



Cheshire Region Local Geodiversity Action Plan



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CHESTER



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Background

In October 2001, English Nature commissioned research by Burek and Potter into the feasibility and process of adapting the action planning approach currently used in England for biological conservation, for local geological conservation. Through consultation with members of the biological and geological conservation communities, possible models and roles for Local Geodiversity Action Plans (LGAPs) were developed. Further information on this research is available at www.lgaps.org

In October 2002, English Nature accepted tenders to pilot the development of LGAPs with a longer-term view to provide some funding to support the delivery of the geodiversity conservation targets that emerged from the initial research. University College Chester's application, on behalf of the Cheshire region, was one of two pilot LGAPs in England to be successful (the other being Warwickshire). Cheshire was seen to be in a strong position to pilot an LGAP because of the existing expertise in the region of working in partnerships for conservation; the pioneering, national lead that Cheshire has taken to date in delivering conservation; and the existence of specialist knowledge of geodiversity conservation issues within local groups, such as the Cheshire Regionally Important Geological/geomorphological Sites (RIGS) Group and the Cheshire Landscape Trust.

In late November 2002, a meeting of potential partners including industry and community groups, LAS... discussed and defined their priorities for the conservation of geodiversity in the Cheshire region. These became the eight objectives of the action plan presented here. Following a second meeting in January 2003, through consultation with organisations in the Cheshire region and identified expertise outside. Specific targets and actions that would meet the objectives were developed, prioritised and costed. The Cheshire Region LGAP was launched on 15th September 2003 in the Grosvenor Museum Chester (home of Cheshire RIGS). We now hope to take this Action Plan forward and continue to invite further comment and participation in this Cheshire region LGAP. By circulating this document even more widely among organisations and individuals that have been involved in its development or could enable its successful delivery. We invite those that feel they would like to contribute to join us in delivering this first countywide Cheshire Region LGAP.

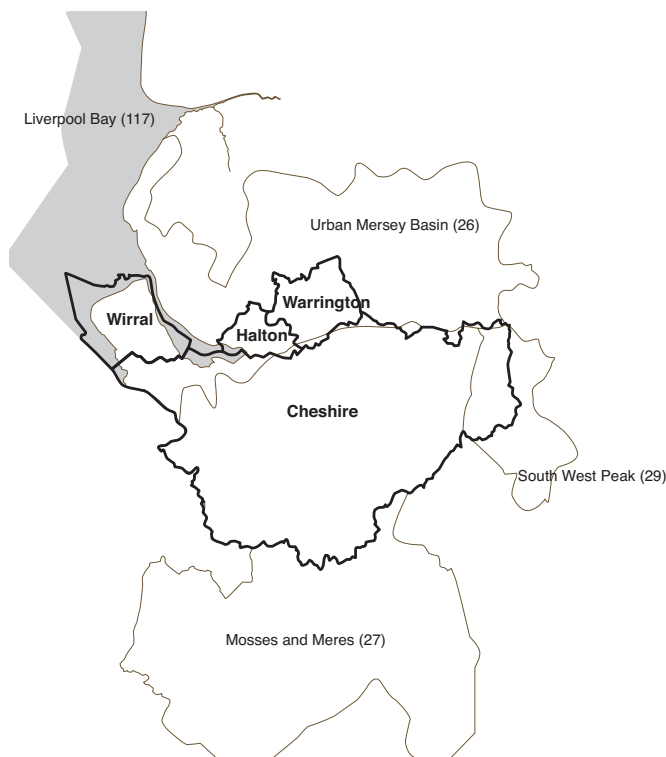


Figure 1 The boundary of the Cheshire region LGAP in relation to the English Nature Natural Areas boundaries and the Unitary and County Councils.

What is the boundary of the Cheshire region LGAP?

The Cheshire region LGAP boundary (see Figure 1) matches the Cheshire Vice County boundary. This area includes the local authorities of:

Cheshire County Council
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Warrington Borough Council
Vale Royal Borough Council
Macclesfield Borough Council
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council
Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council
Congleton Borough Council
Chester City Council
and the offshore area of Liverpool Bay to the 12 mile limit.

The Cheshire region boundary is also used by the Countdown programme, the Cheshire region Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), as well as a number of key conservation organizations such as the Cheshire RIGS group and the local rECOrd centre. Adopting this boundary will hopefully contribute to the coordinated delivery of the action plan.

Of course geodiversity, like biodiversity, does not recognise these boundaries and there will need to be liaison with other geodiversity actions in adjacent areas, for example, the Metropolitan Boroughs of Stockport, Trafford and Tameside and Greater Manchester, The Peak District National Park, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Flintshire, the Irish Sea Forum, Merseyside and Wrexham. This would also facilitate the sharing of best practice across English Nature's Natural Areas and into the adjacent border areas of Wales.

Why develop a Local Geodiversity Action Plan?

Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, soils and natural processes forming the Earth's landscape and structure. It can be protected for its intrinsic value, its ecological value and/or its (geo)heritage value. The Cheshire region has a distinctive and nationally important geodiversity. By developing an integrated, target-led plan, the Cheshire region LGAP partnership aims to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the well being of the Cheshire region by safeguarding the geology, geomorphology, soils and landscapes of the area.

An action plan breaks down a very large, complex project into achievable segments. It ensures focus on actions that matter, and enables every issue to be addressed without duplicating effort. The term Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP) corresponds to the existing mechanism for local biological conservation. Through partnership, local conservation priorities and actions are agreed as part of an action planning process.

The Cheshire region Local Geodiversity Action Plan

The following pages describe in detail how the eight objectives of the Cheshire LGAP will be met by a series of agreed targets and actions. Each action has been prioritised for delivery over an initial lifespan of 12-18 months. In many cases, the targets and actions described will contribute to the attainment of two or more objectives. Where this is the case, the action or target is followed by the other objective(s) in parentheses. Where actions or targets are similar, but not identical across objectives, the phrase 'linked to objective X' follows the action or target in parentheses.

Update

CrLGAP first printed in September 2003
re-printed in June 2004

Progress since first print:

Action is already underway for each of the objectives. Progress is often interlinked as many of the targets and actions have been written to contribute to more than one of the objectives. Funding for projects, such as the ALSF funded site audit, and the enthusiasm of key organisations to support the LGAP, has been crucial to the success to date.

Additional partners' logos will be added to the front cover when permission has been granted in future editions.

Feedback on the Cheshire region LGAP

If you have comments about this LGAP, if you would to know more about local geological conservation issues or if you would like to be involved in delivery of the Cheshire region LGAP, please contact us via:

lgaps@chester.ac.uk

or

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www.lgaps.org

We would welcome your input.

Research into the potential value of local geodiversity action plans to deliver geoconservation and examples of UK practice can be accessed at www.lgaps.org. Burek and Potter (2002), Minding the LGAPs. *Geoscientist*, 12 (9): 16-1, provides a short introduction to local geodiversity action plans (LGAPs).

Aim

To contribute to the maintenance and improvement of the well-being of the Cheshire region by safeguarding the geology, geomorphology, soils and landscapes of the area.

Objective 1	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
1: To audit the local Geodiversity resources by December 2004 by: A: site audit	1. Complete audit of existing RIGS and identify other potential RIGS (linked to Objective 5)	1. Cheshire RIGS Group ALSF Project	Cheshire RIGS Group	In progress
	2. Identify other important geological/geomorphological sites in LGAP area	1. Audit SBIs and SINCs (linked to Objectives 4B and 5)	Cheshire RIGS Group, CWT, Local Authorities	Ongoing
		2. Audit LNRs (linked to Objectives 4B and 5)	Cheshire RIGS Group, Local Authorities	Ongoing
		3. Audit privately owned and managed sites (linked to Objectives 4B and 5)	Cheshire RIGS Group, Local Authorities, EConet, CLA, FWAG, NFU, DERFA, Forestry Commission, National Trust, English Heritage, RSPB, business landowners such as British Waterways, United Utilities	Ongoing
		4. Audit archaeological resources (linked to Objective 4B and 5)	Local Authorities, Museums, National Trust, English Heritage	Ongoing In progress
		5. Survey Cheshire residents to see what sites and landscapes they value and why (linked to Objective 4D)	Cheshire CC (through landscape character assessment and land task group), Local Authorities, WI, CLT, CPRE, University College Chester	Ongoing
		6. Survey targeted potential user groups to see what sites they value and why (linked to Objective 4D)	Outdoor Education Centres, Geography school teachers, Sport England, NW Tourist Board, University College Chester	Long term and Ongoing
		7. Survey tourists and visitors to Cheshire (linked to Objective 4D)	NW Tourist Board, Chester City Council, Forestry Commission, National trust, English Heritage, NWDA, Ramblers Association, University College Chester	Long term
		8. Identify SSSIs in the Cheshire region designated for geodiversity	English Nature	Immediate
		3. Produce a database of locally protected geological/geomorphological sites	1. Collect, collate and record locally protected geological/geomorphological sites	rECOrd, Cheshire RIGS group
	4. Report on the Cheshire region geodiversity from the local site surveys (linked to Objective 6)		Cheshire RIGS group, LGAP Partners	Long term and Ongoing

Objective 1 cont.	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
	5. Develop a reference collection of the Cheshire region geodiversity. e.g. photographs, rocks (linked to Objective 4)	1. Cheshire RIGS Group ALSF Project data entry and title collation	Cheshire RIGS group, Grosvenor Museum	Long term and Ongoing
B: by auditing existing geodiversity information	1. Contact departments within local authorities who may hold geodiversity information. Gauge the scale of the records by December 2004 (linked to Objective 2).	1. Identify how many parties hold potential records.	LGAP partners	Immediate
		2. Visit and collate records from 2 contacts every 3 months	LGAP Partners, rECOrd	Immediate and Ongoing
	2. Contact other targeted organisations that may hold geodiversity data e.g. museums, EA, universities, geological associations. Gauge the scale of the records by December 2004 (linked to Objective 2).	1. Identify how many parties hold potential records.	LGAP partners	Immediate
		2. Visit and collate records from 2 contacts every 3 months	LGAP Partners, rECOrd	Immediate and Ongoing
	3. Identify the geological content of existing Management Plans and Action Plans e.g. HAPS, EAPS, CMPS (linked to Objective 3).	1. Request and review plans from partners and othwe targeted organisations	LGAP partners, CrBP, EA, RSPB, Dee and Mersey Estuary Strategy Officers, Mersey Basin Campaign, Mersey Forest Initiative, NWDA	Immediate and Ongoing
	4. Report on input that geodiversity information does currently have, and could contribute, to existing and developing plans		LGAP Partners	Immediate
	5. Develop an integrated, interactive information system of geological information for the Cheshire region, accessible to the LGAP partnership	1. Produce information dissemination and access strategy	LGAP partnership, LGAP Partners, rECOrd	Long term and Ongoing

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Objective 2	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
2: To audit the skills and resources available from existing and potential partners and other targeted organisations by December 2004	1. Contact 2 existing and potential partners and other targeted organisations by December 2004 to explain LGAP and the skills and resources requirements	1. Undertake skills and resources needs analysis for each aspect of the LGAP	LGAP Partners	Immediate and Ongoing
		2. Design a questionnaire by December 2003 to collate and record the information e.g. skills of individuals, resources of organisations, on-going and finite projects of relevance to the LGAP	LGAP Partners	Immediate
		3. Meet with 2 existing and potential partners and other targeted organisations per month to record their relevant skills and/or potential resource input (Objective 5)	LGAP Partners	Immediate and Ongoing
		4. Liaise with existing audit mechanisms e.g. CrBP	LGAP Partners, CrBP co-ordinator, other LBAP co-ordinators	Ongoing
	2. Create and maintain an appropriate database of the skills, resources and relevant projects with due regard for data protection law		LGAP Partners	Immediate and Ongoing

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Objective 3	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
3. To have geodiversity included in policy of all Cheshire region local authorities and targeted organisations by December 2004	1. Review existing policy documents from local authorities and targeted organisations to determine whether appropriate policy(ies) to safeguard geodiversity already exist (linked to Objectives 1B and 2)	1. Meet with representatives, authorities and targeted organisations.	LGAP partners and key officers in: local authorities and targeted organisations such as DEFRA, EA, CWT	Immediate and Ongoing
	2. Provide support and advice to enable policy changes to safeguard geodiversity	1. Produce 'model' policies and circulate to relevant organisations (linked to Objective 6)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
		2. Develop factsheets on geodiversity issues targeted at professional groups of 'users', e.g. planners, the building trade (Objective 4 and linked to Objective 6)	LGAP Partners sub-group	Long term
	3. Collect feedback on the progress of embedding geodiversity awareness and protection in policies (linked to Objectives 7 and 8)	1. Design a form to record progress with UDPs/LDFs and other existing policies by December 2003	LGAP Partners	Immediate and Ongoing
		2. Organise a workshop for representatives of the local authorities and targeted organisations to share experiences and practice	LGAP Partners	Long term

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Objective 4	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
4: To raise awareness of geodiversity among the following identified audiences by December 2004. A: Professional Bodies	1. Disseminate information on geodiversity to targeted bodies such as planners, architects, builders, developers, Garden Centres, waste and water management companies	1. Identify targeted professional groups among the organisations that have policy(ies) relating to geodiversity and can be approached as described for Objective 3	LGAP Partners	Immediate
		2. Develop fact sheets on geodiversity issues targeted at professional groups of 'users', e.g. planners, the building trade (Objective 3 and linked to Objective 6)	LGAP Partners.	Long term
		3. Write articles for trade magazines and journals	LGAP Partners	Long term
B: Conservation practitioners/ site managers/ landowners	1. Enable 10 conservation practitioners/ site managers/ landowners to audit the geodiversity of their site(s) by December 2004 (linked to Objective 1A)	1. Develop a site audit proforma to enable geodiversity assessment of existing protected sites	Cheshire RIGS group, LGAP Partners	Immediate
		2. Provide training workshops and support to enable site auditing	Cheshire RIGS group, rECOrd, University College Chester	Immediate and Ongoing
C: The Education Sector	1. Engage students beyond the core curriculum	1. Liaise with candidate specialist schools e.g. science colleges (Objective 5)	CWT, Cheshire RIGS group	Long term
		2. Develop links with 'out of school' projects	Cheshire RIGS group, Grosvenor Museum (Rockwatch), CWT (Watch), University College Chester	Long term
		3. Provide work placement opportunities in organisations to contribute to geodiversity conservation (Objective 5)	LGAP Partners and other organisations	Ongoing
D: General Public	1. Actively promote Geodiversity through partner organisation newsletters and other media	1. Disseminate information to all partners on LGAP progress (linked to Objective 6).	LGAP Partners e.g. ACORN and Hedgerows LBAP newsletters of the CLT	Ongoing
	2. Actively promote Geodiversity by sending regular press releases on LGAP process and progress to the local media	1. Disseminate information on LGAP progress (linked to Objective 6).	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
	3. Contribute to and lead at least 2 events per annum to raise awareness of geodiversity in the region	1. Lead events in the Cheshire County Council Countryside 2003 and 2004 programmes	CLT, Cheshire RIS group, WI, Rockwatch, Watch, University College Chester	Long term and Ongoing

Objective 4 cont.	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
D: General Public continued	3. Contribute to and lead at least 2 events per annum to raise awareness of geodiversity in the region	2. Develop generic publicity materials that can be distributed and/or displayed by all partners at events	LGAP Partners	Long term and Ongoing
		3. Attend meetings and shows. Send speakers to relevant events and audiences	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
		4. Offer geological events for the Cheshire Science Festival	LGAP Partners	Long term
		5. Arrange at least 2 fun days based around the geodiversity interest at 2 sites by December 2004 (Objective 5)	Cheshire RIGS group, Grosvenor Museum (Rockwatch), CWT (Watch), University College Chester	Long term
	4. Disseminate information on geodiversity to at least 100 people through surveys (linked to Objective 1A)	1. Survey Cheshire residents to see what sites and landscapes they value and why (Objective 1A)	Cheshire CC (through landscape character assessment and land task group), Local Authorities, WI, CLT, CPRE	Ongoing
		2. Survey targeted potential user groups to see what sites they value and why (Objective 1A)	Outdoor Education Centres, Geography school teachers, Sport England, NW Tourist Board	Long term and Ongoing
		3. Survey tourists and visitors to Cheshire (Objective 1A)	NW Tourist Board, Chester City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, English Heritage, NWDA, Ramblers Association	Long term
	5. Promote existing activities available in the region linked to geodiversity e.g. Chester geological trail, sandstone trail	1. Develop a promotional leaflet	NW Tourist Board, Chester City Council, National Trust, English Heritage, NWDA	Long term
	6. Develop new interpretative material for key geological sites (linked to Objective 5)	1. Identify key sites using auditing output (linked to Objective 1)	Cheshire RIGs group, LGAP Partners	Ongoing
		2. Develop a reference collection of the Cheshire region geodiversity. e.g. photographs, rocks (linked to Objective 1)	Cheshire RIGS group, Grosvenor Museum	Long term and Ongoing
		3. Develop geological trails for urban and rural sites e.g. churchyards	Cheshire RIGS group, CLT and relevant partners eg. diocese of Lichfield, Bangor	Ongoing
		4. Provide risk assessment and site interpretation information (Objective 5)	Cheshire RIGS group	Ongoing

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Objective 5	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
5: To increase community and business participation in the conservation of identified Geodiversity sites by December 2004	1. Identify at least 50 sites where conservation could be improved that are appropriate for different targeted community and business groups e.g. safe sites for school children, challenging sites for experienced groups	1. Complete audit of existing RIGS and identify other potential RIGS (Objective 1A).	Cheshire RIGS group	Immediate
		2. Audit local sites currently managed for nature conservation e.g. SBIs, SINC, LNRs (linked to Objectives 1A and 4B)	Cheshire RIGS group, LAs, CWT, FWAG, CLA and other organisations representing land owners	Ongoing
	2. Identify community and business groups that can contribute to geodiversity site conservation.	1. Meet with 2 existing and potential partners and other targeted organisations per month to record their relevant skills and/or potential resource input (Objective 2)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
		2. Use existing networks within organisations to contribute to the conservation of geological sites (linked to Objective 2) e.g. CLT could involve voluntary Tree Wardens & Tree Guardians	LGAP Partners and other targeted organisations	Ongoing
		3. Liaise with candidate specialist schools e.g. science colleges (Objective 4)	CWT, Cheshire RIGS group	Long term
		4. Provide work placement opportunities in partner organisations to contribute to geodiversity conservation (Objective 4)	LGAP Partners and other organisations	Ongoing
		5. Seek business partners to fund site-specific conservation projects (linked to Objective 8)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
	3. Develop and promote a range of varied potential activities that can be undertaken by community groups and business e.g. site clearance work, developing interpretative material such as leaflets and interpretation boards for 5 sites by December 2004	1. Arrange at least 2 fun days based around the geodiversity interest at 2 sites by December 2004 (Objective 4).	Cheshire RIGS group, Grosvenor Museum (Rockwatch), CWT (Watch), University College Chester	Long term
		2. Seek business partners to fund site-specific conservation projects (linked to Objective 8)	LGAP Partners	Long term

Objective 5 cont.	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
		3. Provide guidance on geodiversity conservation by developing a fact sheet targeted at site managers (Objective 6)	LGAP Partners sub-group	Long term
		4. Provide risk assessment and site interpretation information (Objective 4)	Cheshire RIGS group	Ongoing

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Objective 6	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
6: To produce at least 2 information dissemination tools throughout 2004 and 2005 to share best practice e.g. newsletter, electronic bulletin board on web site	1. Identify the most suitable media to maintain contact with and between LGAP Partners	1. Audit the availability, suitability and cost of using and maintaining existing and potential dissemination tools available to the LGAP e.g. LGAPs website, partner newsletters, partner websites, meetings	LGAP Partners rECOrd	Immediate
	2. Identify the most suitable dissemination tools for other (non-partner) audiences e.g. website, fact sheets, workshops, leaflets	1. Identify the different audiences for LGAP information (linked to Objectives 3, 4, 5 and 7)	LGAP Partners	Immediate
		2. Audit the availability, suitability and cost of existing and potential dissemination tools available to the LGAP	LGAP Partners	Immediate
	3. Produce dissemination tools by December 2004	1. Develop and pilot initial formats of the dissemination tools	External organisation working with the LGAP Partners, rECOrd	Long term and Ongoing
		2. Identify co-ordinators to be responsible for each of the adopted dissemination tools by December 2004	LGAP Partners	Long term and Ongoing
	4. Monitor the success and maintain the dissemination tools (linked to Objectives 3,4,5,7and 8)	1. Maintain the flow of information on LGAP process and progress to the co-ordinators of the dissemination tools (linked to Objectives 4 and 8)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
		2. Evaluate different ways of monitoring and maintaining the information (linked to Objectives 7 and 8)	LGAP Partners	Long term
		3. Seek business partners to sponsor dissemination tools (linked to Objectives 5 and 8)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
	5. Integrate audience and partner feedback mechanisms within the dissemination tools e.g. - mail link on bulletin board, feedback forms in newsletters, customer satisfaction surveys (linked to Objective 7)	1. Develop and pilot initial formats of the dissemination tools	External organisation working with the LGAP Partners	Long term

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Objective 7	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
7: To create effective feedback, reporting and monitoring mechanisms by December 2004 for A: LGAP Partners	1. Identify the most suitable media to report on-going progress and actions among LGAP Partners	1. Audit the suitability of the adopted dissemination tools e.g. LGAPs website, partner newsletters, partner websites, meetings (linked to Objective 6)	LGAP Partners, rECOrd	Immediate
		2. Integrate partner reporting mechanisms within the adopted dissemination tools e.g. e-mail link on bulletin board (linked to Objective 6)	External organisation working with the LGAP Partners, rECOrd	Long term
B: Other identified audiences	1. Invite comment on the LGAP process and its progress from external organisations.	1. Produce an annual report linking targets with indicators to report progress (Objective 8)	LGAP Partners	Long term and Ongoing
		2. Organise a workshop for representatives of the local authorities and targeted organisations to share experiences and practice of working with the LGAP (Objective 3)	LGAP Partners	Long term
		3. Seek immediate feedback from training workshops, fun days and other awareness raising activities (linked to Objective 4)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing

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Objective 8	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
8: Create the infrastructure and mechanisms to enable the Cheshire LGAP process to continue after the initial year of operation by December 2005.	1. Establish a steering group or alternative process for the LGAP by December 2004.	1. Invite members from the partnership with complementary expertise	English Nature, LGAP Partners	Immediate
	2. Invite and encourage new participants to join the partnership to meet the project needs	1. Undertake skills and resources needs analysis for each aspect of the LGAP (Objective 2)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
		2. Produce (Objective 2) and maintain a database of expertise.	LGAP Partners	Immediate and Ongoing
	3. Appoint LGAP project officer/s to provide administrative support or alternative process	1. Develop a job description using the priority targets of the LGAP plan	LGAP Partners	Immediate
	4. Engage pro-actively in seeking funding for targeted action	1. Establish geodiversity awareness and geological conservation within partner organisation thinking, activities and bids (Objectives 3, 4 and 5)	LGAP Partners	Immediate and Ongoing
		2. Seek business partners to sponsor dissemination tools and site-based activities (Objectives 5 and 6)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
	5. Establish the LGAP Partnership as a broker of best practice	1. Produce (Objective 2) and maintain a database of expertise.	LGAP Partners	Immediate and Ongoing
		2. Produce effective dissemination tools for the LGAP (Objective 6)	LGAP Partners	Long term and Ongoing
		3. Respond to feedback on the LGAP process and its progress from external organisations (Objective 7)	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
		4. Establish a biannual LGAP forum to discuss and monitor progress and past activities	LGAP Partners	Ongoing
		5. Develop targeted materials and events for specific groups who impact on local geodiversity (Objectives 4 and 6)	LGAP Partners	Long term and Ongoing
		6. Liaise with English Nature to develop indicators of the success of the LGAP	English Nature, LGAP Partners	Long term and Ongoing

Objective 8 cont.	Target	Action	Potential Partners	Timecale
		7. Produce an annual report linking targets with indicators to report progress (Objective 7)	LGAP project officer and Partners	Long term and Ongoing
	6. Use the comprehensive auditing mechanism (Objective 1) to effectively target future LGAP action	1. Review the continuing validity of the existing LGAP in light of the audit data and update as necessary	LGAP Partners	Long term
		2. Produce themed GAPs for local geodiversity that is under threat or needs enhancement and/or conservation	LGAP Partners	Long term