

Landscape Scale Conservation Case Study

Cumbernauld Living Landscape

Building natural connections

Summary

[Cumbernauld Living Landscape](#) aims to enhance, restore and reconnect green areas of the town. Over 50% of Cumbernauld's town centre is made up of green spaces: parks, woodlands and gardens. However, these areas are often disconnected from one another and many are not as good for people – or wildlife – as they should be. Without good quality, healthy places people and wildlife cannot flourish. Working closely with the local community, we want to ensure that healthy places are at the heart of the town's future.



“The Living Landscape approach has focused our efforts and allowed us to have a greater impact in a targeted area” Brian Thompson, Greenspace Development, North Lanarkshire Council

Challenges

Cumbernauld was designated as a New Town in 1956 and now ranks as the 8th largest Scottish settlement. A large proportion of its population live within some of the country's most disadvantaged communities and the town suffers from a poor reputation. However, despite the fact that a high percentage of land in the Cumbernauld area is under concrete and tarmac, there are many natural connections - some strong and obvious, others thin and fragile.

There is a clear need to reinforce and expand these habitat networks and to make it easier for both people and wildlife to access the town's woodlands, watercourses and glens. The networks are under threat from inappropriate development and lack of management. To ensure the connections are functional and resilient to future shocks we need to protect and expand them. For this to happen we need to ensure people recognise and value the benefits the natural networks bring. Working with community partners the Cumbernauld Living Landscape aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- The green network is reinforced, expanded and reconnected
- Ecosystem health and environmental quality is improved (especially in deprived communities)
- People's wellbeing is improved due to their connection to the natural environment
- More people value and have the skills to take responsibility for their environment

The solution

Due to the legacy of the new town development there is a complex pattern of landownership. A joined up approach is needed to tackle the issues and this led to the formation of the partnership. A programme plan was created with support from the Central Scotland Green Network development fund and the partnership has [recently mapped the ecosystem services](#) delivered by the green network.

Key woodland elements of the programme plan are being delivered through long term forest plans. These provide a vision and strategy for woodland management and give a clear program of works. It allows the partners to phase work and measure their impact. Given the layout of the new town, woodland management is key and new approaches are being developed to create a sustainable interface between people's homes and the woods.

The Living Landscape has worked to make its activities relevant to disadvantaged communities through focusing on community learning and development and health. Creativity and fun are at the heart of all of our engagements and we work hard to bring in new audiences by understanding the challenges they face.

"It is refreshing to see young people develop as individuals in a different learning environment. The leaders from Cumbernauld Living Landscape deliver an excellent programme passing on their knowledge and expertise" Mrs McCallum, St Maurice's High School, Cumbernauld

Outcomes

The recent expansion of pine martens into Cumbernauld demonstrates the importance of healthy woodlands. There is now more semi-natural woodland and better connections between woodland sites. Woodland management has focused on restructuring woodland to improve ecosystem health and support the establishment of new native woods. On the residential boundary the woodland edge is being restructured to ensure that the right trees are in the right places and future impacts of extreme weather are mitigated. This work means that the woodlands will continue to be a well-used resource for future generations.

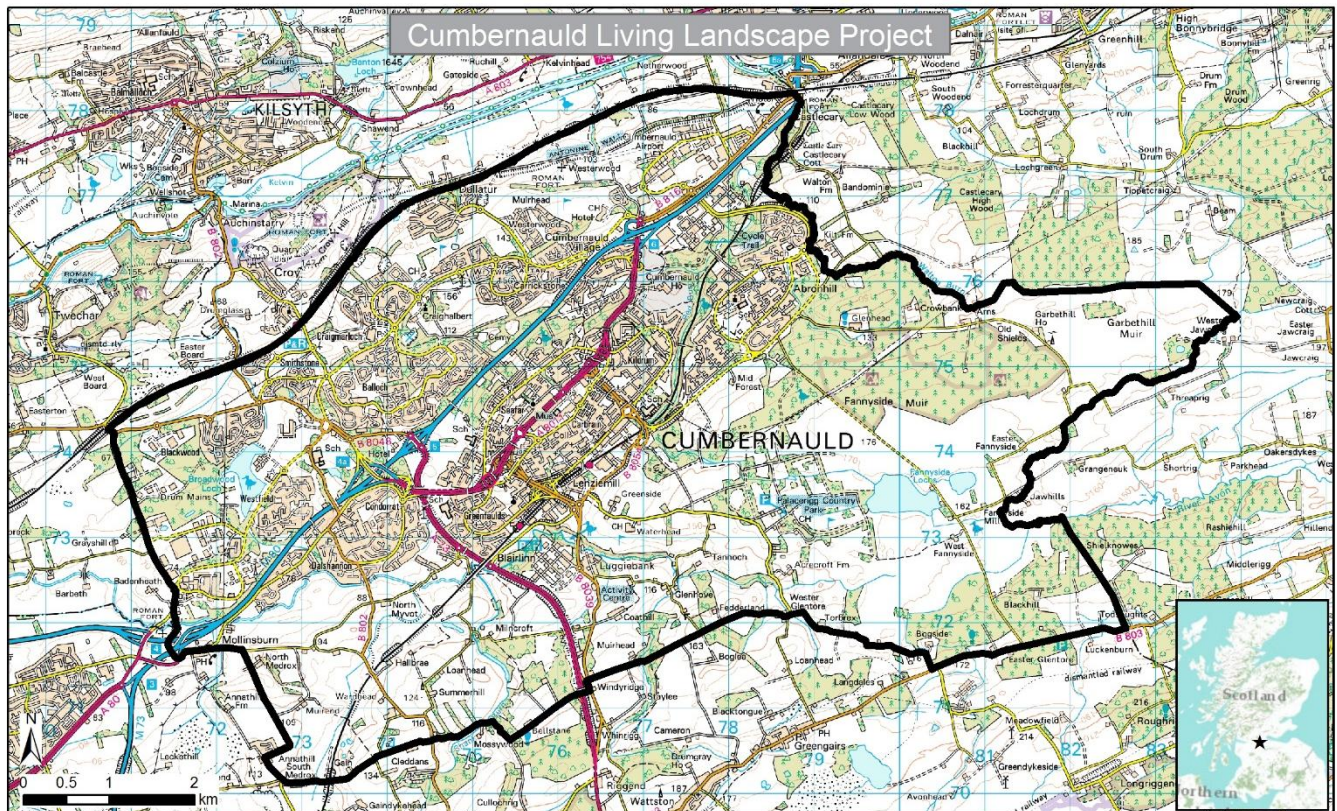


The link between health and greenspace is well documented and the programme continues to engage more people in the town's natural assets. Projects like the [Living Windows](#) have taken nature into some unexpected places, such as the much maligned Cumbernauld Town Centre, to connect with wider audiences. The programme has reached thousands of people who would not normally engage with nature and it has developed activities to target people at risk of ill health.

For the Living Landscape's impact to be sustainable and long lasting change needs to be led locally. We are working with people across the town on project such as the [Natural Connections](#) to improve the skills of young people and inspire them to take action in their neighbourhoods. Our work with deprived communities is improving the capacity of local volunteers and organisations.

Facts and figures

- ***55,000 people live in the 5,900ha Living Landscape area.***
- ***The area is home to some amazing wildlife like the charismatic pine marten and the UK's biggest overwintering population of bean geese.***
- ***Over 9,000 people have been engaged with the project since 2014***
- ***4 trainees, 7 internships and over 50 volunteers have developed their skills***



Scottish Wildlife Trust
Harbourside House
110 Commercial Street
Edinburgh
EH6 6NF

© Crown copyright 2013. All rights reserved.
Ordnance Survey Licence No: 100028223
Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, TomTom, Intermap, IPC, USGS, FAO,
NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri
Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), and the GIS User Community
© SWT (2013)



Scottish
Wildlife
Trust



The partnership



Contacts

Ian Mackenzie, Living Landscape Programme Manager, Scottish Wildlife Trust

Tel: 0131 312 7765

Email: imackenzie@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Website: www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk