

Quality Of Life



ACHIEVING THE VISION

To achieve the vision, the region needs to focus on three key factors:

- 1 Developing **Culture and Image**.
- 2 Developing the sense of **Community** in the Northwest – including community cohesion.
- 3 Improving the **Environment** – including capitalising on our natural assets, the quality of the visitor experience and the quality of the physical environment.

These factors are expanded into specific objectives in the tables on pages 46 to 49. These tables list the key actions required to achieve these objectives, with the transformational actions highlighted. Some actions elsewhere in the RES closely relate to specific objectives in this chapter. These actions are shown as colour-coded numbered links.

NORTHWEST CONTEXT

The Northwest has rich assets which make it an excellent place to live, work and visit, and in which to invest and study. It has vibrant, diverse towns and cities. It is rich in history and heritage. It has a strong and exciting cultural life and wonderful natural assets, including stunning countryside, coastline and areas of natural beauty. Together they provide a quality of life which is one of the region's strengths and which needs to be maintained and enhanced.

Despite these strengths, there is still work to be done on image. The region still has a relatively weak perception amongst UK business leaders and opinion formers. Negative, outdated perceptions persist and need to be addressed.

The visitor economy is a vital part of the wider economy of the region, with strengths in both rural and urban areas. The Northwest is well placed to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the changing nature of the tourism market. The region offers visitors a distinctive and diverse range of experiences. These contribute to the quality of life for everyone and also present further opportunities for development.

The Northwest has been successful in winning major events. These contribute to an improved image of the region, as well as generating economic activity. There are significant opportunities to build further on key events, such as Liverpool Capital of Culture 2008, and much to do to ensure the region benefits from its success in winning such accolades.

One of the strengths of the region is its diversity, particularly of its communities. Future growth depends upon using the talents of all these communities. This requires cleaner and safer environments, as well as the full participation of the community and voluntary sectors.

The Northwest's natural and built heritage assets also contribute enormously to the quality of life in the region. The Lake District, the World Heritage Sites, its historic centres and Regional Parks are prime examples. Developing the economic potential of these, while retaining their environmental quality, should be a major objective.

Northwest facts

- 62% of business and opinion leaders from outside the region view the Northwest as a good business location, compared to 71% within the region.
- The visitor economy is worth some £7 billion per year to the region (7% of the economy), supporting an estimated 400,000 jobs.
- The Commonwealth Games generated an additional £18 million spend by visitors and supported over 7,000 full time equivalent jobs
- The cultural sector, broadly defined, contributes an estimated 12% of the region's GVA.
- Faith communities contribute over £90 million per annum to the regional economy through volunteers, provision of buildings and tourism.
- 18% of the total area of the Northwest is covered by National Park and 11% is classed as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

ACTIONS	REASON	LEAD
Culture & Image		
Promote the image of the region: 61		
95. Develop and implement marketing programmes to promote a positive image of the benefits and diversity of the Northwest as a location for businesses, visitors, investors and as a place to live	Challenges outdated negative perceptions and promotes the environmental quality of the region to attract new businesses and in-migration to support growth	NWDA
Maximise cultural and major event opportunities: 28 54 55		
96. Support Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008 to maximise the full economic benefit through coordinated marketing, business and product development activity	Maximises the economic and legacy benefits to Liverpool, the Northwest and the rest of the UK	Liverpool Culture Company TMP
97. Develop the appeal, distinctiveness and diversity of the "Cultural Offer" in the Northwest focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Manchester and Liverpool ➤ Other Cities 	Improves the appeal of the region to visitors/residents and helps attract higher level workers. Creates vibrant cities, a high quality of life and social inclusion where diversity is embraced and celebrated. Faith communities are major custodians of the cultural and architectural heritage	Culture Northwest
98. Secure sports, business and cultural events and conferences for the region to host in line with the Major Events Strategy	Increases tourism and economic benefits to the whole region	NWDA
99. Develop supply chain, business and marketing opportunities linked to major events, including London 2012	Ensures that the maximum economic impact is gained by these major events	NWDA
100. Develop plans to exploit the predicted business opportunities in the growth of sport	Opportunities will grow due to the government's policy on physical activity and sport. The Northwest already has a strong sporting presence	NWDA
Develop the quality of the visitor experience: 10 11		
101. Improve the product associated with the region's tourism 'attack brands' and 'signature projects' as identified in the Regional Tourism Strategy, in line with market demand	Essential to develop the product in these areas to grow the overall visitor economy. Current "attack brands" are Liverpool, Manchester, Chester and The Lake District. Current "signature projects" are Mersey Waterfront, Cruise Terminals, Chester Zoo, Blackpool's revival, Renaissance of The Lake District and Hadrian's Wall	Tourist Boards SRPs
102. Capitalise on the strengths and key assets of Southport as a "Classic Resort"	Southport has significant latent potential and is a key image asset for the Liverpool City Region	The Mersey Partnership
103. Implement a Business Tourism Strategy, to develop the quality and range of facilities within the region	Business tourism is a high value-added sector that is an underdeveloped market. It has clear links to growth sectors and inward investment	Regional Tourism Forum

ACTIONS	REASON	LEAD
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Culture & Image (continued)

Develop the quality of the visitor experience (continued):

104. Develop and implement a Visitor Information Strategy for the region	Improves the way we provide information to visitors before and during their visit, and links information to the quality experiences being promoted. Key issues include growing “real time” online availability and rationalising information provision	Regional Tourism Forum Tourist Boards
105. Support business development for tourism businesses through the region’s five Tourist Boards to grow the market share of domestic, overseas and business visitors	Supports the growth of visitor economy businesses and improvements in the quality of visitor focused products and services	Tourist Boards Regional Tourism Forum

Community

Support cleaner, safer, greener communities:

106. Deliver the following to support cleaner, safer and greener communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regional Reducing Re-offending Action Plan ➤ Initiatives to reduce the level of alcohol related crime and violence in towns and cities ➤ Support for masterplans and local businesses to incorporate “clean, safe, green” and “secure by design” principles ➤ Business Improvement Districts and Green Business Parks 	Promotes sustainable communities and a suitable environment to promote economic success, a high quality of life, and minimises the economic impact of crime and the fear of crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GONW ➤ Regional Alcohol Forum ➤ GONW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local Authorities
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Develop community cohesion:

107. Implement the Sustainable Communities Plan and develop the skills of regeneration professionals and leaders to support sustainable communities	Ensures a strategic regional approach to developing cohesive communities. Improves the quality of life and aspirations of people in the most deprived wards	GONW/ RENEW Northwest
108. Promote the role of the Voluntary and Community Sector, Social Enterprise, Trade Unions and Faith Communities, in tackling social exclusion and improving community cohesion	These groups are crucial to an inclusive society and have a key role to play in integrated delivery. Key issues include exploring opportunities for the acquisition of shared community assets to increase levels of social capital and the role of Credit Unions in tackling financial exclusion	Voluntary Sector

Develop high quality local services:

109. Undertake capacity building activity of the Voluntary and Community Sector and Social Enterprise to enable delivery of high quality public services, including through the development of local and regional Compacts	Local services are vital to all communities. The role of the VCS and Social Enterprise in their delivery, as well as NHS modernisation, are large potential opportunities	North West Improvement Network Voluntary Sector/ GONW
110. Utilise Local Area Agreements to deliver improved access to high quality public services	Local Area Agreements offer an opportunity to improve both the quality of public services and access to them by all sections of society. Key issues include access for all via the internet, ensuring no “digital divide”	Local Authorities

ACTIONS	REASON	LEAD
Community (continued)		
Reduce health inequalities and social exclusion:		3 34 44 57
111. Deliver the Regional Equality and Diversity (RED) Strategy with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Economic participation for all ➤ Reducing hate crime and violence ➤ Promoting diversity as an asset 	Equality and Diversity are assets for the Northwest and, if correctly promoted, have huge potential economic benefits	GONW NWDA NWRA Local Authorities
112. Deliver the Investment for Health strategic plan with a focus on tackling health inequalities	Improves access to health services, improving social inclusion	Department of Health
Environment		
Realise and nurture the natural and built heritage assets:		54 55 101
113. Develop the economic benefit of the region's natural environment through better alignment of environmental activities and economic gain	A key under-exploited economic resource for the region and part of our quality of life. It is important to nurture the natural resources of the region and to develop a strategy for green infrastructure and transport corridors	Natural Economy Northwest
114. Implement The Lake District Economic Futures Policy Statement to secure the renaissance of The Lake District's tourism offer and broaden its economic performance	Supports The Lake District Renaissance programme and is essential to broaden the economic base of The Lake District, to maintain its status as a key asset and to promote sustainable economic growth	Cumbria Vision Lake District National Park Authority
115. Deliver sustainable growth through use of the region's heritage environments and assets – especially World Heritage Sites, the cities of Chester, Lancaster and Carlisle and The Lake District	A key under-exploited economic resource for the region which delivers tourism, regeneration and image benefits. Current World Heritage Sites are Hadrian's Wall and Liverpool Waterfront	Sub-Regional Partnerships Tourist Boards
116. Create and manage the following Regional Parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mersey Waterfront ➤ East Lancashire ➤ Weaver Valley ➤ Ribble Estuary ➤ Northwest Coastal Trail ➤ Wigan Greenheart 	Delivers image and regeneration benefits. Proposals for regional parks at Croal Irwell, Morecambe Bay and West Cumbria should also be further developed	Regional Park Organisations Sub-Regional Partnerships
117. Implement the Regional Forestry Framework	Delivers image and regeneration benefits	Forestry Commission
118. Promote sustainable farming and food production and its role in the management of rural environmental assets	Recognises agriculture's role in shaping the physical landscape, which benefits tourism and quality of life	GONW Natural England

ACTIONS	REASON	LEAD
Environment (continued)		
Improve the physical environment:		
47-50 54 56 101		
119. Invest in quality public realm, green space and environmental quality focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The cities of Liverpool, Manchester and Preston ➤ Tourism “Attack Brand” and “Signature Project” locations and key arrival points ➤ HMR and URC areas ➤ Key Rural Service Centres 	A quality environment is essential for private investment, attracting knowledge workers and a high quality of life. The areas mentioned are key for future growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SRPs ➤ Tourist Boards Local Authorities ➤ HMRS/URCs ➤ SRPs
120. Understand the economic case for, and promote, good design ensuring project developers and managers provide strong client leadership	Good design contributes to economic growth and regeneration	RENEW Northwest
121. “Future proof” physical development projects to ensure they meet the demands of future generations	All developments need to ensure they are contributing to the sustainable future of our region, reduce their resource use and incorporate high quality and sustainable construction techniques	Local Authorities
122. Protect existing areas of high economic value from flooding, to appropriate standards	Ensures key economic assets will be guarded against flood risk	Environment Agency

KEY SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

According to independent assessment, implementation of the actions above is likely to lead to the following outcomes when measured against the UK Priorities for Sustainable Development.

a) Sustainable Consumption and Production

Recognition of the environment as a key economic resource will support better management of resources. Support for cleaner, safer and greener communities will also complement actions concerned with resource efficient, future-proofed physical development projects.

b) Climate Change and Energy

Promotion of quality in design and construction, including environmental design, should reduce energy use. Protection of existing areas of high economic value from flooding should minimise the impacts of climate change. Recognition of the need to adopt ‘softer’ techniques to adapt to climate change should also be considered, including green infrastructure. Actions to increase additional visitors to the region could increase carbon dioxide emissions from transport, although the emphasis on the cultural offer of major towns and cities should ensure visitor development in the most accessible locations. Support for the Regional Forestry Framework should provide a ‘carbon sink’.

c) Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement

Actions that recognise natural and built heritage assets and the improvement of the physical environment will improve existing environmental resources. The creation and management of Regional Parks, together with the promotion of sustainable farming and food production, should promote better environmental management. Generic skills development for regeneration professionals should result in better identification and delivery of those elements that make for a healthy and well-managed environment.

d) Sustainable Communities

Delivery of the Sustainable Communities Plan, together with support for improvements to the physical environment and actions to reduce the fear of crime, increase equality. The promotion of sport, will improve health and social conditions, particularly in deprived areas. Actions to develop community cohesion will enable all sections of the community to benefit from economic growth. Enhancement of the built environment and achievement of a greater improvement in the quality of the design will bring greater community pride and community cohesion, especially when combined with support for the voluntary sector to engage communities in these activities.