Durham City Green Corridor

A partnership project between:

Update for the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
March 2024

85% of the UK population live in towns and cities. This is expected to grow to **over 90%** by 2030.

99,400 people live in the City of Durham.

Almost a **quarter** have no cars or vans in the household.

One third of people in England do not have access to good quality green and blue space within 15 minutes of their home.

The quality, amount and variety of green spaces is seen by the public to be unequal both across the North in general and within individual towns and cities.
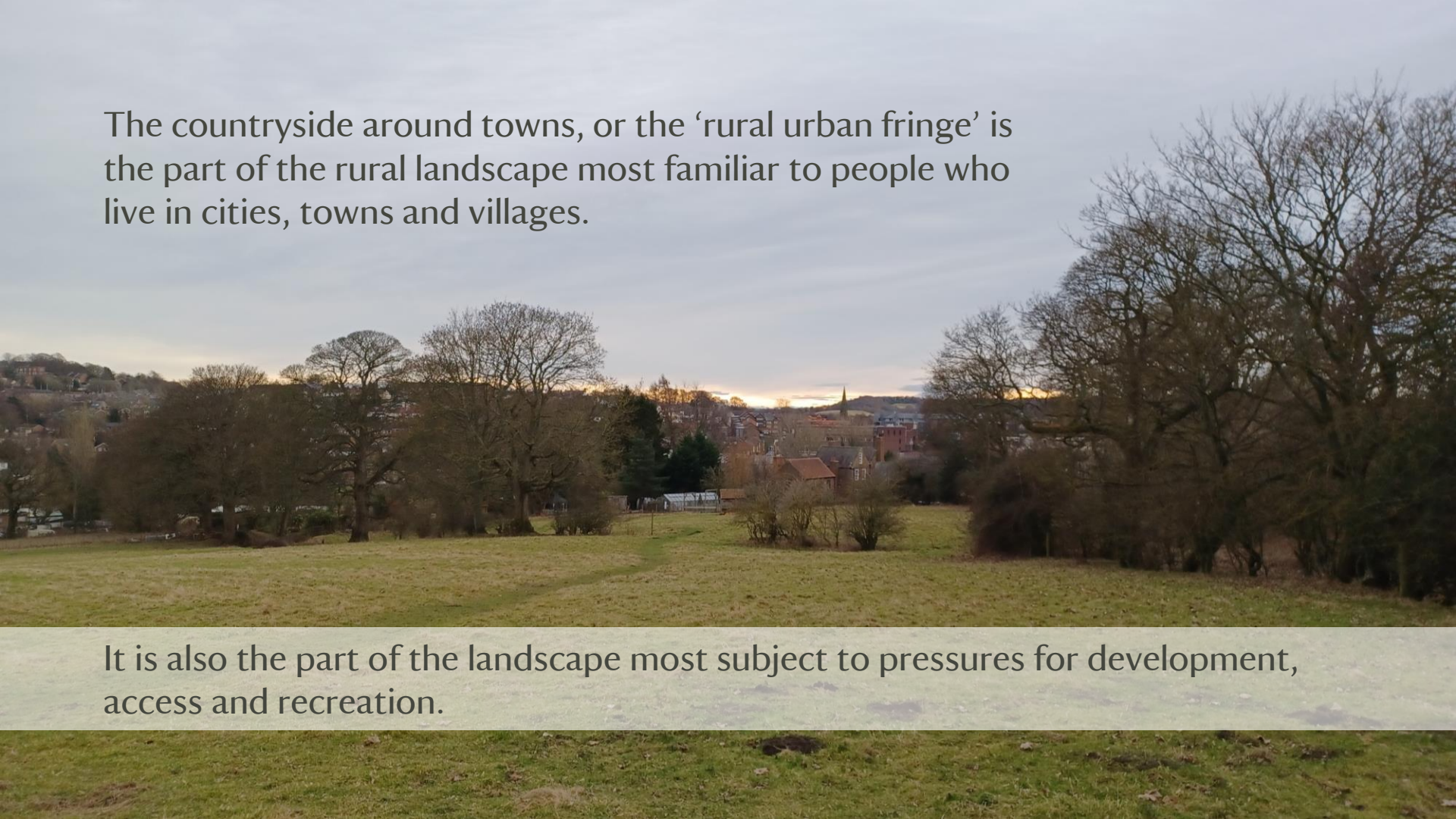
People in the UK made 855 million fewer outdoor recreation visits in 2022 v. 2020, citing poor health and busy schedules as barriers.

An estimated 1.1 million fewer people across the UK gained health benefits from spending time in nature in 2022 compared with two years earlier.

The countryside around towns, or the 'rural urban fringe' is the part of the rural landscape most familiar to people who live in cities, towns and villages.

It is also the part of the landscape most subject to pressures for development, access and recreation.

"Green Space *& fresh air* **for all.**"

Octavia Hill, National Trust Founder

A collection of items from the National Trust archives relating to the founders, Hill, Rawnsley and Hunter. ©National Trust Images/James Dobson

Green corridor

"A large corridor, lung, web or wedge of land within or very close to towns and cities, that gives people easy access to nature-rich outdoor space that through investment and management will deliver significant new public and environmental benefit."

A green corridor provides green infrastructure: a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and **corridors** that exist within and between cities, towns and villages.

Many things can make up a green corridor. This includes wildlife sites, woodland, cycle routes or even benches.

" At the heart of communities will be **accessible green infrastructure**, not only **improving the quality of place** but people's **quality of life** and reducing health inequalities. "

Spatial Vision for County Durham, adopted in 2020

Our Vision

View of the moat pond at Crook Hall Gardens, Durham ©National Trust Images/Annapurna Mellor

From the Wear-carved peninsula where the monks chose to worship, to the surrounding communities formed from the riches underfoot, Durham is a place where nature, culture and heritage are inextricably linked.

We want to make it easier for people to reconnect.
With nature. With the city. With each other.

View of the moat pond at Crook Hall Gardens, Durham ©National Trust Images/Annapurna Mellor

Our Mission

We will work together with nature and communities to enhance this beautiful part of Durham City, to enable change and deliver wide benefit for those who visit, live and work here.

Our Objectives

1 Improve physical connectivity to and within the Durham City Green Corridor.

2 Develop practical actions with landowners and communities for greater biodiversity and climate action.

3 Identify and deliver ways to connect people to nature and culture across Durham City and the green corridor.

Footpath and herbaceous borders in May at Crook Hall Gardens, County Durham ©National Trust Images/Annapurna Mellor

Following a 6.5-mile stretch of the River Wear, this wedged green corridor connects Durham City and Crook Hall Gardens with over 1,000 hectares of green and blue space.
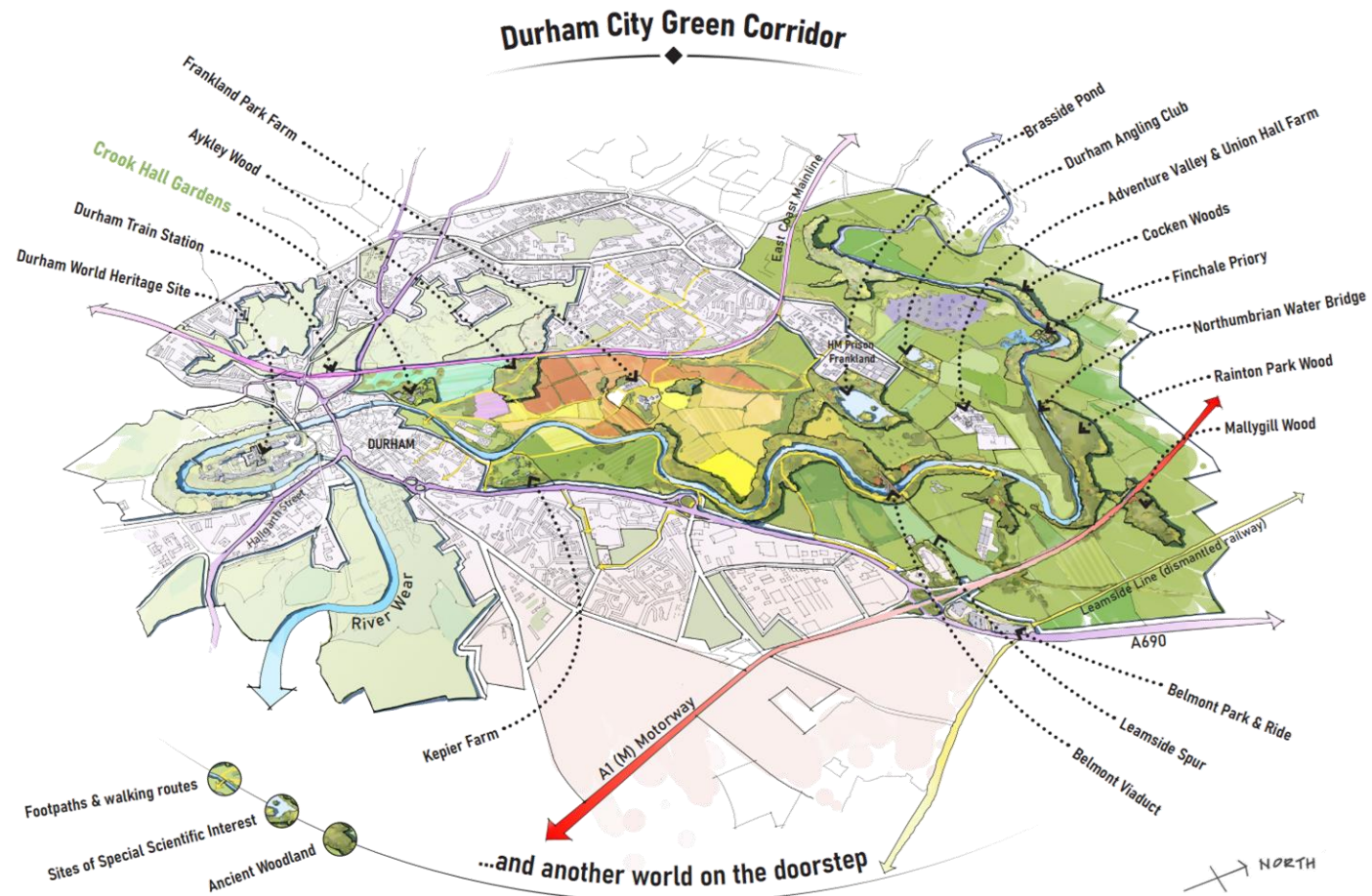
Durham City Green Corridor

...and another world on the doorstep

Frankland Park Farm

Aykley Wood

Crook Hall Gardens

Durham Train Station

Durham World Heritage Site

East Coast Mainline

HM Prison Frankland

DURHAM

Hallgarth Street

River Wear

Kepier Farm

A1 (M) Motorway

Footpaths & walking routes

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Ancient Woodland

Brasside Pond

Durham Angling Club

Adventure Valley & Union Hall Farm

Cocken Woods

Finchale Priory

Northumbrian Water Bridge

Rainton Park Wood

Mallygill Wood

Leamside Line (dismantled railway)

A690

Belmont Park & Ride

Leamside Spur

Belmont Viaduct

NORTH

What benefits could this deliver for Durham?

Health and wellbeing

People and community

Placemaking

Learning and sharing

Influencing change

Nature and climate

Personal

Community

Societal

What benefits could this deliver for Durham?

Health and wellbeing

People and community

Placemaking

Learning and sharing

Influencing change

Nature and climate

Personal

Community

Societal

What benefits could this deliver for Durham?

Health and wellbeing

People and community

Placemaking

Learning and sharing

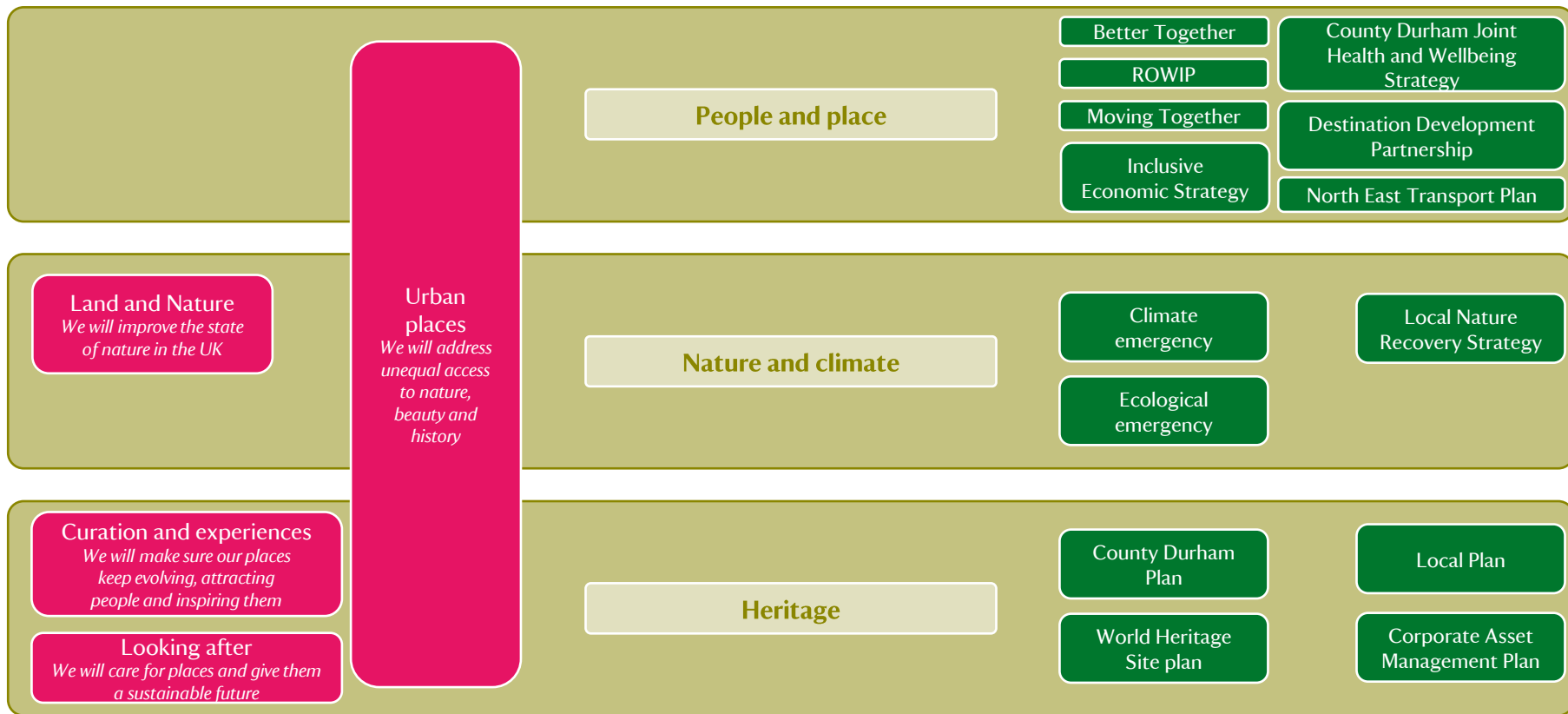Influencing change

Nature and climate

Personal

Community

Societal

How does the project relate to our strategies?

National Trust

Project themes

Durham County Council

People and place

- Better Together
- ROWIP
- Moving Together
- Inclusive Economic Strategy
- County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Destination Development Partnership
- North East Transport Plan

Nature and climate

Land and Nature
We will improve the state of nature in the UK

Urban places
We will address unequal access to nature, beauty and history

- Climate emergency
- Ecological emergency
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Heritage

Curation and experiences
We will make sure our places keep evolving, attracting people and inspiring them

Looking after
We will care for places and give them a sustainable future

- County Durham Plan
- World Heritage Site plan
- Local Plan
- Corporate Asset Management Plan

Challenges

Barriers to outdoor activity in Durham City

Connectivity of routes

Lack of clarity around rights of way

Lack of time

Safety

Challenges preventing green spaces from reaching their full potential in the North

Land use

Resources

Funding

'I feel like there could be a bit more.'

'Problem is I never know if I'm allowed to go to places...'

'Neglected, abandoned area.'

'For Durham, the river is important in terms of the impact upstream through urban environments from upland, then coast, is often missed. Green corridor and blue and green infrastructure are really important.'

Opportunities

People and place
Engaging and delivering for the community, supporting connectivity.

Nature and climate
Working in ways to protect and enhance nature and landscape.

Heritage
Celebrating and caring for the diversity of heritage in Durham City.

Aerial view of the circular maze at Crook Hall Gardens, County Durham ©National Trust Images/Annapurna Mellor

Next steps

Priorities
2023 to 2025: Activation and enhancement

Health and wellbeing

Accessibility and experience

Enhancing nature

Capacity building and insight sharing

If you'd like more information, please contact

Laura McIntyre-Brown

laura.mcintyrebrown@nationaltrust.org.uk

Project Manager, Durham City Green Corridor