencing the spatial planning system and land-use decisions to secure greater and better functionality for local people into the future (the same asset “working harder or better”). Hertfordshire’s Green Infrastructure Framework, a suite of district based Green Infrastructure Plans and a sub-regional Strategic Highlights Plan (SHiP) have been the key outputs to date. These have been jointly commissioned across the partners (the County Council, district and borough councils, the Environment Agency, Green Arc and Natural England) and identify a series of high level projects of district or sub-regional importance. Significantly, it is anticipated that the district GI plans will be linked into Local Plans. Hertfordshire has also made bids to establish three Nature Improvement

Areas drawing from projects identified in the SHiP, and whilst these have not made it into the final 12 areas receiving government funding, they will still be pursued as large-scale GI projects. Additionally the County has held a recent conference to explore the establishment and direction for a Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership. It was agreed that the LNP will be working to the Hertfordshire Sustainability Forum and is also anticipated to have a role in driving partnership-implementation of the GI Plans.

Cheshire West and Chester have focused on a similar theme but are at an earlier stage. They have also drawn up detailed plans to develop their local green infrastructure, which are to be incorporated within their Whole Place community budget pilot (further to the December 2011 pilot area announcement). The Council, working with the existing Cheshire Green Infrastructure Partnership, intend to focus on a couple of small scale neighbourhoods. The driving motivation is underpinned by an assessment of local need which identified five key issues that would be improved through the development of local green infrastructure, health, climate change adaptation, energy, flood risk and economic development. The assessment also recognised that such improvements could be best realised through greater organisational collaboration. A more detailed work programme relating to each of the five themes is now under development, with the Council due to liaise further in respect to Defra and agency support.

3.2 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

Flood and coastal erosion risk management requires collaboration between agencies and partners. Coastlines and river catchment areas do not adhere to administrative boundaries, nor are they the responsibility of a single organisation, therefore this topic has emerged as another strong Total Environment theme. This is further influenced by new statutory duties for local authorities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Projects relating to flood and coastal erosion risk management have primarily been pursued in Lincolnshire and Suffolk.



A joint Suffolk and Lincolnshire workshop was held in February 2011, along with Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Local Government Association. It was an opportunity to determine which issues were raised jointly and the key asks of the Defra network. Although some differences in approach and spatial scales, common themes were:

- to deliver better outcomes for local people,
- working with local communities, and
- removing duplication and inefficiency by simplifying processes and greater partner collaboration.

This has formed the basis of ongoing dialogue with Government. More detail on each of the two areas activities now follows.

Building on an already strong partnership, **Lincolnshire** County Council are working with the Environment Agency, district authorities and Internal Drainage Boards to pilot ways of delivering improved value for money and outcomes from locally derived flood risk and drainage funding in the county. Alongside achieving efficiencies in spending on flood risk management, the partnership aims to develop a joint strategy for all flood risk, undertaking to commission each other to deliver flood and water management works and seeking out other means of securing additional funding. Financial savings will then be re-invested in further flood risk works. The Joint Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Lincolnshire will underpin the development of a Common Asset Management Plan prepared by the partners to guide where it is most appropriate to invest limited funds. Both of these are already under development.

Lincolnshire – in brief

Issue: The need to improve value for money and improved flood risk outcomes across the county.

Actions: Include establishing a 'Partnership Fund' for maintaining flood and water assets with a view to commission relevant partner to deliver agreed interventions.

Outcomes: More/improved flood risk management drainage work delivered in the county whilst utilising existing funding. All Partners have agreed they would prefer to see "more done for the same" rather than "the same done for less".

Next steps: To work with local partners and government to refine mechanisms for committing resources and commissioning.

The partnership has proposed that a 'Partnership Fund' of about £5 million be established comprising various elements of all partners' existing funding. This fund could then be used to maintain existing assets whether drainage, main river or ordinary water courses. The Risk Management Authorities involved believe that what they have achieved to date is a natural step in the evolution of an already excellent partnership and will deliver more for people and the environment.

Suffolk's focus has been on coastal issues. The authority and partners have undertaken significant work to define objectives and build partnerships. In March 2011 Suffolk held its own Total Environment workshop which resulted in four work-streams:

- mapping resources,
- mapping governance,
- simplification of asset management, and
- communication.

A further partner workshop, led by the Environment Agency, was held in August and focused on simplification of asset management to identify clear short, medium and long-term objectives. These objectives have been assessed by Suffolk and shared with a range of key partners. There has been a positive response to the proposals, and to build momentum a meeting is planned for spring 2012 to develop an implementation plan. More generally, the work has helped to underpin other initiatives being progressed with Suffolk coastal communities.

3.3 Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector

Local authorities working with the Defra family and the LGA has been the cornerstone of the Total Environment approach; however involvement of partners beyond the public sector has also been a key feature in certain areas, particularly with the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

In **Hampshire** the reduction in funding and loss of specialist public sector expertise, resulting from the current economic climate, meant that it was more important than ever for government agencies, local government and the local VCS to work together so that environmental delivery wouldn't suffer. This was supported by the consensus that environmental issues cannot be solved by individual agencies alone, and thus building joint capacity and long-term resilience together was key. As a result the 'Hampshire Centre of Environmental Excellence' was established to align programmes of work and share the environmental expertise available across the partners.

To drive this vision forward, the relevant organisations came together to map synergies across their priorities and identify potential shared delivery outcomes. It became apparent that a place-based, themed approach would work best. The local commissioning model is now well established and eleven landscape scale initiatives have been commissioned and are currently being delivered by the partners, covering all environmental sectors to deliver integrated solutions.

Hampshire – in brief

Issue: How local government, government agencies and the VCS could respond to resource cuts by working together and building capacity to better address environmental issues.

Actions: Open dialogue between public bodies and VCS, mapping organisations, priorities, identifying synergies and aligning programmes to deliver shared outcomes.

Outcomes: Establishment of a virtual Centre of Environmental Excellence to deliver local environmental benefits. Local commissioning model now well established, engaging with 21 actively participating partners, 11 landscape scale initiatives commissioned and are currently being delivered.

Next steps: Sustain the current enthusiasm and momentum and establish stronger links with potential economic/commercial partners.

Different projects under the themes of green and blue infrastructure are led by different partner organisations, thus sharing resources and responsibilities equitably and allowing organisations to retain their independence. These include (with lead partners):

- Water quality diffuse pollution (Environment Agency)
- Surface water flooding (Hampshire County Council – HCC)
- Land management (South Downs National Park Authority)
- Enhancing green infrastructure (two projects led by different partners: two borough councils along with HCC)
- Community planning and resilience (Community Action Hampshire)
- Increasing community engagement in the management of heritage sites (English Heritage)
- Improving the community value of publically owned woodlands (Forestry Commission)
- Managing sites as a single unit or place, rather than by organisation (Forestry Commission and HCC)
- Providing a closer link between communities and highways asset management to respond to local needs and priorities (Hampshire Association of Local Councils/HCC)
- Education Outreach project (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust)
- Tackling social deprivation through environmental improvement schemes (Rushmore Borough Council)
- Community engagement in catchment environmental projects (Solent Groundwork)
- Six projects to develop a landscape toolkit to enhance community planning (respectively lead by local parish councils/village associations with support from HCC and Community Action Hampshire).

This local commissioning model has demonstrated the benefits of partners using discussion and constructive challenge to align and enhance relevant programmes to achieve broader environmental and social benefits when tackling together what might previously have been handled by one organisation alone. Partners also achieved clear delivery efficiencies by reduced duplication, improved communication and better deployment of resources by sharing expertise for a common purpose.

In **Bristol**, partners agreed to focus on enhancing and promoting environmental volunteering opportunities through a project coined 'Green Volunteers Bristol' – a theme much in-keeping with the city's association with the 'green' movement and proud status as a Green Capital. Already an established partnership body, the Bristol Natural History Consortium⁵, incorporating Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Bristol City Council and numerous other local educational and environmental organisations, was the natural choice to lead the project. In keeping with the Total Environment philosophy, constituent partners jointly contributed to developing the project, along with strong involvement from local volunteering organisations.



Throughout 2011 the scheme helped to recruit over 1,000 volunteers and match them with organisations

⁵ <http://www.bnhc.org.uk/>

looking for volunteers in environmental and sustainability fields. A dedicated website to facilitate these relationships has been up-and-running since June 2011 with plans to develop the volunteer brokerage capabilities of the site further in 2012. The first year of the project, under European Year of Volunteering funds, also provided organisations with workshops and activities for sharing best practice, including a large end-of-year conference where volunteers and voluntary organisations were celebrated through the 'Green Volunteers Awards'.

This project is also complemented by Bristol City Council, working with the Environment Agency and Civil Service South West, looking at their own employee volunteer schemes (more details in the Annex).

4. Next Steps for Total Environment

Although renewed support for Total Environment has been made centrally, the future of the initiative rests predominantly in areas' hands. However there are a number of government initiatives announced since the inception of Total Environment that may stimulate future activity: the focus throughout is on joining up across organisational boundaries to achieve better outcomes for the environment and for local communities.

4.1 Environmental Partnership Initiatives

A number of potential opportunities for Total Environment areas have been introduced in the Government's Natural Environment White Paper *The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature* as published June 2011 (web-link at footnote 4). It sets out how the value of nature will be mainstreamed across our society, for example by facilitating more joined-up action at local and national levels; strengthening the connections between people and nature to the benefit of both; and creating a green economy. As such it sets out a number of potential opportunities for Total Environment areas.

The Green Infrastructure Partnership

The White Paper contains two commitments relating to the development of local green infrastructure:

- To work with local authority partnerships through the Total Environment initiative to identify and address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth, and share the lessons learnt, and
- The establishment of a Green Infrastructure Partnership to support the development of green infrastructure in England.

The Partnership was launched October 2011 and is focused on how green infrastructure can be enhanced to strengthen ecological networks, improve health and quality of life, enhance resilience to climate change, and help to drive investment and growth. The membership of the Partnership is broad, and further involvement is sought from local authority representatives, including Total Environment pilots.

The work plan of the Partnership is now being considered, with a view to have lead partners for each of the following areas:

- Design for the built environment (how to design and retrofit GI)
- Landscape scale (how to plan GI for ecosystem services)
- Neighbourhoods (how to work with communities)

- Local delivery (lessons from implementation at the local level)
- Valuation (how to value and make the case for GI)
- Education, training and skills (ensuring that people have the skills and knowledge to deliver improved GI).

The key question across all of these themes is how best to support local communities, planners and decision-makers in planning and developing green infrastructure. An overarching communications work strand will help address this.

More details are available as per the link below, with a follow-up contact for those interested in engaging with the partnership at the end of the section:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/green-infrastructure/>

Other Natural Environment Initiatives

In a number of cases, the work done by Total Environment areas will lay the foundations for the new partnerships being piloted or introduced, such as Local Nature Partnerships, Nature Improvement Areas and Water Catchment Pilots, which are to be driven by the knowledge and vision of local partners. Many such partnerships will include local councils, though there is an opportunity for all local councils to engage with these initiatives and be part of improving the local environment and the benefits which flow from this. Further details on these example initiatives are as follows:

- **Local Nature Partnerships:** The vision for LNPs is that they are self-sustaining strategic partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people. They will help their local area to manage the natural environment as a system and embed its value in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy. Applications will open spring 2012, with the first LNPs announced in the summer.
See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/local-nature-partnerships/>
- **Nature Improvement Areas** are being established by partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations with the primary purpose of delivering significant enhancements to ecological networks over large areas. They could be established wherever the benefits or opportunities are greatest based on the knowledge and shared vision of local partnerships. In February 2012, Defra announced 12 NIAs that will receive government funding to kick-start the process.
See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/nia/> and <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/nia>
- **Water Catchment Pilots** aim to increase participation to improve the water environment by bringing together those who benefit from it and those with an interest in protecting river wildlife and/or habitats. The pilot phase is running until December 2012. This involves the Environment Agency providing a 'hosting' role to facilitate local engagement in 10 catchments, whilst a range of external stakeholders are hosting 15 other catchments. Additionally, lighter touch support is being provided in a further 41 catchments. All of these will be evaluated to inform the wider national roll out of the approach from 2013.
See: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/131506.aspx>

4.2 Budgets and Financing

As Total Environment projects develop, there is naturally a progression from agreeing priorities and outcomes to the more complex and challenging business of ensuring the appropriate set-up for their implementation. As with Total Place, the ethos of Total Environment is framed around the simple question 'can we do better for less?', but it can take time to put in place the mechanisms to realise the savings available. Several Total Environment areas are now at the stage of focusing on their finances and funding arrangements in order to take their projects to the vital delivery stage.

In addition to Lincolnshire's pioneering work to establish a 'partnership fund', as set out earlier in the report, several Total Environment areas responded to the summer 2011 invitation from central government to work with departments and agencies to develop a **Community Budget** on the themes of their choice.

Community Budgets – in brief

A community budget enables local public service providers to come together and agree how services can be better delivered, how the money to fund them should be managed and how they will organise themselves.

The approach was first used by departments and agencies engaging with families with multiple problems; however in summer 2011 the invitation was broadened to other themes – with Total Environment cited as an example. Five areas put forward Total Environment related expressions of interest.

Additionally, in December 2011:

- Four areas were selected to test how all funding for local services can be brought together into one place under a 'whole place' community budget, and
- Ten 'neighbourhood level' areas were selected to develop much smaller scale Community Budgets (*see footnote for more details*)

Total Environment activity was highlighted in particular and consequently five Total Environment areas expressed initial interest. Whilst green infrastructure is the focus of several of these community budgets (as per Worcestershire and Cheshire West and Chester examples), flood risk and biodiversity offsetting also featured as topics. Finalising the ambitions for this work continues into 2012, alongside 'Whole Place' community budget pilots⁶ announced December 2011, which include three Total Environment areas – Cheshire West and Chester, Essex and Greater Manchester. It is early days for this, but Defra are maintaining close contact.

Some of the initial work done in Greater Manchester by **Oldham** illustrates the potential benefits of considering environmental challenges through a community budget lens. A workshop across partners was held December 2011 to explore which local environmental priorities would be most appropriate to apply to a community budget approach. To do this, participants considered:

- The environmental issues that partners collectively spend the most on,
- How to change practices to work together better on the highest spend areas to make savings but achieve positive outcomes, and therefore
- Agreeing priority areas for more detailed action planning following the workshop.

⁶ Four Whole Place pilots were announced 21st December 2011; Cheshire West and Chester, Greater Manchester, West London and Essex. See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/localgovernment/2056449>

In the workshop, fly-tipping was returned as the environmental theme requiring the greatest spend across the partners present so time was spent to explore approximate costs to tackle the issue according to prevention, enforcement and clean up. The next steps, linking in with Greater Manchester's Whole Place pilot, are to look more accurately at these costs and to apply this methodology to other priority themes (the Greater Manchester pilot will focus on tackling dependency on public services and supporting economic growth, with Oldham leading on the environmental aspect). There are also plans for this to link in with the work of the emerging Greater Manchester Local Nature Partnership and Nature Improvement Areas.

This all signals clear intent to explore the more complex landscape of joint resource management now required to take partnership working to the next level. This will therefore be a key component of the Total Environment agenda going forward.

4.3. Final Thoughts

Over the last year and a half that Total Environment has been running, it has been very encouraging to see the range of projects being tackled and their achievements to date. Total Environment areas are often at the forefront of a novel and increasingly relevant model of partnership working, which will be essential to implementing natural environment improvements across the country, especially as part of a more localised approach.

Total Environment also remains a learning experience for all, so we hope to continue to build on and share expertise and experiences. Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Local Government Association are keen to continue to support areas, but also to gain feedback and review progress. To this effect please continue to keep in touch – contacts as below. We hope we will be able to continue to move forward with a common purpose and achieve even more in the coming year.

Defra – overall: anna.knight@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Defra – Green Infrastructure: greeninfrastructure.partnership@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Local Government Association: rebecca.cox@local.gov.uk

Natural England: tom.butterworth@naturalengland.org.uk

Environment Agency: hannah.mears@environment-agency.gov.uk

Forestry Commission: mark.durk@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

A summary of the projects across Total Environment areas, along with lead contacts, is set out as below. We would like to thank these areas for their contributions.

Area and Lead Contacts	Project	Actions	Outcomes to date	Next Step
Bristol Savita Custead at Bristol Natural History Consortium savita@bnhc.org.uk	1) The development and launch of the Green Volunteers programme. 2) The Council, EA and Civil Service South West looking at their own employee environmental volunteer schemes.	1) A dedicated website to facilitate relationships between potential volunteers and environmental and sustainability organisational has been up-and-running since June. 2) Launched EA intranet site offering their employees a range of local volunteering activities. High profile scheme launch event.	1) In 2011 the scheme helped to recruit over 1,000 volunteers and match them with organisations looking for volunteers. 2) Greater awareness of the availability of environmental leave and its purpose. Improved local environmental quality through the volunteering activity.	1) To develop the volunteer brokerage capabilities of the site further in 2012. 2) Build on opportunities available to EA employees and explore integration with new Green Volunteers Bristol brokerage technology.
Cheshire West and Chester jane.staley@groundwork.org.uk paul.nolan@merseyforest.org.uk	A collaborative approach to progressing Green Infrastructure outcomes at a local level.	Focusing on the Northwich and Winsford areas, five key issues were identified for addressing through greater collaboration; heath; climate change adaptation; energy; flood risk; and economic development.		To take this project forward as part of the whole place Community Budget. A more detailed work programme relating to each of the five themes is now under development, with the Council due to liaise further in respect to Defra and agency support.
Cumbria paul.feehily@cumbria.gov.uk	To enable closer partnership working across environment issues, co-ordinating effort and targeting combined resources.	The formation of Cumbria Total Environment Group, who will support the development of a Cumbria Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and work being undertaken on the Northern Uplands and Morecambe Bay LNPs.	Agreement that the Group's role will be mapped on to existing formal decision making structures and processes to ensure participating organisations can follow through on Total Environment commitments.	To look at the Group's strategic priorities, widen membership to reflect agreed priorities (including the business community where appropriate) and refine Terms of Reference to ensure a focus on project delivery.

Area and Lead Contacts	Project	Actions	Outcomes to date	Next Step
<p>Essex matthew.searle@essex.gov.uk luke.bristow@essex.gov.uk</p>	<p>To demonstrate Essex County Council's commitment to exploring the opportunities for biodiversity offsetting in Essex.</p>	<p>A biodiversity offsetting feasibility study (to address the unavoidable ecological impacts of development).</p>	<p>The feasibility study concluded that Essex presented the right conditions for biodiversity offsetting to work well.</p> <p>Essex became one of six biodiversity offsetting pilots.</p> <p>Principle of offsetting imbedded in the Greater Thames Marshes Nature Improvement Area.</p>	<p>To further develop biodiversity offsetting as part of the Defra pilot.</p> <p>To engage with developers, landowners and the minerals industry to help deliver compensatory measures as part of the local planning process.</p> <p>To explore opportunities for biodiversity offsetting and the environment as part of the Whole Place Community Budget.</p>
<p>Greater Manchester adam.hackett@oldham.gov.uk liz.hume@oldham.gov.uk</p>	<p>To look at integrating environmental services into other place-based services.</p>	<p>Evaluating a range of existing and emerging projects across the constituent authorities to develop further. Including Oldham specifically looking to establishing a TE community budget, initially with a fly-tipping focus.</p>		<p>To take this project forward as part of the Greater Manchester Whole Place Community Budget.</p>
<p>Hampshire linda.tartaglia-kershaw@hants.gov.uk</p>	<p>To rethink how government agencies, local government, and the voluntary and community sector can build capacity and long term resilience.</p>	<p>Open dialogue between public bodies and the voluntary and community sector. Mapping organisations' priorities, identifying synergies and aligning programmes to deliver shared outcomes.</p>	<p>Establishment of a virtual Centre of Environmental Excellence to deliver local environmental benefits. Local commissioning model well established engaging with 21 actively participating partners.</p>	<p>Sustain the current enthusiasm and momentum and establish stronger links with potential economic and commercial partners.</p>

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<p>Hertfordshire tony.bradford@hertscc.gov.uk simon.odell@hertscc.gov.uk</p>	<p>1) Collaborative working to establish a common Green Infrastructure framework for Hertfordshire.</p> <p>2) Better networking with the Environment Agency to explore joint working and resource pooling.</p>	<p>1) Establishment of a commissioning partnership to fund and drive GI planning in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>2) Both organisations undertook a high level scan of the broad work areas and asked local service managers to examine current activities to spot where a common approach could be applied.</p>	<p>1) District based LDF compliant GI plans and a strategic highlights Plan. Submission of LNP bid for capacity building.</p> <p>2) The Agency has seconded a member of staff into Hertfordshire County Council to support the Council in addressing its requirements under the Flood and Water Management Act.</p>	<p>1) Establish a GI delivery group and begin developing and delivering SHiP projects at county wide or sub-county scale.</p> <p>2) Decisions to be made over joint training, information sharing and integration of maintenance costs, including the potential to pool resources.</p>
<p>Kirklees margaret.durkin@kirklees.gov.uk jeff.keenlyside@kirklees.gov.uk</p>	<p>To work on three areas of challenge:</p> <p>a) Farming and business regulation;</p> <p>b) Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure (GI);</p> <p>c) Planning and infrastructure.</p>	<p>a) Discussion in partnership with EA, NE, the Rural Payments Agency and the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (amongst others) to define priorities.</p> <p>b) Exploring shared mapping of GI assets, activities and opportunities in pilot area to develop a single delivery programme.</p> <p>c) Develop more streamlined planning processes to cut duplication.</p>	<p>a) Establishing an intelligence sharing framework to better target resources at risk, and the provision of cross-organisational training and up-skilling of officers.</p> <p>b) More effective measures in place to deliver plans and programmes of partners.</p>	<p>a) To implement action plans and monitor and evaluate expected cost savings and benefits.</p>

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<p>Lincolnshire david.hickman@lincolnshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>To improve value for money and improved flood risk outcomes across the county.</p> <p>Partners agree they would prefer to see “more done for the same” rather than “the same done for less”.</p>	<p>Include establishing a ‘Partnership Fund’ for maintaining flood and water assets with a view to commissioning relevant partners to deliver agreed interventions.</p> <p>Develop a common asset management approach across all partners, including assessment, evaluation and joint commissioning.</p>	<p>Agreement to jointly fund common asset management maintenance works and to commission maintenance from each other.</p> <p>Agreed funding/ resource streams to be included and efficiencies gained are to be recycled.</p> <p>More/improved flood risk management drainage work delivered with existing funding.</p>	<p>To work with local partners and government to refine mechanisms for committing resources and commissioning.</p> <p>Embed TE common asset management approach and funding mechanisms into a Joint Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.</p>
<p>Suffolk matt.hullis@suffolk.gov.uk jane.burch@suffolk.gov.uk</p>	<p>To examine new ways of managing flood and coastal risk management.</p>	<p>Four work-streams have emerged: mapping resources, mapping governance; simplification of asset management and communication.</p>	<p>There has been a positive response to the proposals, which are helping to underpin other initiatives being progressed within Suffolk coastal communities.</p>	<p>A meeting in March 2012 to develop an implementation plan.</p>
<p>Worcestershire Emily Barker and Dale Bristow ebarker@worcestershire.gov.uk dbristow@worcestershire.gov.uk</p>	<p>The Council and Defra agencies working together to better feed into the spatial planning system in respect to GI (to avoid duplication/ missed opportunities).</p>	<p>Partners mapping their existing processes, talking through obstacles and the design of joint advice statements.</p>	<p>Improved use of staff resources, along with more coordinated and strengthened messages to benefit local green infrastructure developments.</p>	<p>Involve wider stakeholders in advice statement preparation and develop ways of tangibly measuring effectiveness of the statements.</p> <p>Explore the funding side through a community budget.</p>

