

# Learning and Action Alliance (LAA) Factsheet

- **What is a LAA?**

A LAA is typically an open arrangement where participants create a joint understanding of a problem and its possible solutions based on rational criticism and coherence through discussion. LAAs create an atmosphere of trust and mutual ownership and facilitate the identification of innovative ideas for the solution of complex problems outside the constraints of existing formal institutional settings. LAAs encourage the development of a vision, in this case, the Blue-Green Vision for the City of Newcastle, and ideas are then presented in formal inter-organisational decision-making processes.

- **Are there any examples of successful LAAs?**

Yes, the [EU MARE](#) project successfully employed LAAs to help develop strategies for flood risk management and resilience in the [Don Catchment](#), [Bergen](#), [Dordrecht](#) and [Hannover](#).

- **What is the objective of the Newcastle LAA?**

To develop a Blue-Green vision for the City of Newcastle, including strategies for flood risk management that are integrated with city planning, economic growth and urban green infrastructure development, and that create a multitude of environmental, socio-cultural and economic benefits. Ultimately, to define the desirable state for Newcastle, assess the problems and solutions, and mainstream ideas into political/policy frameworks for potential implementation.

- **What do I (and my organisation) get out of joining the Newcastle LAA?**

The outcomes will vary depending on the vision of the group but all individuals/organisations will have the opportunity to network with other stakeholders (including those that they may not normally engage with), learn from discussions (and freely contribute to discussions outside of their professional remit) and benefit from data, information and contact sharing. We are at the start of a journey to build trust between partners to enable the building of a vision for the City of Newcastle.

- **What role does the Blue-Green Cities Research Project (BGC) play?**

The LAA is not led by BGC but by the core members. BGC organised the initial start-up workshop and got people talking and interacting, and will help to map out the vision and to learn and contribute along with everyone else. Several of the BGC team will be core members and will host some of the meetings at Newcastle University. We hope the LAA will continue when the BGC project ends (2016).

- **How will the LAA be run and what will be the focus of core meetings?**

There is no single model for a LAA; it will be founded on collaborative working, communication and specialist support. There will be three stages; 1) establishment, 2) functioning (delivering on the vision, challenging regulations and developing novel ideas), and 3) sustainability. Building the

vision for the City of Newcastle may take time and will rely on both face to face meetings and engagement from the wider group. The core group will determine what is the most useful format and timing for the meetings (possibly every 6-8 weeks). Each meeting will have a specific focus/theme and we hope that the core members will take turn in hosting the meetings. Wider members will be informed of progress and opportunities via the [LinkedIn group](#) and will be invited to attend core meetings that are relevant to their interests and expertise.

- **What are the next steps for the Newcastle LAA?**

1. Join the [LinkedIn group](#) (completing Expression of Interest form if not done) and contribute to discussions relevant to interests/expertise, read updates from core meetings and suggest themes for future meetings.
2. Attend the evening reception Monday March 17<sup>th</sup> (~7-9 pm) at the [Caledonian Hotel](#), Newcastle.
3. Core members to attend the first core group LAA meeting (Tuesday 8th April 12.30-3.30pm, lunch provided), hosted by Newcastle University. A synthesis of the meeting will then be posted in the [LinkedIn group](#).

- **How can I get involved in wider group discussions and who do I address questions to?**

Please ask questions of the core and wider group via the [LinkedIn group](#) and indicate if you require a response from a specific person/institution. Questions regarding the organisation of the LAA should be directed to [Emily Lawson](#). For more information on LAAs please see the [BGC webpage](#) and [blog](#).

