

# Learning and Action Alliances: frameworks for developing Blue-Green visions for urban flood risk management

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# Impact of the **Newcastle Learning and Action Alliance (LAA)**

## February 2014 - present

Opportunities have arisen for the city which may not have occurred otherwise;

- Discussion of flood risk management with parties not typically involved – opening of communication channels
- Strengthening of existing relationships between stakeholders
- Opportunities for collaborative working to achieve common goals
- Potential joint funding schemes for multifunctional Blue-Green projects
- Realisation that goals and objectives of many organisations align (whether water management, place making, transport, biodiversity, wellbeing, environmental...)
- Speeding up data sharing between partners

# Impact of the **Newcastle Learning and Action Alliance (LAA)**

February 2014 - present

“we would not be here discussing BG infrastructure with you if it wasn’t for the LAA”

“the LAA has been an invaluable exercise in bringing people together”

# Barriers to the delivery of integrated urban water and flood risk management *(why do we need LAAs?)*

Lack of coordination

Changes in institutional structures and responsibilities

Funding cuts

Too much jargon

How do we do it?

Lack of trust

I'm too busy

Fragmentation of knowledge

Not my problem

Silo thinking

Lack of knowledge

# Learning and Action Alliances (LAAs)

Social learning + active learning

A LAA is usually an **open arrangement** where participants create a **joint understanding** of a problem and its **possible solutions** based on rational criticism and coherence through **discussion**. It facilitates the identification of **innovative ideas** for the solution of complex (wicked) problems **outside the constraints of existing formal institutional settings**. Solutions or ideas are afterwards presented in formal inter-organisational decision-making processes.

# Learning and Action Alliances (LAAs)

- No fixed structure in a LAA
- Founded on their own specific vision that evolves over their lifetime
- Useful to have a strong leader or champion

Aim: to break down barriers to both horizontal and vertical information sharing

Caveat...







Search website

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MARE  
workpackage  
outputs

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Work Package 1: Learning and  
Action Alliances »

1. Reports »

2. Guides »

Work Package 2: The MARE  
Toolbox

MARE Output / Work Package 1: Learning And Action Alliances

## Work Package 1: Learning and Action Alliances

In a time of great uncertainty about environmental and socio-economic factors there is a need to do things differently; innovation is not an option it is a necessity.

Effective flood risk management, in common with many other processes requires integration within organisations



The MARE Transnational Alliance

**EU MARE and Netherlands Living with Water:** pioneered the LAA approach to help develop strategies for flood risk management and resilience in the Don Catchment, Bergen, Dordrecht and Hannover (Ashley et al., 2012; Dudley et al., 2013; Newman et al., 2011; Van Herk et al., 2011).

[www.mare-portal.eu/mare-output/1/work-package-1-learning-and-action-alliances](http://www.mare-portal.eu/mare-output/1/work-package-1-learning-and-action-alliances)

<http://www.levenmetwater.nl/home/>

# The Newcastle LAA (established Feb 2014)

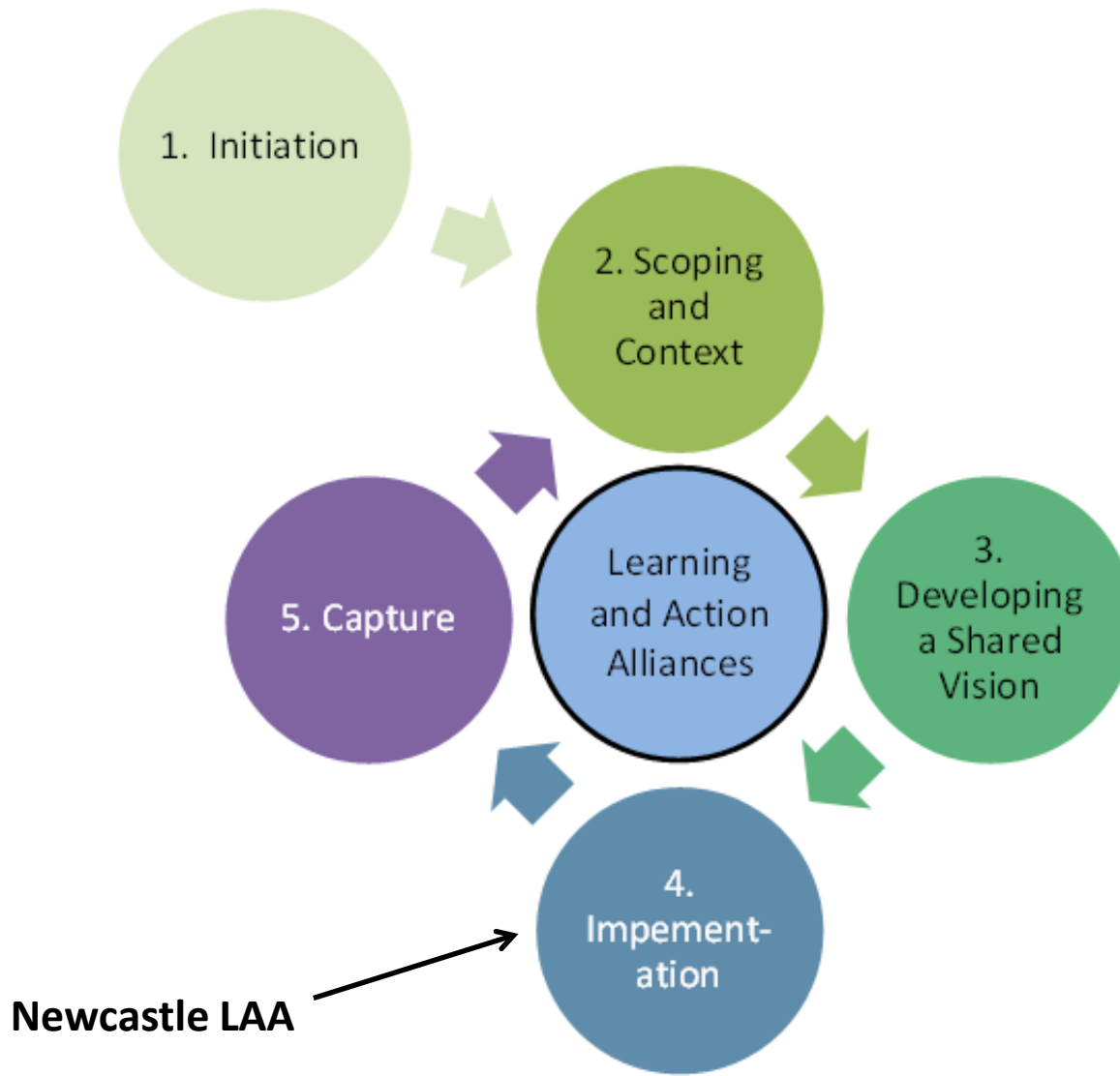


[www.mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk)





# Establishing and running LAAs



*Adapted from Ashley  
et al., (2012)  
MARE Project  
([www.mare-project.eu/partners](http://www.mare-project.eu/partners))*

# Phase 1. Initiation of the Newcastle LAA

- Form initial group of interested parties

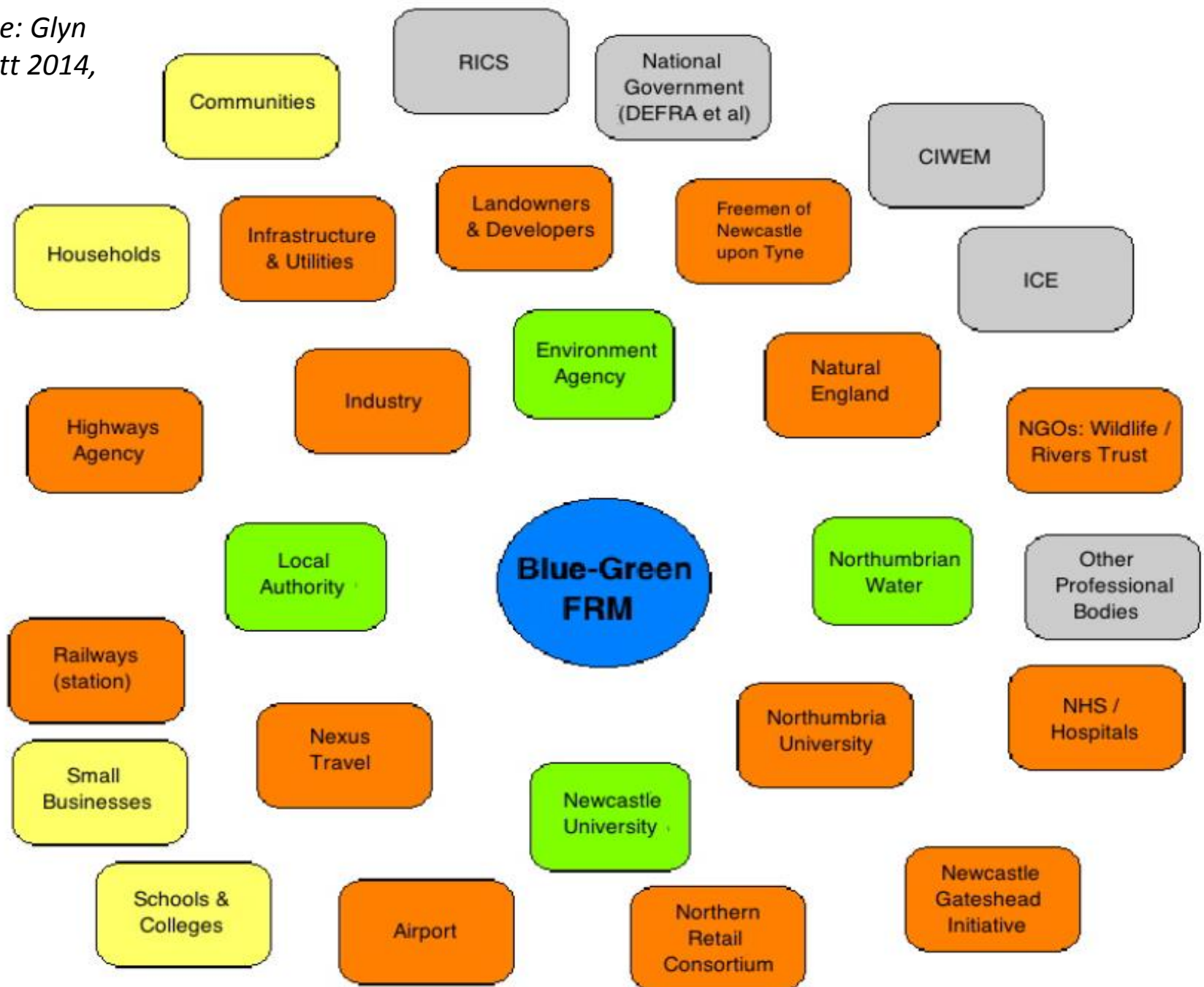
## Phase 2. Scoping and context

- Identification of the political and physical reach of the LAA
- Identify stakeholders who can affect, or are affected by, the LAA (iterative process)

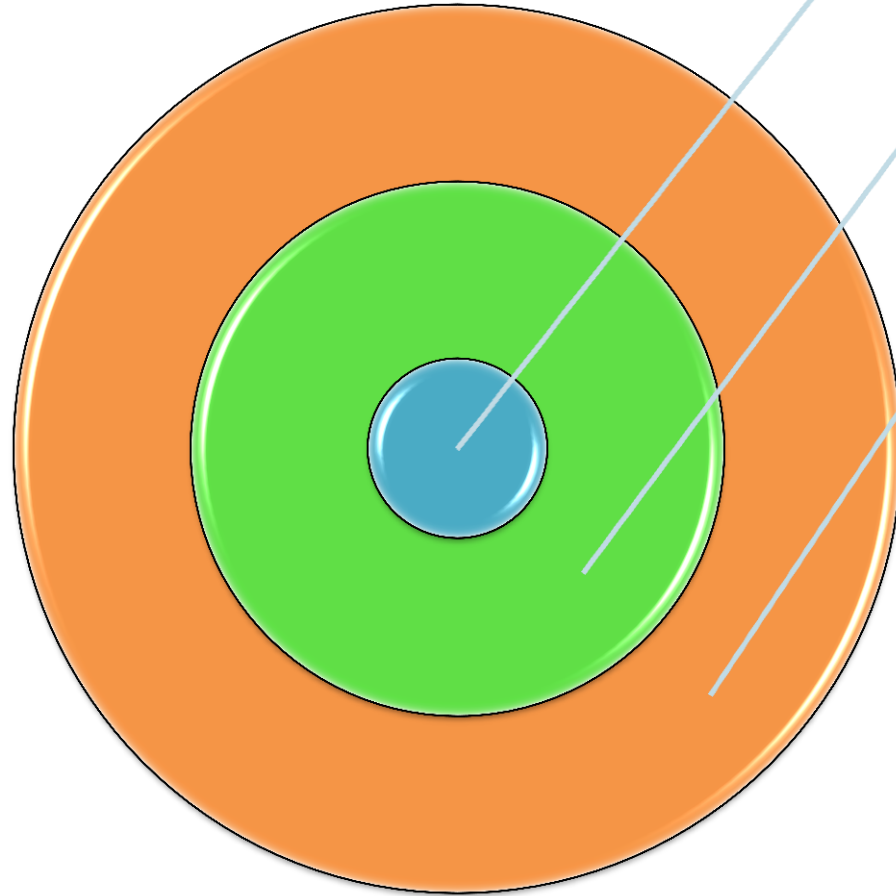


[www.politicsresources.net](http://www.politicsresources.net)

Source: Glyn  
Everett 2014,  
UWE



# Newcastle LAA membership



**Organising Group**  
(coordinator)

**Core Group**  
Attends regular meetings

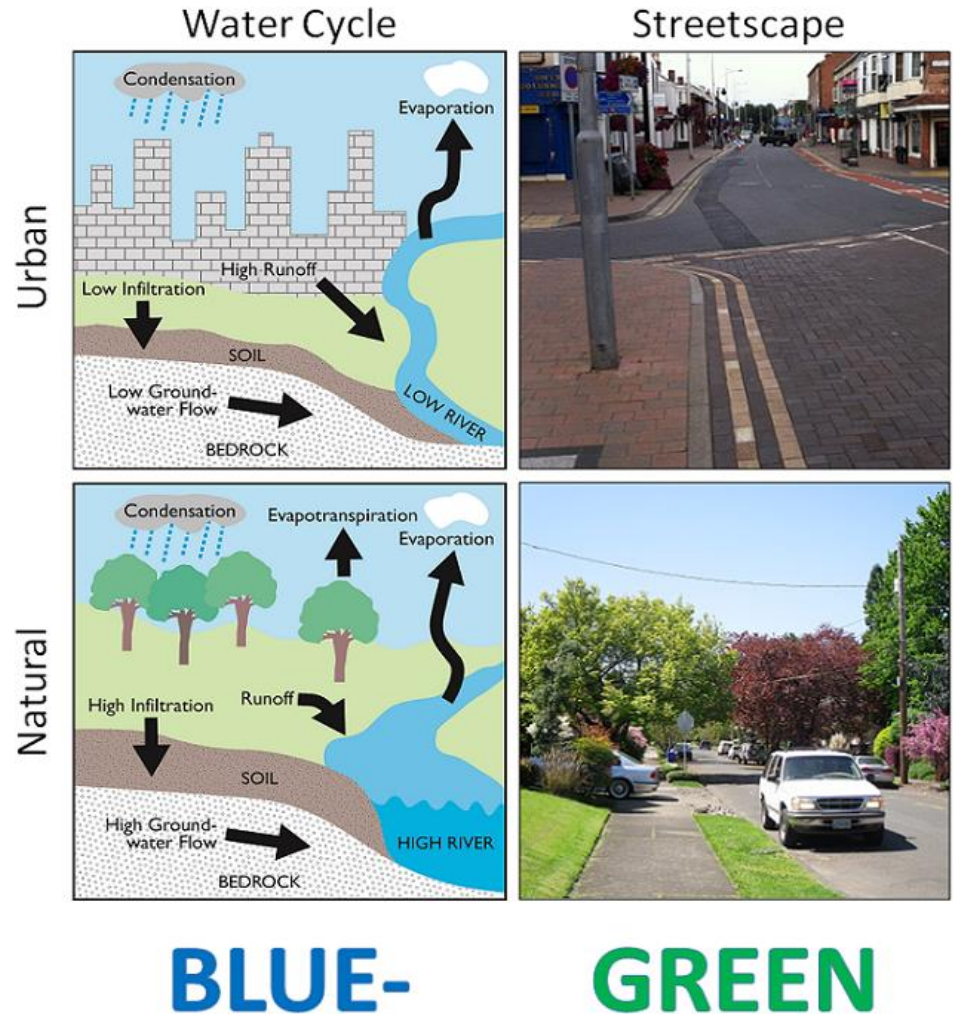
**Wider Group**  
Participation via online group

## Phase 3. Developing a shared vision

# The Vision...

is for Newcastle to become a city that follows the principles of Blue-Green design by maximising the opportunities to achieve multiple benefits of Blue-Green approaches to surface water management

- Establish **terms of reference** and **strategic objectives**



[www.bluegreencities.ac.uk/bluegreencities/documents/newcastle-laa-vision-tor-final.pdf](http://www.bluegreencities.ac.uk/bluegreencities/documents/newcastle-laa-vision-tor-final.pdf)



# The Vision...

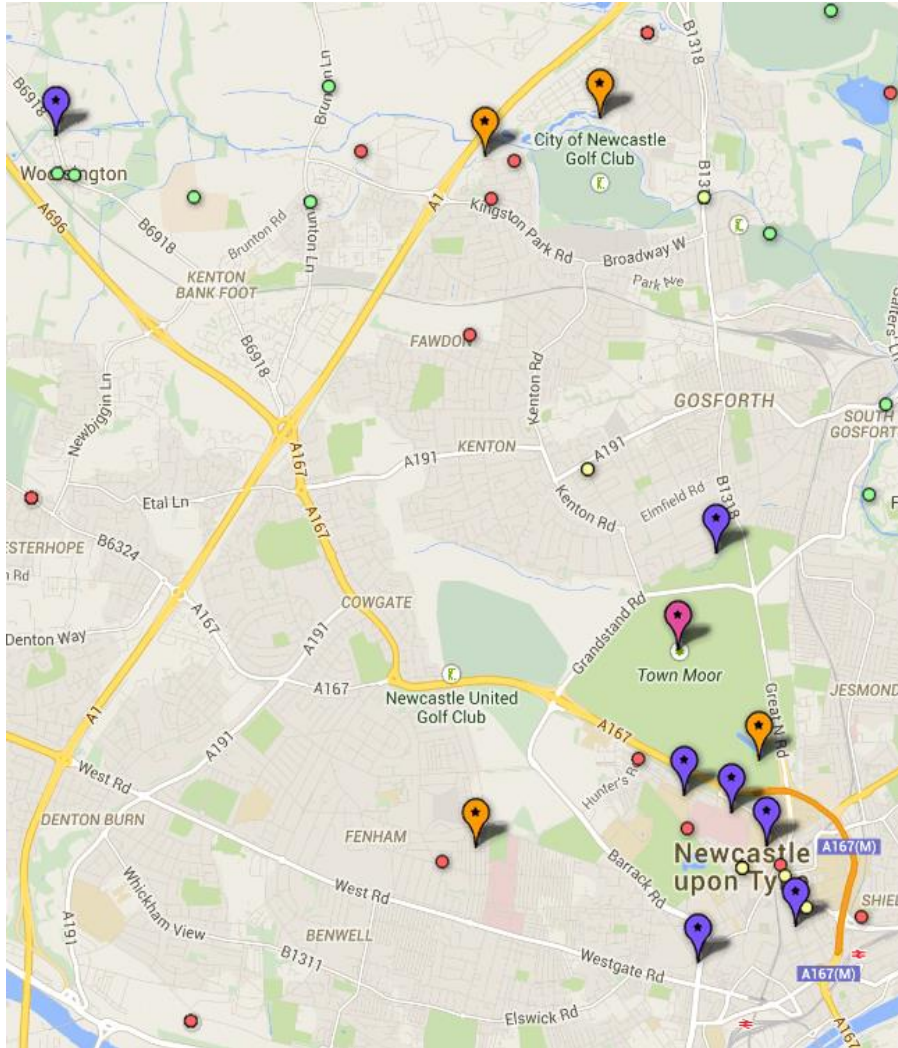
is for Newcastle to become a city that follows the principles of Blue-Green design by maximising the opportunities to achieve multiple benefits of Blue-Green approaches to surface water management

The LAA will promote this vision and realise it by recognising, and utilising, windows of opportunity for potentially influencing the strategies of decision makers

[www.bluegreencities.ac.uk/bluegreencities/documents/newcastle-laa-vision-tor-final.pdf](http://www.bluegreencities.ac.uk/bluegreencities/documents/newcastle-laa-vision-tor-final.pdf)



# Identifying demonstration projects and existing assets



1. Delivered



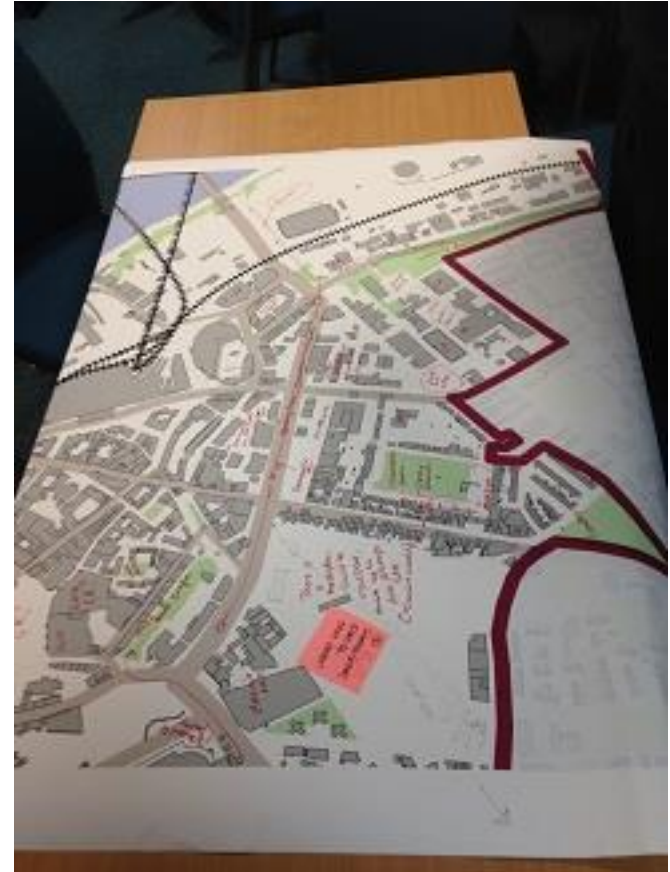
2. Possible to influence



3. Visionary



# 'Hypothetical Blue-Green urban core'





# Modelling novel Blue- Green solutions





# St James' Boulevard swale

RP= 50 years,  
60 mins

Dimensions of  
swale:  
Width = 2m  
Depth < 1m

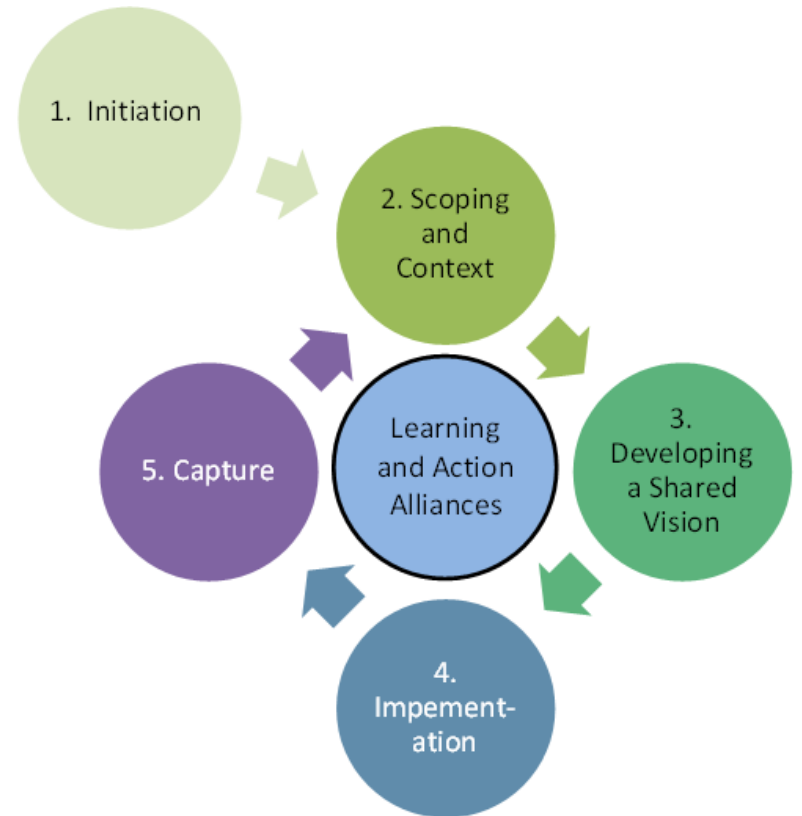




## Phase 4. Implementation

## Implementation

- Identifying and acting upon 'quick-wins'
- Developing longer term vision
- Formulating initiatives to respond to and deliver the vision



# Moving towards implementation: exploring funding sources and opportunities for Blue-Green infrastructure in Newcastle

Bid into multiple pots of funding

Optimising funding stream cycles

Look for opportunistic schemes

Additionality



# Moving towards implementation: exploring funding sources and opportunities for Blue-Green infrastructure in Newcastle



**Science Central** – Plans for SuDS and the Urban Sciences Building



## Transport Projects

› Acorn Road

› Barras Bridge (including St Mary's Place)

› Blue House roundabout

› Brandling Park

› Broadway to Hollywood

› Central Gateway

› Central Gateway Phase 2

› Church Road-Alwinton Terrace-Moor Road North

› Claremont Road

› Cowgate Junction Improvements

› Great North Road (GNR)

› Haddricks Mill

› John Dobson Street

› Moor Road North / The Grove

› Percy Street

› Queen Victoria Road

› Salters Road /Church Road Junction

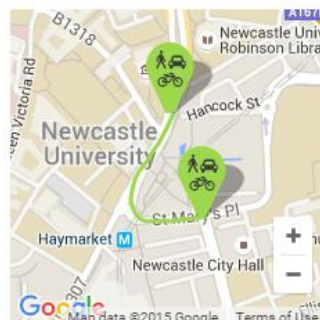
› Scotswood Bridgehead and

[HOME](#) / [TRANSPORT](#) / [TRAFFIC](#) / [BARRAS BRIDGE \(INCLUDING ST MARY'S PLACE\)](#)

# Barras Bridge (including St Mary's Place)

City Centre North

Making Improvements



**Project** Barras Bridge (including St Mary's Place)

**Location:** City Centre North

### What's the issue?

Barras Bridge is the northern gateway to the city centre. It is an important route for pedestrians and cyclists and provides access to two bus stations and car parks. The majority of the space in this area is dedicated to vehicles despite there being significantly more pedestrian movements than vehicle movements. Access to the bus

# Leave feedback via let's talk Newcastle



[www.letstalknewcastle.co.uk/transport](http://www.letstalknewcastle.co.uk/transport)

View projects, view comments and leave comments

<https://northnewcastle.commonplace.is/schemes>

We want your opinions and feedback on our proposals

Tell us what you think please click on the areas below.

## City Centre North



Public engagement for a series of proposed designs for several transport corridors in the north of Newcastle's City Centre.

[View & Comment](#)

## Gosforth



Progress to date and public engagement on schemes in the Gosforth area.

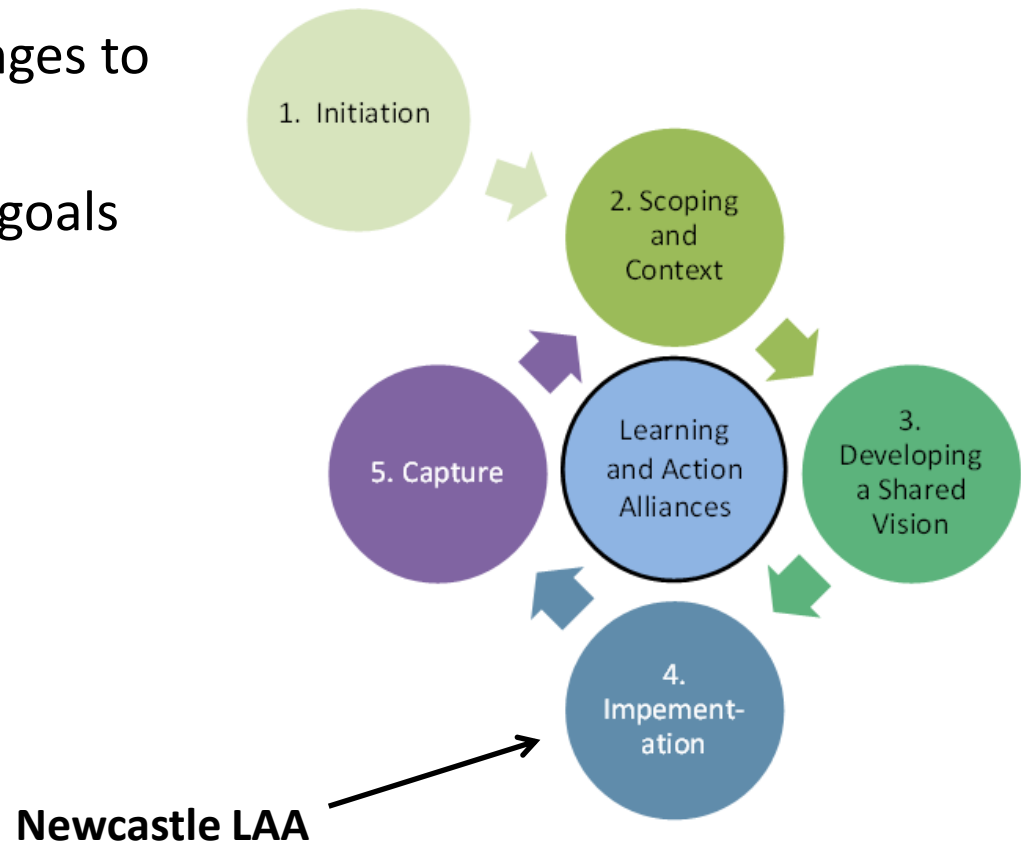
[View Proposals](#)



# Phases 5. Capture

## Capture

- Monitor and evaluate performance of response(s)
- Draw lessons and define changes to policy, practice and culture
- Review and revise vision and goals



# Goals for longevity and sustainability of the LAA

- Active learning
- Communication, rapport and trust
- Clear rewards for all stakeholders – meet (and manage) their expectations
- Facilitation – someone to organise regular meetings
- Manage conflicts of interest
- Overcome bureaucratic difficulties, e.g. data sharing and acquisition
- LAA coordinator – in our experience the coordinator was working on a research project and so had resources to coordinate meetings (difficult for other stakeholders)

# Summary

Blue-Green infrastructure requires a **cooperative approach** and multi-disciplinary thinking → learning and action alliances may represent a viable way forward

The **LAA framework** is transferable to other cities and can be scaled up to a whole catchment approach (risk shared between multiple organisations to enable greater progress)

## **Impact** of the Newcastle LAA:

- Opening and broadening communication channels
- Strengthening existing relationships
- Opportunities for collaborative working to achieve common goals
- Identification of joint funding schemes for multifunctional BG projects
- Realisation of common goals and objectives of many organisations
- Speeding up data sharing between partners

# Thank you for your attention, any questions?

## Acknowledgement

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