

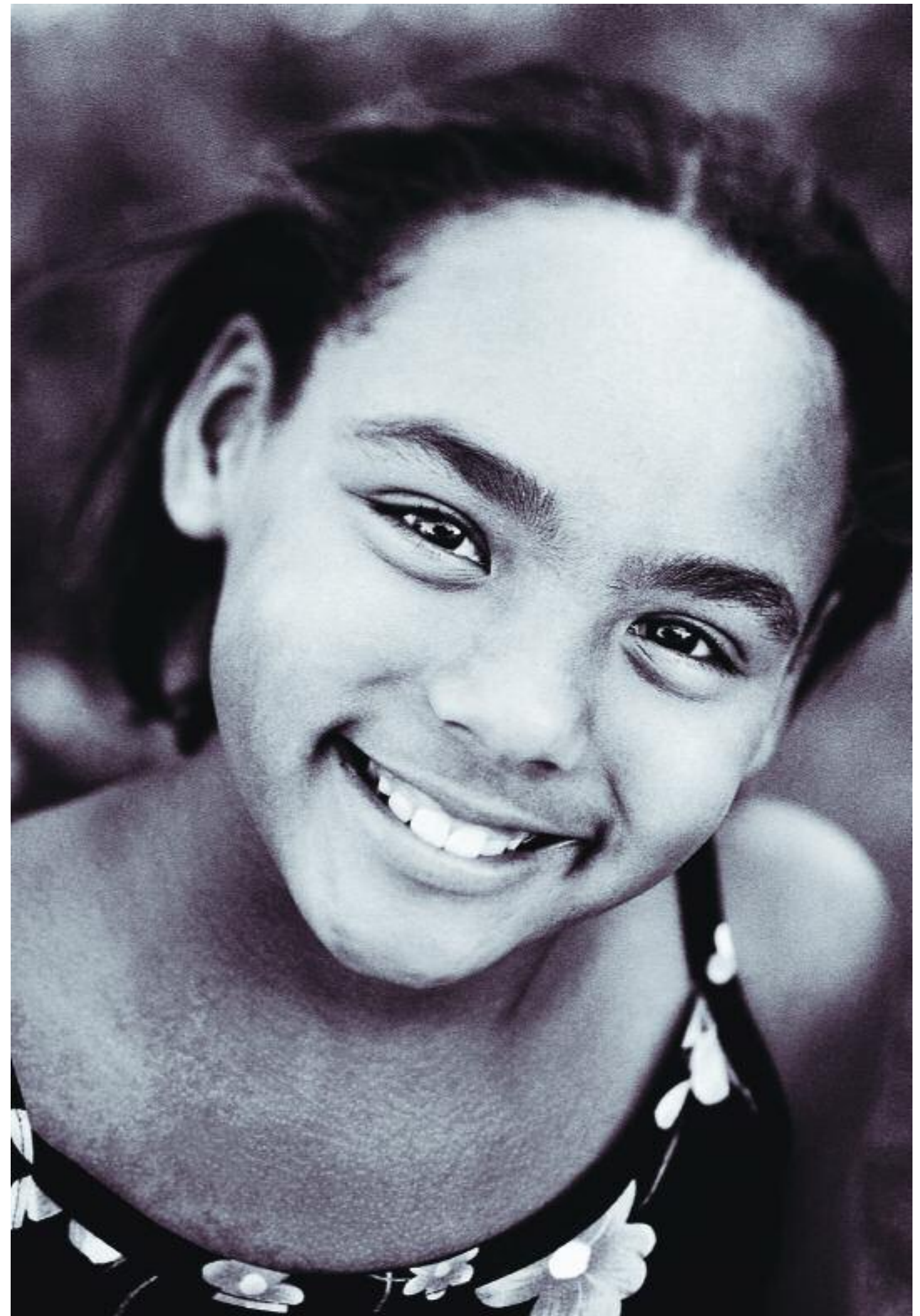
environment tourism
sustainability access
community economy
regeneration health
biodiversity inclusion
greenspace renewal

redroseforest

business plan
2003-2008

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foreword

**Rt. Hon. Lord Thomas of Macclesfield,
Chairman and Patron of Red Rose Forest**



As we reflect on the last decade of Red Rose Forest it is hard to believe that so much has been achieved in this time. Since the Forest Plan adoption in 1995 a strong, effective and enthusiastic partnership of public, private and voluntary sector organisations have joined forces to produce many of the successes to date. However, there is still a great deal to do to fulfil the Forest's 40 year vision.

With national and regional key policy agendas continually evolving, the Forest Partnership is well placed to respond to change, although in the short term, much work still needs to be done in engaging the partnership with regional priorities and preparing for Succession in 2005 when the Forest's funding base will adjust. Through joint working with our neighbours The Mersey and Pennine Edge Forests, we can maximise our ability to deliver regional agendas across the Forest areas, which is important for the Forest's succession beyond 2005, but also to the long-term delivery of Red Rose Forest Plan.

I would like to thank the Partnership for their dedication and commitment to the development of Red Rose Forest and we look forward to working together to achieve our plans for the future.

The Forest Vision "Streets lined with trees. School playgrounds with wildlife areas. Wastelands turned into vibrant parks. Motorways screened by woodlands. Tower blocks surrounded by gardens. Estates with community orchards. Allotments brightening dull corners. Edges of towns fringed by meadows, parks and woodlands linking town and country. Safe footpaths along cleaned up canals. Fields lined with hedgerows and trees. Quarries, derelict land and rubbish tips transformed into country parks. Villages, towns and cities regenerated by tourism and revitalised by a thriving woodland economy".



executive summary



what is red rose forest ?

Red Rose Forest is an environmental regeneration partnership covering a large part of Greater Manchester. With a total population of around 1.5m people, it is both the most densely populated and urban of the 12 Community Forests around England.

The **Lead Forest Partners** are The Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission, the Metropolitan Boroughs of Bolton, Bury, Trafford and Wigan and the Cities of Manchester and Salford. Elected Council Members and senior executive officers from the lead Forest partners form a governance board called the **Red Rose Forest Partnership Group**. The **Red Rose Forest Management Group** is comprised of senior officers from the lead partners and advises the Partnership Group. A wide range of public, private and voluntary organisations and individuals make up the **Red Rose Forest Partnership** and deliver work on the ground. The work of the Partnership is facilitated and co-ordinated by the **Red Rose Forest Team**. The Red Rose Forest Company Limited was established as a separate legal entity in 1998 and is a charitable trust known as The **Red Rose Forest Trust**.

To work more closely with our neighbouring Community Forest, The Mersey Forest, **Community Forests Northwest** was created in June 2002 to pursue joint projects.

our achievements

Since the birth of Red Rose Forest in 1991 and the Forest Partnerships adoption of the 40 year Forest Plan in 1995, many outstanding achievements have been made, including:

Between 1992-2003

- **Woodland and trees** - Over 2 million trees planted, forming 1000 hectares of new woodland planting
- **Investment** - Over £30 million of funding attracted into Red Rose Forest
- **Employment** - Over 50 new jobs created in woodland industries alone
- **Events** - Over 9000 school and community events
- **Access** - Over 500 km of routes open for leisure, recreation and commuting

The broader picture of the Red Rose Forest Partnership means so much more than targets and numbers. Through sustainability we can influence positive change for local people and visitors alike.



This Business Plan sets out the medium term goals for the Red Rose Forest Partnership in order to fulfil the 40-year Forest Vision. More detailed short-term targets are set out in an annually updated Action Plan.

The objective is to show how the Forest can deliver partners targets in areas such as Public Service Agreements, Community and Regional Plans and Strategies. The main elements of our work can be placed under the three main sustainability areas: Environment: Community: Economy.

We have identified three issues that deserve special consideration:

1. **Maintaining a smooth transition through Succession in 2005 when the Forest's funding base will change**
2. **Adapting rapidly to new agendas**
3. **Spreading the message of the Forest to a wider audience**

Underpinning this, it is recognised that the Forest are to continue to build on our success we need to develop new systems for targeted marketing and communications to greater effect. This needs to be a two way process of giving and receiving information so that we have a greater understanding of the needs of Partners and their priorities.



current issues

Succession

The Countryside Agency's core funding for Red Rose Forest will end in 2005. With such radical changes to the funding stream, the Red Rose Forest Partnership has an exciting new opportunity to reform itself outside the bounds of current national funding constraints.

We will

- Maintain and strengthen the Red Rose Forest Partnership for local delivery.
- Support the merger of The Mersey Forest and Red Rose Forest Trusts into a single body under the existing Community Forests Northwest brand in order to create a stronger regional and sub regional profile to outside bodies.
- Investigate opportunities for improved joint working with The Mersey and Pennine Edge Forests, particularly with functions such as fundraising, marketing and administration to increase efficiency.
- Secure any shortfall in core funding from a mix of national, regional and local sources.
- Increase the capacity of Community Forests Northwest to support the work of the Red Rose Forest Partnership by working throughout the region where appropriate.

New agendas

Ever changing national policies and targets inevitably filter down to influence regional and local priorities. In response to this, Red Rose Forest has developed an excellent track record of adapting to this ever changing environment. The Red Rose Forest Partnership will continue to assist partners in meeting targets especially in areas that show synergy with the Red Rose Forest Plan.

We will

- Influence at a national, regional and local level to ensure Red Rose Forest objectives are incorporated into policy.
- Ensure the delivery of targets locally by regional agencies, specifically the Northwest Development Agency's Regional Economic Strategy, the Forestry Commission's Regional Forestry Framework and The Countryside Agency's local programmes.
- Show how we can deliver local authority partners targets in areas such as Public Service Agreements and Community Plans.

Identity

Red Rose Forest is valued for its partnership approach and its strong sense of community by the organisations and agencies within its operational area. However, wider public promotion and engagement is still a high priority as despite high profile awareness campaigns, media support and "on the ground" activities, the concept of Community Forests is difficult to understand.

While many people reap the benefits of local achievements the wider public audience fail to engage with the Forest's extensive objectives. The challenge is set to market Red Rose Forest to a more inclusive audience generating a broader understanding of the Forest concept. Red Rose Forest can be promoted as a place that local people and visitors can enjoy whilst still remaining faithful to its 40 year vision.

We will

- Produce a marketing and communications strategy to spread the aims, objectives and outputs of the Forest.
- Work with a wide range of partners to continue to develop the Forest's identity for all key audiences including businesses, visitors, local people and key decision-makers.
- Ensure that any campaigns reinforce the Forest objectives.
- Help develop a Regional Park identity.



environment

Creating new greenspace on green and brownfield sites

Red Rose Forest is involved in many initiatives including community woodland and greenspace creation: a benchmark by which the Forest is frequently measured. Red Rose Forest's work on brownfield land (of which Greater Manchester has the highest proportion of in the North West) through Newlands and Newleaf will be capitalised on over the next few years. This will link with organisations such as NWDA whose focus has turned to derelict land regeneration as a key objective for the region.

Farmland diversification to include new woodland, in line with the Forestry Commissions Regional Forestry Framework, offers a way to stimulate the rural economy. This is a much needed boost to the agricultural sector, whose recovery post Foot and Mouth has been slow.

Improving woodland management, improving revenue funding

Much of the region's existing woodland, including pre-Red Rose Forest planted areas, would benefit from improved management. Sadly, lack of revenue funding limits our ability to co-ordinate this aspect of the Forest's development.

Biodiversity

Red Rose Forest partners are involved in creating and improving extensive areas of woodland and non-woodland habitats. Internationally the European Habitats Directive has added increased weight to nature conservation and UK legislation such as the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and the publication of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) have reinforced this. At a regional level Regional Planning Guidance 13 and the North West Biodiversity Audit begin to highlight key issues for the North West's Nature Conservation resource. This is eventually translated to action at a local level through the Greater Manchester BAP published by Greater Manchester's Ecology Unit and through the Local Authority's Community Strategies and Unitary Development Plans.

We will

- Work to identify suitable derelict, under utilised and neglected land for Community Forest use.
- Continue to market the Forest to the agricultural community, but also work with landowners to purchase areas for community woodland creation.
- Continue to work on other land types, school grounds, publicly owned land and transport corridors, in the knowledge that significant benefit can be gained from many small pockets of land planted.

We will

- Produce a blueprint specifically designed to address the development of low maintenance woodland planting schemes.
- Ensure Forest partners are aware of, and claiming their full entitlement of management grant funding.
- Identify new revenue streams for sites, such as tree adoption schemes, income generation from development potential, film locations and event hire where appropriate.
- Increase the uptake of woodlands in environmental certification schemes.
- Encourage the establishment of endowment schemes to pay for the long-term management of newly planted areas.

We will

- Insist that any site development proposals that the Forest is involved in, takes full account of existing and potential biodiversity.
- Significantly meet or exceed the new habitat creation targets in the Greater Manchester BAP.
- Increase the use of locally sourced and grown plants in habitat creation schemes.
- Work towards integrating Greater Manchester BAP monitoring within Red Rose Forest activities.

Combating climate change

Climate change has very serious environmental and economic consequences. Current climate change scenarios from Sustainability North West's "Everybody has an Impact" predicts warmer, wetter winters with increased risk of flooding and hotter, dryer summers with more likelihood of drought. The University of Manchester's "Adaptation Strategies for Climate Change in the Urban Environment" will be looking at ways that Greater Manchester can cope with any adverse impacts. Forest greenspace and woodlands could have a significant positive impact by promoting the use of alternative fuels such as bio-energy from locally sourced wood.

Regional park

Regional Park proposals represent a major opportunity to create a step change in community woodland planting. It also has the potential to link many existing sites creating an extensive Regional Park resource.

The planning process

Regional Planning Guidance, Unitary Development Plans and Spatial Frameworks ensure that future developments within Community Forest areas contain policies relating to the Forest Plan and its delivery. This ensures that the Forest's objectives are taken into account when major developments are being considered.

Waste, reuse and recycling

The Regional Waste Strategy notes that within six years time we will have used all our available landfill space. We have to look at ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. The Forest partnership works very closely with the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority and supports waste minimisation projects in the Forest area, promoting waste as an asset. Green wastes and biosolids for example can provide a useful remediation and soil forming material rich in nutrients for planting trees and greenery. By setting in place systems to deal with timber waste we can help to stimulate the local timber economy by providing the industry with a regular supply of recycled reusable wood.

We will

- We will promote the positive role that greenspace and woodlands can play in adapting to climate change.
- Work with Renewables North West to promote the use of wood as a biofuel.
- Ensure that partners are aware of the current grants for biofuel technologies.

We will

- Work with The Mersey and Pennine Edge Forests to establish a major Regional Park in the Mersey Belt.
- Actively promote Regional Park proposals including creating a unique identity within Red Rose Forest.
- Ensure that Community Woodlands form a major component within a Regional Park.

We will

- Ensure that any review of regional and local planning guidance takes into account Red Rose Forest objectives.
- Comment on major developing schemes to ensure that the maximum environmental and community gain is being achieved.

We will

- Promote the use of green waste and biosolids for tree planting programmes where appropriate.
- We will Investigate and support the creation of "Timber Stations".
- Reduce the amount of timber waste and forestry residuals that currently go to landfill.





community

Community network

The Red Rose Forest Community Network produces a community strategy every 4 years to create easy, effective and innovative ways for local people to get actively involved.

The Community Strategy has three main objectives:

- To encourage a large number of individuals to get involved in making the Forest happen in lots of ways.
- To enable groups of people to have a substantial and influential involvement in a greenspace or woodland near to where they live or work
- To devise ways to support community involvement in local greenspace and woodland in the long term.

The strategy action plan is delivered through the Community Network which comprises over 150 committed individuals and organisations including experienced volunteers, project officers, wardens, community development workers, rangers, health specialists from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Community participation in urban renewal

The active participation of local people in neighbourhood renewal is essential to the long-term social regeneration of an area. Community forestry can provide opportunities to assist in building consensus, improving social interaction, and securing long-term community cohesion. These were a key finding of the Government's Report 'Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener' which led to the creation of CABA Space to champion quality urban greenspace. Several major programmes such as Housing Market Renewal and Newlands will provide a major impetus for The Forest's involvement in Urban Renewal.

Access, recreation and sustainable transport.

Greenspaces provide an important recreational resource for the community and reducing inequalities in terms of access to quality local greenspace is a priority for the Forest. Disadvantaged communities living in poorer quality environments often have lower levels of car ownership and less access to public transport networks.

We will

- Continue to develop and support the Red Rose Forest Community Network as a key mechanism for delivering the Red Rose Forest plan
- Secure resources to ensure the effective delivery of the Community Action Plan
- Input into, and assist in the delivery of Local Authority Community Plans.

We will

- Promote the incorporation of urban trees and greenspaces into urban renewal programmes to support the long-term sustainability of living environments.
- Support local residents to become actively involved through community forestry initiatives in the regeneration of their area.
- Further develop greening initiatives like 'Green Streets' across the Forest area.
- Continue to support the development of quality greenspaces from derelict land with local people.
- Develop capacity building programmes to support the long-term involvement of communities in their local greenspaces.

We will

- Ensure 'access for all' is central to all new developments and improvements to existing greenspace.
- Organise programmes and activities to raise awareness of recreational opportunities within greenspaces.
- Work with partners to ensure transport provision to greenspaces meets the needs of local people.
- Work with partners to develop sustainable transport links and investigate opportunities to develop and promote strategic routes through greenspaces as alternatives to car use.
- Investigate and deliver partnership solutions to provide for legitimate 'wheeled' recreation activities within the Forest.

Community safety

Community safety is a primary consideration when developing and managing greenspace, particularly woodlands. Careful design and maintenance is essential to overcome real and perceived risks to personal safety. Barriers to the enjoyment of woodlands and greenspace may be influenced by many factors including culture, age, gender, disability, and individual experience.

We will

- Develop and support community involvement programmes and activities to overcome barriers to accessing greenspace and woodlands.
- Disseminate good practice in relation to design and community safety.
- Encourage increased use of greenspaces to improve safety and develop programmes to engender community ownership and belonging.

Improving health

The health benefits associated with quality greenspaces and woodlands are now well documented. In addition to recreational opportunities for improving physical health, research also shows clear evidence of reduction in stress levels associated with greenspaces. In addition there are health-related benefits from improved air quality, provision of shade and self reported improvements in overall quality of life.

We will

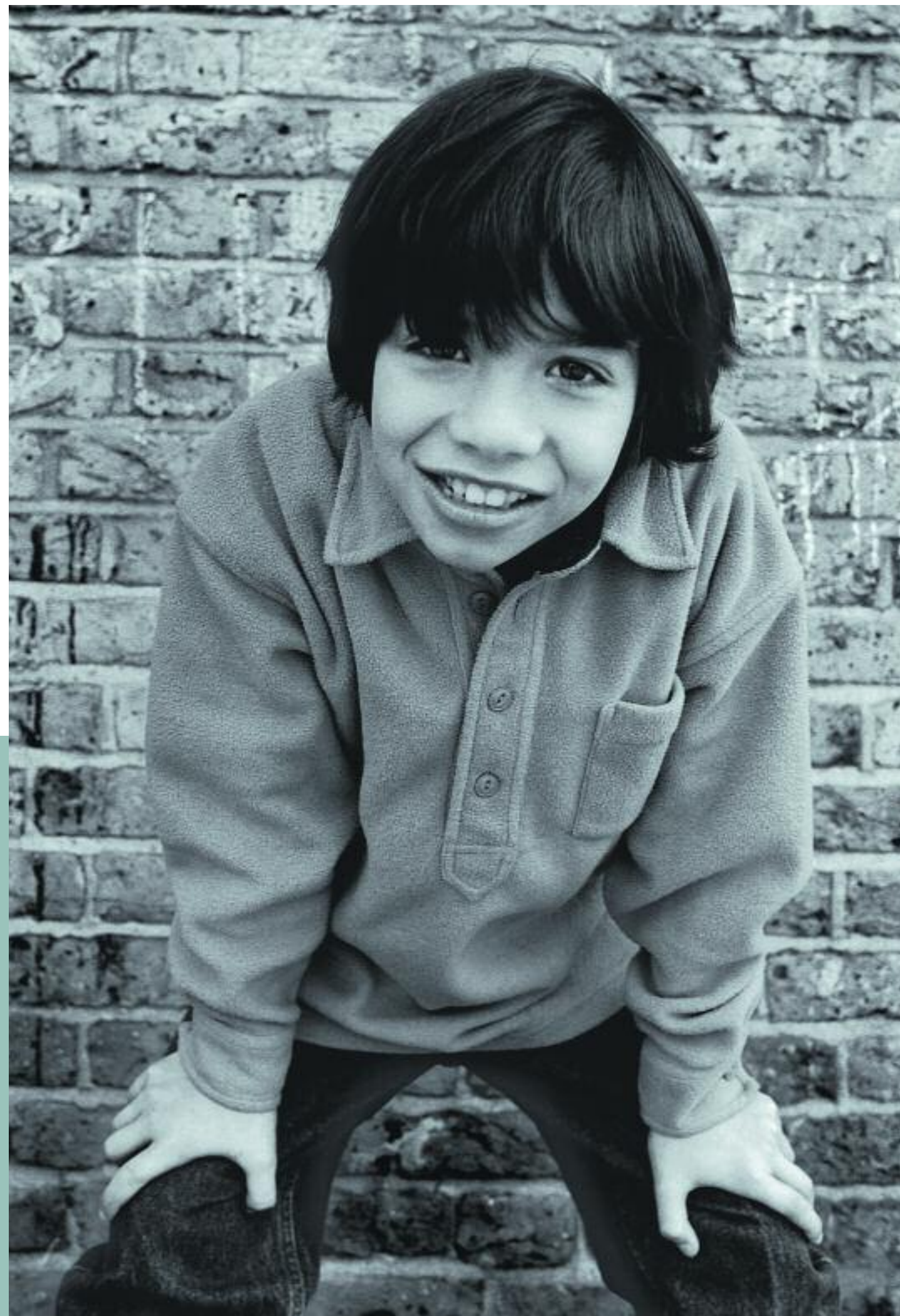
- Promote the health benefits of community forestry within the Health sector to ensure closer partnership working.
- Investigate opportunities for community food growing initiatives and small-scale urban agroforestry.
- Build on the success of the Health Walks Festival and investigate opportunities to develop further health programmes and initiatives e.g. BTCV's Green Gyms.
- Promote existing recreational opportunities within the Forest environment.

Social inclusion

Many traditionally excluded groups are also under-represented in the Forest's activities. In order to ensure that the Forest genuinely meets the needs of its communities it is essential to ensure that these groups are targeted and fully supported. Demographic changes to the populations within the Forest area may also require proactive changes to the way the Forest's activities are developed and promoted in future.

We will

- Ensure that promotional materials are available in an accessible format such as large font sizes, translations etc.
- Develop programmes to target under represented groups, specifically young people, ethnic groups, older people, people with disabilities.
- Disseminate good practice models in relation to social inclusion.
- Develop monitoring procedures to ensure all areas of the Forest's work are socially inclusive.



Improving the image, attracting investment

A green, urban landscape will help to boost the local economy as improvements to the physical environment attract much needed inward investment to the area. Land classed as derelict, underused and neglected are benefiting from environmental regeneration as the region improves its image for investors, workers, residents and visitors.

Creating local jobs

As a long-term urban greening and regeneration project, Red Rose Forest offers a great many opportunities for local people to consider woodland or wood based industries as a new career choice or hobby that can provide an income. Education and Intermediate Labour Market training schemes are available through partner organisations including Groundwork, New Deal and Boltonwise.

It is important to increase the skill base of the existing contractors in the Forest area to increase their productivity, quality of work, range of work (woodland and non-woodland), and personal safety.

Timber products

The Forest is in a unique position to promote the use of locally sourced timber. The Forest has had considerable success with projects like the Urban Timber Initiative and the Woodland Industries Network. The Forest would look to build upon these programmes, continuing to offer business support, advice and training to local producers through to end users..

Tourism

Manchester as a tourist destination already ranks third behind London and Edinburgh in terms of overseas British visitors. "For the Greater Good" Greater Manchester's five-year tourism strategy notes that investment in tourism will lead to an improved image of the city-region. This is in line with the NWDA's "The Tourism Vision for England's Northwest" which places an emphasis on economic growth from new visitor market catchments. The Forest's many urban greenspaces are a valuable asset which can be capitalised on and promoted as an extra visitor experience to benefit local, national and international visitors. Promoting the Forest's greenspaces within existing regional strategies can be an effective tool when promoting Greater Manchester as a vibrant cultural destination.

Spreading the message

The Red Rose Forest's Marketing Group is supporting the development of a Marketing and Communications Strategy. It will support the Business Plan by guiding the marketing and communications for the Forest Partnership, The Trust and Community Forests Northwest.

Creative marketing and communications methods have been adopted by the Red Rose Forest Team to raise awareness and communicate the Forest as a regional force that can deliver a wide range of key regional objectives and attract financial support within a very competitive market.

Money to deliver

Fund raising strategies and mechanisms are being developed on a number of local, regional and national platforms. The birth of Community Forests Northwest, Red Rose Forest's joint working organisation with The Mersey Forest, is tasked with developing funding opportunities through a variety of fundraising mechanisms. This Business Plan will provide the fundraising team with key material to promote Red Rose Forest's future aims and objectives for use in targeted fundraising activities, funding applications and stimulating donor support.

We will

- Support soft end use derelict land programmes such as Newlands and Newleaf and help develop other programmes to create a more attractive environment to stimulate investment in the Forest area.
- Work with partners such as the Groundwork Trusts, encouraging businesses to green their premises.

We will

- Continue to support training programmes as the opportunity arises.
- Provide opportunities for existing contractors to increase their skills and knowledge in Community Forest related work.

We will

- Continue to support existing programmes such as the Mersey Valley Warden Service, that process and manufacture local wood products.
- Assist other programmes in the Forest that want to utilise local timber, including waste wood.
- Identify gaps in the local timber supply chain and develop mechanisms to plug them.
- Work to establish links with a number of organisations' Purchasing Policies to establish end users as an essential part of the network.

We will

- Ensure that tourism development realises the full potential of the Forest's green spaces.
- Develop a website to market Greater Manchester's green spaces as part of an overall tourism destination package.

We will

- Produce a marketing and communications strategy to communicate further the aims, objectives and outputs of the Forest.
- Ensure that all campaigns reinforce the Forest objectives.
- Influence at a national, regional and local level to ensure Red Rose Forest objectives are incorporated into policy.
- Work with a wide range of partners to continue to develop the Forest's identity for a range of different audiences including businesses, visitors, local people and key decision-makers.
- Assist Community Forests Northwest and Pennine Edge Forest with marketing expertise and help develop a Regional Park identity.

We will

- Investigate opportunities for improved joint working with The Mersey and Pennine Edge Forests, particularly with functions such as fundraising, marketing and administration to increase efficiency.
- Secure any shortfall in core funding from a mix of national, regional and local sources.
- To increase the capacity of Community Forests Northwest to support the work of the Red Rose Forest Partnership by working throughout the region where appropriate.

getinvolved

The Red Rose Forest Partnership welcomes any organisation, group or individual that wishes to become actively involved in delivering Forest objectives for local, regional or national benefit. Red Rose Forest's success is based on a partnership approach to delivering the 40-year vision that links to, and delivers, many regional priorities. The wider Forest partnership that includes landowners, businesses, government agencies, environmental and voluntary bodies, countryside services, communities, schools and many individuals, is fundamental to the Forest's development and success. **A National *community forest* Partner**

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