

**REVISED VISION STATEMENT
FOR A CHARNWOOD FOREST REGIONAL PARK
June 2009**

1. Vision

- 1.1 The unique natural and cultural heritage features of Charnwood Forest will be managed and promoted through the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The Regional Park will be recognised as an essential part of the growing communities in the Derby, Leicester and Nottingham area, now and in the future.**

2. Background

- 2.1 The East Midlands Regional Plan includes provision for the creation of a Charnwood Forest Regional Park.
- 2.2 Charnwood Forest has long been recognised as a naturally coherent area valued for its distinctive and special qualities in terms of its landscape beauty, geological significance, biodiversity, historical importance and recreational role. It is also a traditional working landscape with a high proportion of land in agricultural use and, in parts of the area, mineral working. The western part of Charnwood Forest forms part of the National Forest.
- 2.3 Charnwood Forest is a major asset for people within the Derby, Leicester and Nottingham area. In particular it provides opportunities for recreation close to the growing urban areas of Leicester, Loughborough and Coalville.
- 2.4 Charnwood Forest faces challenges including habitat fragmentation and decline, landscape degradation and loss of character, the need to meet mineral extraction demands, and visitor management. In addition, growth in nearby urban areas will need to be appropriately managed and may

provide opportunities to enhance parts of the area and improve green infrastructure (GI)¹ links.

3. Objectives

3.1 The objectives of the Regional Park are :

- To manage and promote landscape and settlement character, including biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and industrial heritage features.
- To promote sustainable leisure and tourism.
- To support agricultural diversification and woodland and rural economy uses which respect local character.

4. Regional Park boundary

4.1 The Charnwood Forest Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (October 2008) recommends a working boundary for the Regional Park, as shown on the attached Figure 019. The Regional Park boundary will be defined by each local planning authority through its Local Development Framework (LDF). In order to maximise potential funding benefits, the definition of the boundary needs to incorporate a degree of flexibility.

5. How we will achieve the vision and objectives

5.1 The vision and objectives will be achieved through positive spatial planning and land management within the Park as follows :

Managing and promoting landscape and settlement character, including biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and industrial heritage features

¹ 'Green infrastructure' comprises the networks of multi-functional greenspace which sit within, and contribute to, the type of high quality natural and built environment required to deliver 'sustainable communities'. Delivering, protecting and enhancing these networks requires the creation of new assets to link with river corridors, waterways, woodlands, nature reserves, urban greenspace, historic sites and other existing assets. (East Midlands Regional Plan, March 2009)

a) LDF policies will be prepared which manage appropriate types of development and ensure that development is of high quality design in keeping with its landscape and settlement setting within the Park.

b) The landscape character of the Park will be enhanced in line with National Forest planting targets, where appropriate, particularly where such planting can be used to assimilate development within the Park and around its fringe.

c) Habitat creation and enhancement will be focussed on Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and prioritised corridors in order to maximise biodiversity benefits and achieve habitat connectivity.

d) Charnwood Forest's international geological value will be preserved and enhanced, working with the British Geological Survey and other specialist groups.

e) Charnwood Forest's cultural and industrial heritage will be investigated, safeguarded and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Promoting sustainable leisure and tourism

f) LDF policies will be prepared which manage sustainable leisure and tourism related development within the Charnwood Forest Regional Park.

g) The existing network of green spaces and non-vehicular access routes within Charnwood Forest will be enhanced and expanded to remedy gaps in current provision and provide for future need, to maximise access to and from the areas around Charnwood Forest.

h) There will be a co-ordinated approach to the management and promotion of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park, with the creation of a distinctive Park brand, and the raising of awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special character through its sustainable and educational use by local people and visitors.

Supporting agricultural diversification and woodland and rural economy uses which respect local character

i) LDF policies will be prepared which promote agricultural diversification and other rural economy uses, and the restoration of minerals sites to biodiversity, geodiversity, sustainable leisure and tourism, and woodland uses, recognising that the Regional Park will continue to be a working landscape where agriculture, mineral extraction, water resources and recreation are important activities.

6. Next steps

6.1 The establishment and development of a Charnwood Forest Regional Park will be a long term project. It will involve large and small scale schemes, public and private landowners, including farmers, and existing and new projects. A Regional Park Strategy and Action Plan will be prepared to provide the framework for the long term development of the actions proposed to achieve the vision for the Park.