



Taking Flight

An Evaluation of the Economic Benefits of Using Red Kites *Milvus milvus* for Environment-led Regeneration in North East England by 'Northern Kites'

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Northern Kites, a partnership project with the following organisations:



Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2004, the first of 94 red kites was released as part of a scheme to reintroduce and ultimately, re-establish the species as a breeding bird in North East England, after an absence of 170 years. This report estimates the scale of the economic impacts of the Northern Kites Project 2004-2008.

Assessing the Economic Impacts of the Northern Kites Project

Nature conservation provides significant benefits to local economies, particularly in rural areas. This report presents data on employment, income, and expenditure by the Northern Kites Project [the 'Project'] as well as statistics related to these topics provided by businesses and agencies specifically associated with the Project, and also information from those companies located within the Project's 'core area' of the lower Derwent valley, in the west of Gateshead. In addition to this, it summarises the results of a small number of visitor expenditure surveys.

The return of red kites to the North East of England brought about by the Project, more specifically, to the area of the lower Derwent valley, has provided support to local economies in a variety of ways:

- They have provided direct employment for staff involved in managing the work of the Project and a range of associated countryside projects. This amounted to 3.84 Full Time Equivalents [FTE] over the period 2004-2008;
- This led to spending by employees and volunteers associated with the work of the Project supporting local economic activity. It is estimated that this spending supported a further FTE job;
- Direct expenditure by the Northern Kites Project of budgets with local providers of goods and services (Case Study Four). This provided income and employment for local firms, calculated to be the equivalent of one FTE;

- Business opportunities have developed around the return of the red kites to the region. These range from the use of the kites' image (Case Study Five) for marketing to the adoption of the kite in an award-winning major branding exercise (Case Study Two);
- They have provided repeated opportunities for positive, and often national multi-media complementary advertising for a range of companies (Case Study Eight). The value of this, for just one company, was estimated to be £30-40,000 (Case Study Two);
- It is estimated that these initiatives have provided a minimum additional income of £254,000 and supported the employment of a range of individuals in a raft of local businesses. These used the image of kites to produce specific products and services, and built upon this success (Case Study Three, Six, Seven and Nine);
- Enhancement of the regional tourism offer, to create new and popular visitor destinations with the resultant economic, and also health benefits (Case Study One);
- Worked with schools and businesses, to create valuable and popular participatory amenities for pupils, and to encourage children to learn more about kites (Case Study Ten);
- Supported the development of tourism activities that encourage visitors to visit the North East, in order to enjoy the red kites, thereby encouraging spend in the local economy (Case Study Eight). Visitor spending of £757,000 in the lower Derwent valley was attributed to the presence of the red kites and there was strong support for branding this area as 'Kite Country' to further promote tourism;
- Building participatory and productive relationships has also benefited the profiling of the Northern Kites Project and, more importantly, public recognition of red kites and their needs. One branding exercise resulted in taking 'red kite' messages to 4 million people a year.

Conclusion

In total, it is estimated that over its lifetime, the Northern Kites Project supported 12.5 FTE jobs in the local economy, and has generated a minimum of £1.73 million in economic activity, the majority of which has filtered through to local companies and businesspeople. In light of this boost to productivity, it is hoped that this report will encourage best practice initiatives to be adopted by similar conservation schemes.

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House of Commons 25 March 2008
Early Day Motion number 1257

REINTRODUCTION OF RED KITES TO NORTH EAST ENGLAND

Mr David Anderson
Mrs Sharon Hodgson
Mr Jim Devine
Mr David Clelland
Mr Stephen Hepburn
Mr Kevan Jones

That this House welcomes the introduction of Northern Kite Ale to the Strangers' Bar; notes that the ruby ale is brewed at the Wylam Brewery and that it has been produced to celebrate the welcome re-introduction of the red kite into the North East of England; recognises that the re-introduction of the kites is the first of its kind in that the birds were bred and freed very close to a large urban conurbation; it is pleased to note that the project has gone from strength to strength and is a matter of great interest and pride in the local area; and sends both the Red Kites project and the Wylam Brewery the best wishes for their respective futures.

1. Background and Context

It has been estimated that around 2.85 million adults in the UK 'bird watch' and the audiences for the BBC's 'Springwatch', which might be seen as indicative of society's interest in birds, regularly reached over 3 million in 2008 (Dickie *et al*, 2006; Conlan, 2008). As the public's interest in birds and other wildlife increases, this kind of activity is generating ever-greater levels of business and economic activity (Dickie *et al*, 2006). Indeed, as a demonstration of the public's affinity for garden birds, it has been estimated that the UK bird feeding market for food and equipment, is worth an annual £200 million, and has the potential to grow still further (Moss, 2004). No assessment of the total financial worth of birdwatching in the UK has been carried out. Yet, in the USA, wildlife watching trips account for \$7.4 billion of the \$32 billion spent by the country's 46 million birdwatchers pursuing their pastime (Dickie *et al*, 2006).

There is a proven record demonstrating that spectacular, and often-rare bird species have the ability to excite not just bird watching enthusiasts, but also to stimulate the imagination of the wider public, who will make a conscious effort to see 'special wildlife'. The number of visitors drawn to an area to view iconic bird species can sometimes be measured in millions. For example, the Symonds Yat peregrines (*Falco peregrinus*) in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire have a tremendous popular appeal. A joint Royal Society for the Protection of Birds [RSPB]/Forestry Commission watchpoint,

first set up in 1984, welcomed its millionth visitor in July 2003, and has seen 55 peregrines fledge from the nest. Around 50,000 people visit the site each year (Lambert, 2005). Such a scheme more than demonstrates how to balance the sometimes-competing demands of nature conservation and outdoor recreation.

Even short-staying birds, with the assistance of extensive media coverage, have the ability to attract large numbers of visitors. In 2002, a breeding pair of rare and colourful bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*), drew 15,000 admirers in just five weeks to Bishop Middleham in County Durham, a site not renowned for hosting unusual bird species. This phenomenon is one that might be expected to be confined to rural or naturally picturesque locations. However, an RSPB Peregrine watch point at the London's Tate Modern Gallery in August 2006 drew 31,000 visitors. Indeed, the prospect of encountering wildlife within an urban setting has become integral to the RSPB 'Birds Near You' project that has also drawn peregrine watchers to central Birmingham (Dickie *et al*, 2006; Allen, 2009). Such evidence amply demonstrates that wild birds, and in particular those that are colourful and/or exciting, have the ability to engage people in large numbers, irrespective of the perceived naturalness of the setting. Attracting large numbers of people to specific locations to enjoy wildlife can therefore offer significant social and economic benefits. The unexpected arrival of the bee-eaters to Bishop Middleham, in summer 2002, had the effect of attracting £100,000s worth of visitor spending and introduced County Durham to a whole new audience (Dickie *et al*, 2006).

From the employment perspective, it has been calculated that there are over 18,000 people engaged in full-time jobs in nature and landscape conservation in the UK (Shiel *et al*, 2002). It has also been estimated that conservation organisations spend a sum that amounts to more than £500 million per year in England and Wales alone. Through this spend, it can be seen that nature conservation activities are a significant contributor to the rural economy and the rural tourism market; a market with an estimated worth of some £12 billion per annum in England (Shiel *et al*, 2002).

Such evidence well demonstrates that nature conservation activities have the potential to generate significant local economic benefits, whether through direct employment, the use of contractors/service providers or because of spending generated by visitors attracted by wildlife to an area. In addition, the social benefits associated with such works can be even greater than the economic benefits, though these attributes can be more difficult to quantify and evaluate.

1.1 About the Northern Kites Project

Northern Kites is a partnership Project between the lead partners [the 'Partners'] Natural England and the RSPB, and Gateshead Council, Northumbrian Water, the National Trust and the Forestry Commission, with additional funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the SITA Trust. The Project aimed to reintroduce and ultimately, re-establish the red kite as a breeding bird in North East England. As well as bringing the

kite back to the North East region, the Project set out to provide opportunities for people to see these spectacular birds.

In essence, the Northern Kites Project comprises four key elements:

- Wildlife: the return of the red kite to its former range in North East England
- People: the opportunity to give people and communities access to the kite, so that they can enjoy and learn about wildlife and the wider environment through the Project
- Economics: the chance to show how such a project can be good not just for wildlife and people, but also for the local economy
- Partnership: the illustration of how partners from the charitable, private and public sectors, working in an imaginative way together can better deliver rewards not just for wildlife but also to improve local people's quality of life.

It has been the Partnership's intent to show how a flagship biodiversity project, such as Northern Kites, can illustrate the importance of a healthy environment to many aspects of modern life. As a world first in re-introducing red kites into an urban-fringe environment, Northern Kites ultimately aims to highlight the value and benefits brought to the region by all of the region's biodiversity.

Over the Project period, 2004-2009, Northern Kites has re-established the red kite as a breeding bird in the region, with 25 nesting territories established in the region by 2008 (figures from Northern Kites). The release sites for the kites (2004-2006) were close to the heart of urban Tyneside, within 3kms of the Gateshead MetroCentre, Europe's largest shopping and leisure centre, and in this respect, based in Gateshead's Derwent valley.

At first glance, Gateshead might seem a somewhat strange choice for such a Project, but the area selected – in the lower Derwent valley - is right for a number of reasons. First, the habitat mosaic is perfect for kites. Secondly, much of the land, which the kites might use after the release phase of the Project, was already in the ownership or management of organisations that manage their land holdings for nature conservation or heritage interest. Finally, and very importantly, the area is easily accessible to hundreds of thousands of people living in the Tyneside conurbation. It is worth remembering that Northern Kites is as much about people as it is the birds themselves. Whilst the North East is well known for its rich natural and historical heritage, with over 30% of the region's land area being classed as either an Area of National Beauty (AONB) or National Park, housing 22 castles and 2 UNESCO World Heritage sites (www.bitc.org.uk), many of the region's most exciting wildlife spectacles are remote from the region's main population. Northern Kites offered an exceptional opportunity to bring spectacular wildlife to the heart of the region and its people, on a daily basis.

1.2 Northern Kites' Funding

Like many of the other red kite reintroduction programmes around the UK (Dickie *et al*, 2006), the work of Northern Kites could not have been possible without the support and sponsorship from many bodies. This has not only paid for the expenditure related to the kite release programme itself, but also the cost of the Project's administration, including transport costs, staff salaries, equipment, and office overheads. In total, the income for the Project, as of December 2008, was estimated at £503,250. *Appendix One* tables this data, but in summary, the Project's main financial supporters were Gateshead Council, Natural England, Northumbrian Water, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and SITA Trust. This financial support ceases in July 2009, when the funded phase of the Northern Kites Project ends.

1.3 The Role of Red Kites, and their Return, in Stimulating Local Economies

The return of red kites to England and Scotland over the last 20 years or so, courtesy of a centrally coordinated programme of successful reintroduction exercises, has been effective not only in ecological terms, but in the way it has generated an interest across a broad spectrum of sectoral interests, not just amongst traditional 'wildlife watchers'. Red kites have the ability to inspire in people a sense of pride in both place and community and, courtesy of considerable media exposure and

profile; they have become much-valued stars of the British countryside (Dickie *et al*, 2006).



Figure 1: Red kite in flight (Ray Wilby)

There is little doubt that the sight of a red kite contributes to the landscape value of an area and can, if appropriately utilised, act as a 'flagship species' for an area, in order to generate support and sympathy for other bird species, and the environment as a whole (Rayment, 1997). Furthermore, the species can also be used to serve the purpose of a promotional tool and marketing brand. In 1994, for example, the Welsh 'Kite Country' project was launched with the specific aim to increase visitor numbers and extend the tourist

season in Mid-Wales. Thousands of new visitors were attracted to the area with the consequent economic benefits that have stimulated the economy and helped redefine the image of Mid-Wales (Rayment, 1997). Indeed, an assessment of the economic impact of this work in Wales found that 148,000 visitors to 'Kite Country centres' in 1995/96 had the effect of contributing £5.4 million to the Mid-Wales economy, £2.9 million of which was ascribed to the 'Kite Country' project. Clearly, these are significant figures and have had the effect of supporting 114 FTE jobs (Rayment, 1997).

The actual name 'red kite' appears to be an incredibly strong branding name for businesses, many of which are located within red kite release areas, and not exclusively Wales. There is a strong clustering of such activity within other red kite reintroduction areas, such as the Black Isle in North East Scotland. An Internet search revealed a wide range of business activities associated with the red kite 'brand'. For instance, the building companies Red Kite Construction and Red Kite Homes, as well as Red Kite Yurts, Red Kite Glass and Red Kite Cycles, all operating in different regions of Britain. In addition, specific products and services have been developed that use the 'red kite' brand that clearly take advantage of the presence of kites in their immediate area. A number of individuals and companies, within red kite core project areas of Wales and northern Scotland offer guests the opportunity of a self-catering stay in a 'Red Kite Cottage' or 'Red Kite House' (Google, 11 December 2008).

1.4 The Economy of the Lower Derwent Valley

The lower Derwent valley (the core Project area) is located in the western part of Gateshead Council's administrative area of Tyne and Wear. Although located on the edge of urban Tyneside, the lower Derwent valley has a surprisingly 'rural' feel. The valley is a particularly attractive area, straddling the River Derwent, which has its headwaters in the uplands of the Durham Pennines and flows to its confluence with the River Tyne at Swalwell.

The lower Derwent valley is notable for its large tracts of woodland, farmland and small villages, notably Chopwell and Rowlands Gill. Historically, the area was noted for its mining and associated industry, but this has long gone. Many former industrial areas, such as Derwenthaugh Coking Plant, have been reclaimed and turned over to leisure amenities, such as sports and country parks, for example Derwenthaugh Park (Winlaton, 1975; Hutchinson, 1994). Indeed, located within the lower Derwent valley, is the Derwent Walk Country Park [DWCP], a well-visited country park, the very popular Chopwell Woodland Park and the National Trust's Gibside Estate. All of the 'green facilities' offer largely open public access, in contrast to some of the other red kite release sites in the UK, such as the Harewood Estate in Yorkshire

For administration purposes, the lower Derwent valley is largely confined within the Chopwell and Rowlands Gill, Winlaton and High Spenn, and Whickham North wards of



Figure 2: Just 8kms from Newcastle City Centre, the beautiful lower Derwent valley (John Hemstock).

Gateshead borough. To illustrate the economic profile of the lower Derwent valley, the Chopwell and Rowlands Gill ward is analysed in detail below. This ward had a total population of 9,198 in 2001 (Census, 2001d). As the 2001 Census shows (*Chart One*) the employment of the ward's residents is mixed (Census, 2001d). It is presumed that a large number of those persons recorded as being employed in 'other' industries are in fact employed within the service sector, which would embrace the food and drink sector. It is also presumed, that given the limited number of businesses located within the

ward, that the majority of the working population are employed outside of the ward, in all probability in nearby Gateshead or Newcastle.

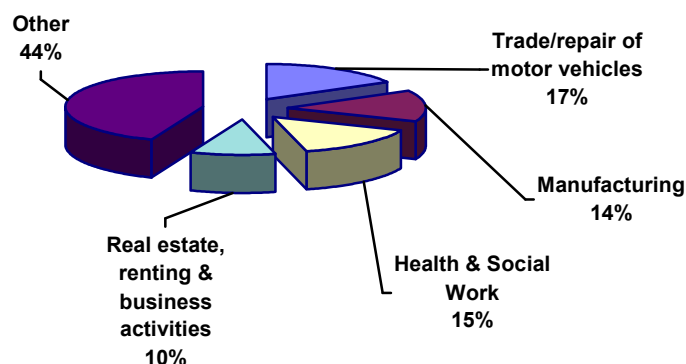


Chart One: Industrial sectors of employment for the residents of the Chopwell & Rowlands Gill Ward.

In October 2008, in Chopwell and Rowlands Gill ward, the unemployment rate was 4.5%, and rising. Although below the 4.7% claimant figure for Gateshead, and the 5.0% of Tyne and Wear, the ward is still ranked equal ninth of the 22

The red kites are an iconic symbol of our region's regeneration

The Right Honourable
Nick Brown, MP
Minister for the North East,
The Journal, August 2007.

calculates scores derived from

Gateshead wards calculated by the number of unemployed claimants (Claimant Count Statistics, 2008). To make a true comparison of individual council wards, the *Index of Multiple Deprivation* assessments of income;

employment; health deprivation and disability; education, skills and training; housing; and geographical access to services. This allows the 8,414 wards in England to be ranked. The most deprived ward is given a rank of one, and the least deprived ward is given a rank of 8,414. (Noble *et al*, 2000). In comparison with other Gateshead wards, Chopwell and Rowlands Gill is not by any means a deprived area, for instance its ranking in the *Index of Multiple Deprivation* is 1,676 (Census, 2001c), as compared to Bede (now Bridges) ward, which ranked at 117 in the same year (Census, 2001a). However, in the national context, of the 8,414 wards in England, Chopwell and Rowlands Gill is badly placed.

Looking at the wider context, there are 354 Local Authority districts in England. As a whole, Gateshead is ranked as 52 (with the rank of one being the most deprived ward) although it is certainly not alone within the North East in suffering social problems (Noble *et al*, 2007). The region faces significant challenges, having lost over 110,000 jobs in primary and manufacturing industries, between 1981 and 1997. It has a high proportion of workless households, with significant pockets of deprivation in Easington, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Sunderland (www.bitc.org.uk). It is worth comparing here the location of other red kite reintroduction schemes and their positioning in England, by local authority, in order to underline the potential added value of the Northern Kites Project in stimulating economic growth, in what is essentially a socially deprived region. By comparison: Leeds City Council (Yorkshire Kites) is ranked at 85; East Northamptonshire Council (Rockingham, East Midlands) is

266; and, South Oxfordshire Council (Chilterns release area) can be found at 333, in the rankings of Local Authorities in the *English Indices of Deprivation Local Authorities 2007* (Noble *et al*, 2007). In relation to the first of these, it is worth noting that the Yorkshire Kites release site was at Harewood Estate, in the 'Leeds North West' ward.



Figure 3: MPs Dave Anderson and Rgt. Hon. Nick Brown watching red kites (Northern Kites).

Unlike the Northern Kites' site, which released its birds on the very edge of urban Gateshead, the Harewood site is located in a large landscaped private estate, situated in a very rural setting, approximately 13km north of Leeds City Centre.

2. Introduction to this Study

In *Leading the Way: Regional Economic Strategy* [RES] (One NorthEast, 2007) One NorthEast [ONE] recognised the importance of a high quality natural environment to the region and its economy. The RES identifies that if we are to improve the economic performance of the region, we need to:

- Increase awareness of the North East of England, and its many superb features
- Attract more leisure and business visitors
- Attract talented people to live and work here
- Attract investment
- Create positive perceptions of the region

In order to achieve this set of objectives it is paramount that as a region, we are able to improve the North East's image beyond its boundaries. Promoting the region's people, places, businesses, assets and quality of life is key to North East England's economic growth. One of the most effective ways of achieving this is to utilise the region's rich green environment and the backdrop that it provides for selling the region. This is well illustrated by the hugely successful '*Passionate people, Passionate places*' campaign, launched in 2004, which was recognised as the World's Best Regional Marketing Campaign at the World Travel awards in 2005 (*Experience*, 2005). This routinely utilises images of the region's natural and built heritage to convey the message that

the region is an excellent place within which to live, work, study, visit and do business.

Back in 2001, the *Valuing the Environment of the North East of England* report (Environmental Resources Management, 2001) identified the environment as one of the region's greatest assets. It highlighted the economic significance of the natural and historic built environment in terms of activities:

- Which aim to protect or improve the environment, such as the manufacture of pollution control equipment;
- Which generate income from environmental good practice; and
- Which depend on a high quality environment, such as many tourism attractions.

Valuing the Environment of the North East calculated that the contribution of the environment to the region's economy was £1.1 billion (Environmental Resources Management, 2001). Analysis has shown that at least 27,000 tourism sector jobs in the North East are dependent on our high quality environment, and the mix of landscape, biodiversity and built heritage, which constitutes it (Environmental Resources Management, 2001).

The natural environment of the North East is clearly already appreciated and recognised by its residents and visitors. The interim results (2005–2007) of the survey by Tourism UK commissioned by the Tyne & Wear Area Tourism Partnership,

which was conducted at the National Trust's Gibside Estate, the Angel of the North and St Mary's Square, Gateshead, indicated that 34% of the respondents, stated that what they most liked about the North East was the 'Scenery'. Noteworthy also were the 29% who rated 'Countryside' and 21% who believed the 'Coastline/beaches' to be the best aspect of the North East. Indeed, 75% of visitors interviewed reported that they would recommend the North East as a place to visit based upon some aspect of its natural environment, whilst 99% of all visitors would recommend the North East of England to a friend for a visit or day trip (Tourism UK, 2008). Clearly, the North East is particularly appreciated for its high quality and striking landscapes, and this natural endowment needs to be utilised to further encourage visitors and thus promote economic growth.

One of the actions growing out of the *Valuing the Environment of the North East* report was the recommendation to support the development of high profile environmental improvement projects in the North East, which would in turn deliver economic, and community regeneration, as well as environmental gains. In this respect, Northern Kites has demonstrated how a charismatic, iconic species can be used as being indicative of a high quality environment and in how this might be built upon to contribute to improvements in the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Notably, although this potential focused upon developing the natural environment, including land regeneration, controlling pollution, and environmentally beneficial farming and forestry, it omitted mention of any scheme which would work in tandem with wild

creatures to spearhead the delivery of environmental and economic benefits.

2.1 The Study: Aims

This study was commissioned by Northern Kites to quantify and document the total value of the economic activity and 'rippled-out' economic benefits that have been associated with the Project since the return of red kites to North East England in 2004.

It is recognised that although the economic benefits of red kites have already been assessed, it is important to stress that studies have been limited to the long-term project in Mid Wales, and latterly the Black Isle, which are by nature very rural economies (Dickie *et al*, 2006). So far, no detailed study has been carried out on the red kite reintroduction sites in England, and certainly no assessment has been made of such a densely populated and urban-fringe area as targeted by the Northern Kites Project.

The rationale underpinning this study is the need to demonstrate how investment in best practice environmental models (such as Northern Kites) can deliver wider social and economic benefits alongside the environmental benefits, which are at the heart of the programme of such works. In the case of this study, the subject matter is the economic benefits and activity catalysed by the Northern Kites Project 2004-2008.

This study report attempts to identify the nature and scale of the economic impacts secured by the Northern Kites Project. It collates data on employment, income and expenditure by the Project, as well as feedback from a range of businesses in the core Project area and beyond. It does this in the form of a suite of detailed case studies and the results of two business surveys. Furthermore, it summarises the results of a number of other surveys on visitor expenditure and business attitudes to red kites, to show how the Project and the red kites have supported business developments and activities, mainly in the lower Derwent valley. The economic impact of some of these activities is estimated using multipliers derived from input: output tables and tourism multiplier studies.

2.2 The Study: Objectives

Underpinning the broad aim of the Study were a set of specific objectives, which were:

- To determine the level of economic activity generated by the return of red kites and collect evidence to demonstrate this.
- To place such evidence in the context of the regional economic agenda by quantifying the Project's delivery in relation to the objectives of the region's key guidance documents on the economy, that is, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Undertake an assessment of the economic value that business people place upon the kites in 'their area'.

2.3 The Study: Methodology

This study employs a mix of desktop studies, surveys and field research. More specifically:

- An analysis of existing relevant economic data sets, which contribute to an assessment of 'Total Economic Activity';
- A review of existing relevant data sets to help quantify and demonstrate different aspects of the economic activity stimulated by Northern Kites, for example, through the Project's discretionary spend; new business created/influenced by the presence of the kites and/or the Project;
- Using existing data, determine the current level of general tourism activity in the core Project area and assess the potential for growth in this, which might be facilitated and supported by the presence of the red kites and the activities of Northern Kites;
- Assessing, from the results of the Social Impact Study into Northern Kites, the perceived economic value, which local people place upon the kites;
- An analysis of the data from Northern Kites' 2008 survey of visitor numbers and spend, and utilising appropriate 'multiplier methods' to indicate the increase in 'general spend' as a result of increased visitors to the area;
- Undertaking a business attitudes survey, using broad-based questionnaires with business in the lower

- Derwent valley and beyond, to determine business perceptions of the Project;
- Conducting a business impacts study, primarily in the lower Derwent valley, to determine what additional business activity has been catalysed or secured because of the Project and/or red kites and to determine how local businesses are using red kites;
 - Assessing the economic benefits of red kites to a range of businesses that have actively used red kites in their work, through the application of questionnaires and follow-up interviews (the results of these form the main case studies);
 - By surveying the Partners in the Project, determining the value of benefits accrued by Project Partners because of the presence of the kites, for instance an increase in membership or improved retention of members;
 - Making an assessment of the capacity of the existing 'servicing facilities' in the lower Derwent valley, and the general tourist infrastructure in the core Project area and from this baseline, develop some indicative models that will highlight how red kites might be factored into supporting a growth of this capacity and the development and refinement of the infrastructure;
 - Assessing how kites have been used in the local housing market to extol the lower Derwent valley as a desirable place to live and promote the selling of properties;

- Considering the economic value of any kite related tourism activities with a view as to how these may be 'transferable', and available to be used by others with other wildlife projects.

All of these activities were conducted in a way that allowed the findings to be informed by the studies into the social value of the kites, and, where possible, to integrate the results with, any other relevant studies conducted by, or on behalf, of Northern Kites, for example visitor surveys

2.4 The Study: Timetable

The work was undertaken during the period July 2008 to February 2009.

The various elements of the study were delivered on the following timeline:

- Overall Economic Impact: June/November 2008
- Desk-top Studies: commencing July 2008
- Business Impact Study: August/October 2008
- Case Study Survey Questionnaires circulated: August 2008
- Visitor Survey Conducted: August/September 2008
- Follow-up Interviews: November 2008
- Analysis and Report: September 2008 to February 2009

2.5 Study Outputs

As well as this report, a suite of other outputs has been produced. These include:

- An executive summary of the report's findings
- A poster presentation summarising the study's key findings
- A downloadable PDF of the report, which will be made available at www.northernkites.org.uk and various website addresses.

3. Results

The results of this Study are presented in five main sections:

1. Direct commercial and business activity, with Case Studies.
2. A summary of the results of the Northern Kites local business surveys (August to October 2008).
3. An analysis of spending by visitors to the lower Derwent valley, based on Northern Kites' 2008 visitor survey.
4. An interrogation of direct Project expenditure.
5. An exploration into Partner-derived economic benefits.

3.1 Direct Commercial and Business Activity

A range of companies and individual business people have worked with Northern Kites, or independently, to offer specific 'red kite' products or services, derive significant commercial benefits from the Project or utilise the red kites, either partly or wholly, to generate economic opportunities. The nine case studies (Case Studies Two to Ten) that detail this below, summarise the sweep of commercial activity from ten different businesses, ranging from micro-businesses to large enterprises. See *Appendix Two* for the Case Study Survey forms used to collate data. In addition, a number of other individuals or companies have used the red kites to develop

business opportunities, and information relating to this is collated in Sections 3.1.11.1 to 3.1.11.4.

3.1.1 Case Study One: The Red Kite Trail: An Exercise in Generating Tourism Business Using Red Kites

Launched in May 2008, by Councillor Mick Henry, Leader of Gateshead Council, the Red Kite Trail is an 18km (11 miles)



Figure 4: Specially designed Red Kite Trail interpretation boards mark the way (Northern Kites).

circular way-marked walking route through the scenic countryside of the lower Derwent valley, which at the time of writing had already become a well-known feature of the valley. In the accompanying interpretive leaflet (see Appendix Five) and Trail pages of the Northern Kites' website, seven businesses along the route of the Trail are highlighted. These act as red kite information points, and their inclusion in this leaflet has prompted uplift in footfall, encouraging other businesses to seek inclusion.

Customers.. mentioned coming because of our name being on the leaflet.

Mark Bewley,
The Happiest Sandwich
Shop in the World
Rowlands Gill

The Trail has been developed as a tourism destination to give visitors an excellent chance of seeing red kites and to support the development of the service facilities along the route of the Trail; for instance, local pubs, teashops, the Derwent Park and Caravan Park and Go North East's Red Kite buses.

A local signage company produced the way-marker signs on the Trail. This company was also tasked with producing a 'Red Kite Trail' t-shirt, which will be available for sale at selected retail outlets in Rowlands Gill in 2009.

As a measure of the popularity of the Trail, by September 2008 Northern Kites had exhausted its initial stock of 15,000 Trail guides/leaflets, which were produced by a Washington-based printer.

The Trail featured in the 2009 regional walking guide published by ONE and, provided the excellent maintenance and promotion already invested in it can be sustained by appropriate marketing, it should provide an important resource for the future. Guided routes offering the opportunity to see kites have proved to be popular elsewhere, similarly contributing to the tourism offer. The Galloway Kite Trail in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, has been visited by 15,000 visitors since 2003 (Dickie *et al*, 2006). It is important to note that the Galloway Trail is not a walking trail, and is instead a 30-mile circular road route, largely around Loch Ken, affording users signed stop-offs to watch kites (www.gallowaykitetrail.com).

In addition to generating business opportunities, sections of the Red Kite Trail are used to deliver elements of the Red Kite Health Walks. These short, but brisk walks, coordinated with Gateshead Council, began in September 2008 and are specifically designed to provide health benefits for their participants, some of whom suffer from cardio-vascular

Great to see people care about the wildlife. Well done!

Muriel Hotz,
Portmac, North West
Australia

problems. In addition to physical exercise, these walks provide wellbeing and de-stressing to both the participants and the volunteer walk leaders. It has been well documented that access to nature has proven positive effects on mental wellbeing (Bird, 2007).

Furthermore, there are commercial benefits to this scheme, as walk participants usually take post-walk refreshments in one of service businesses located on the Trail.

3.1.2 Case Study Two: Large Enterprise Go North East



Figure 5: The distinctive and award winning, Red Kite bus (Go North East).

Beginning as Northern General in 1913, Go North East is now one of the principal public transport providers in the North East region and has an annual turnover of over £70million.

During 2006, as the company was developing its area-branding concept for some of its routes, Northern Kites proposed a red kite-branded bus for the company's Derwent

valley routes (i.e. the 45, 46 and 46A services). This led to the creation of an external kite-liveried bus, named the Red Kite, which has proved to be the most recognisable of all bus brands for the company. Although this special branding cost £2,000 per vehicle, twice as much as the price of an 'ordinary' branded bus, Go North East believes the investment has been more than justified.

In 2006/07, Go North East invested £1million in a fleet of nine brand new buses for the 45, 46 and 46A routes. This was a planned spend to upgrade the vehicles on the route, but it matched perfectly the timetabling of the Red Kite brand launch. The Red Kite service comprises this fleet of nine buses. This service travels through the heart of Gateshead's 'kite country', between Newcastle City Centre's Eldon Square and Consett, via the MetroCentre, approximately every eight minutes in either direction at peak times. An estimated 3,500 passengers per day travel on the Red Kite buses, giving rise to 'overlapping messages of wildlife conservation and sustainable travel', according to Iris Boyd, Go North East's Public Relations Manager.

A series of interpretation panels on the internal friezes of the buses, augmented by plasma screen displays, tell the story of the return of the red kite and bespoke 'Red Kite Timetables' direct passengers to the Red Kite Trail. Additionally, with the support of Nexus (the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive), at selected bus stops adjacent to the Red Kite Trail and at the MetroCentre Bus Interchange, interpretation signage offers further kite information. The launch of the Red

Kite service has been hugely successful in all its aspects. For the company, it has led to increased passenger numbers on the relevant routes, by over 10%, which equates to around 1,000 extra passengers per week.

In monetary terms, Go North East estimate that the Red Kite buses, specifically, have increased their annual turnover by £50,000 and, since the launch of the service, have contributed upwards of £70-90,000 additional net revenue, to date (December 2008).

Subsequent to the launch of the service, the company worked with the Project and local children's illustrator and author, Jules Burnett, to produce the red kite children's storybook, *Let's Go Flying Kites* (see Case Study Ten). Go North East contributed £5,000 for the book's production and donated 400 copies of the book to Northern Kites' Adopt-a-Kite schools. For more information on this education work, see Hills (2009).

In recognition of this work, Go North East has won a number of awards. This includes being named winner in the business category of Northumberland Wildlife Trust's 2008 Conservation Awards for its work on *Let's Go Flying Kites*. The company uses this success in its promotional literature, which is available to bus passengers.

In November 2008, from almost 200 entries from across the country, Go North East's Red Kite bus won the advertising consultants', CBS Outdoor's Marketing Award, at the UK Bus Awards 2008; the premier award in the country for such activity. The judges were impressed by how the branded route

had been successful in winning new customers as well as bringing conservation and the environmental messages into the branding strategy. The judges particularly liked the way this initiative had won the hearts and minds of people of all ages and felt the synergy between the conservation project and the route branding strategy had brought significant benefits to bus users as well as other partners in the scheme. Dave Anderson MP tabled a parliamentary Early Day Motion congratulating the company for its red kite related work (Early Day Motion: 309).

Go North East's collaborative red kite work has led to a great deal of press coverage and media profile for the company, not just newspaper reportage, but also television and radio coverage. For instance, the visit of the Minister for the Natural



Figure 6: Interpretation panels in bus stops along the Red Kite bus route (Northern Kites).

and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MP, to the North East, in October 2008, to launch a pledge of support for birds of prey, received wide media coverage. Significantly, the Minister was transported to the launch event in the Gibside Estate in Gateshead on a Red Kite bus. Such regular and complimentary high profiling, the company estimates, has a value of some £30-40,000 to their business offer.

The innovative Red Kite buses have inspired the launch of an 'Osprey Bus' in 2008 in the Lake District, which runs on a route past nesting ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*). However, unlike the Red Kite buses that uniquely operate as a fleet of

Kingfisher, in conjunction with Gateshead Council, which will support the company's business and address aspects of social need and the environment. The focus for this new branded service, and its appropriate strap line 'dive into the outdoors', is to connect local people with green space and environmental amenities.

In 2009, the company will begin to use specially designed and commissioned 'kite marks' on its whole fleet. These show red kites in various stages of flight to denote the European standard environmental performance of each vehicle; further emphasising the link between iconic wildlife images and environmental quality icons.



Figure 7: Red kite marks denoting bus engine emission levels (Go North East/ Blue River).

buses day-in-day-out, this latter scheme offers a limited service restricted to the summer months.

Following the success of the Red Kite branding exercise, Go North East has launched another 'wildlife' theme bus, the

3.1.3 Case Study Three: Small or Medium Enterprise Wylam Brewery Ltd

In 2000, Wylam Brewery began producing cask and bottled real ales from its plant at Heddon-on-the Wall. It has since won several national and regional awards at beer festivals for its various brews.

After an approach by Northern Kites, and the first successful breeding of red kites in Northumberland, (close to Wylam village) in almost 180 years, during 2007, the brewery began producing Northern Kite Ale. This is a 4.5% volume, ruby-coloured 'scotch' type real ale, replete with commemorative beer mats. The beer is available in both cask and bottle forms from local pubs and retail outlets mainly in northern England,



Figure 9: MPs Peter Atkinson and Dave Anderson enjoying Northern Kite in the Strangers' Bar, Palace of Westminster (Office of Dave Anderson MP).

but it has also been made available in high profile and prestigious outlets in London (see below).

Within two months of its launch in November 2007, Northern Kite Ale had become the brewery's second best selling beer and sales continue to remain strong to the extent that the beer is now a core offering in their range.

From a business perspective, the most important aspect of the brewery's work with the Northern Kites Project, Wylam Brewery believe, is that it has contributed very strongly to the image of the business and offered up new markets. John Boyle, the company's Managing Director, suggests that as the 'extensive marketing expertise was provided by the Project' this 'generated extensive multi-media exposure. The Company's strong association with a flagship conservation project is invaluable for its image in the public eye'.

Since its launch, sales of Northern Kite Ale have generated £43,000 for Wylam Brewery, approximately 15% of its sales income. The quality of the product has led it to being installed as the guest ale to the Strangers' Bar in the House of Commons, leading to an Early Day Motion from six North East MPs, congratulating Wylam Brewery and Northern Kites (Early Day Motion: 1257).

The success of this venture led to the company being commissioned by Gateshead Council (a Project Partner) to produce Angel Ale in April 2008 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the unveiling of the Angel of the North. This new beer has already generated sales of £24,000. Furthermore, possibly because of the increased exposure provided by the Project, Wylam Brewery has been invited to supply the bottled house beer for The Treehouse Restaurant at the Alnwick Garden in Northumberland.

The beer's developing reputation continues to be recognised. For instance, a 'fine-dining' venue in Newcastle, Oldfield's Restaurant (opened in December 2008) now serves Northern

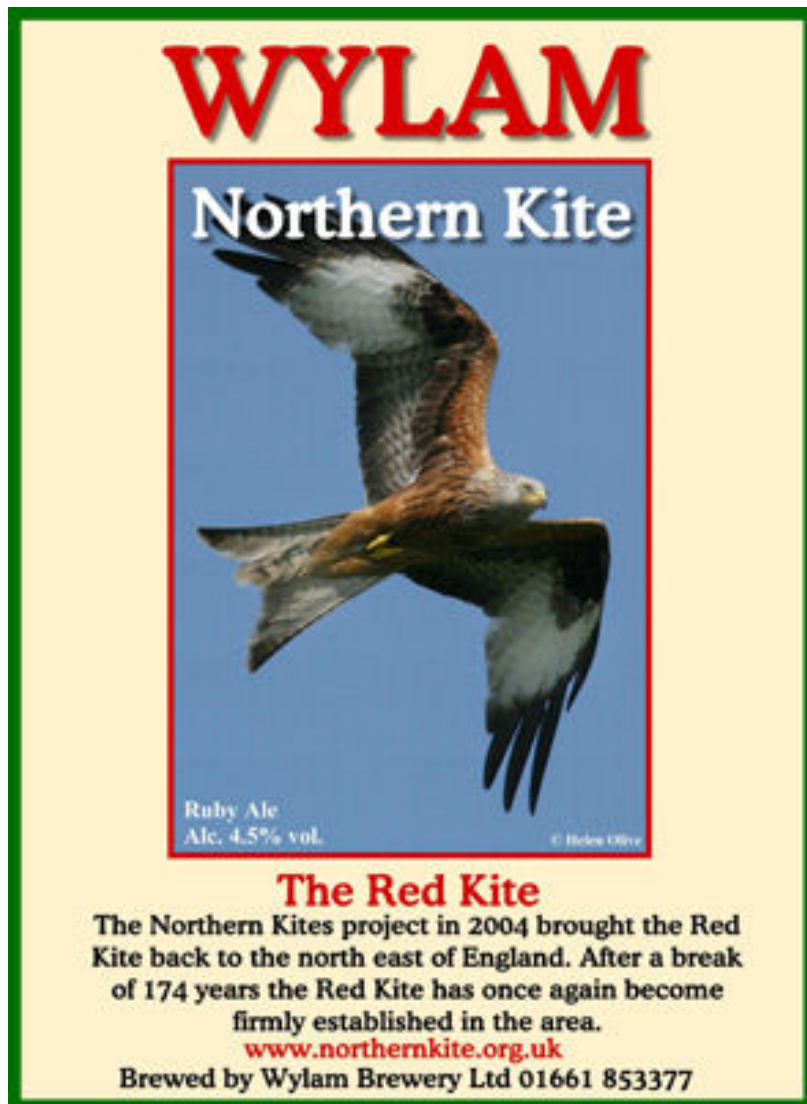


Figure 8: The eye-catching label of Northern Kite (Wylam Brewery).

Kite. Wylam Brewery's conservation related work has continued to grow. As a direct result of its association with Northern Kites, the brewer is working in partnership with the

National Trust to re-brand its best selling Rocket Ale as 'Delaval Ale', as part of the Trust's fund-raising campaign to secure the future of Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland.

The creation of Northern Kite Ale has also enabled the Newcastle based bakery, Thompson's Craft Bakery, to use the beer as an integral ingredient to produce its specialty rye bread, the Red Kite Cobbler.

3.1.4 Four: Small or Medium Enterprise Chromazone

Based in the Team Valley Trading Estate in Gateshead, Chromazone are a high profile business providing large format, digital colour printing solutions to the design/corporate business sectors, as well as meeting the graphic needs of several public organisations. Since 2004, Chromazone has been involved with the Northern Kites Project through their existing relationship with Gateshead Council. They have subsequently provided information packs, promotional banners, and interpretation signage for the Project. This included the production of the information panel for the 'Red Kites in the Red Mall' campaign managed by the MetroCentre and Northern Kites (see Section 4.2.1). Furthermore, when the Red Kite Trail was launched in May 2008, Chromazone

produced the multiple information panels that are located at key points along the Trail.

Although the firm has no direct product association with Northern Kites, it considers that its corporate profile has been heightened and its image has benefited from the association with the Project. In turn, this has strengthened its relationships with other companies and organisations and offered up potential new business relationships. The company



Figure 10: Red Kite Trail information panels produced by Chromazone (Northern Kites)

is unable to quantify these figures, but it has used its relationship with Northern Kites as a case study to solicit further commissions. Additional sales activity because of association with the Project is estimated to be £9,000.

Chromazone fully supports the red kite reintroduction programme as a means of changing people's perception of the North East, and from a business perspective, considers its relationship with the Northern Kites to be vital in offering potential contact opportunities. The direct sales derived from Northern Kites' commissioned work since 2004 is £7,000.

3.1.5 Case Study Five: Small or Medium Enterprise Red Kite Construction Development Ltd.

Based in Newcastle, Red Kite Construction Development was



Figure 11: A distinctive logo for Red Kite Construction & Development (www.redkiteconstruction.com).

founded in 2006, and builds for both the commercial and domestic sector. As a supporter of the Northern Kites Project, Steve Hair, the owner of Red Kite Construction, named his business after the birds, which also feature as his company's logo.

The company has completed a number of property development and commercial construction schemes. One particular project, the aptly named 'Red Kite House' in Dipton, which is located in the Derwent valley, has unobstructed views of the Northern Kites' main project area from a specially designed, upper floor viewing area. This commanding view over a landscape, which encompassed at least 13 red kite breeding territories in 2008, is one of the selling points of this property. This is already attracting substantial public interest. A sports pavilion in Gosforth, built by Red Kite Construction in 2007, also carries red kite designs.

Red Kite Construction has received considerable media attention for its projects. This includes articles in the *Journal* newspaper, and the online daily North East business news network, *bdaily.info*, which carried an article on the red kite house. In 2009, Red Kite Construction intend to build ten houses in Felton, branding them as 'Red Kite Homes', thus raising and taking public awareness of the kites into rural Northumberland.

3.1.6 Case Study Six: Small or Medium Enterprise Express Travel

Express Travel was a long established provider of buses and coaches for private hire in the North East of England, based in the Saltwell area of Gateshead. Express Travel first developed a connection with the Project in 2005, when the



Figure 12: The kite-badged bus of Express Travel (Northern Kites).

company was engaged to provide the transport for a range of red kite safaris staged as part of the Newcastle Science

festival. This soon became an established working relationship, developing through 2005 and in the summer of that year, the company commissioned, and paid for, its own Northern Kites decals for its vehicles, to promote the work of the Project. By 2006, the company was starting to run its own commercial 'red kite safaris', supported by some of the Northern Kites' local community volunteers, who acted as tour guides.

Between the beginning of 2006 and autumn 2007, the company undertook at least ten privately run red kites safaris, showing well over 400 people red kites in the lower Derwent valley, generating an income of over £1,400.

In 2007, working with local PR company Certys Ltd, and a Blue Badge Tour guide, the company began developing a package of red kite and other wildlife-based tour offers. These featured in a number of newspaper articles and in a TV documentary screened in March 2007.

Tragically, the development of this aspect of business was cut short by the premature death of the company owner Ian Robertson, in June 2008. His family subsequently chose to sell the company rather than continue without him.

The range of red kite safaris and activities over the period 2005-2008, earned the company £2,600 from Northern Kites and related budgets. In addition, on at least five other occasions, Express Travel secured additional business

because of its association with Northern Kites, worth over £600.

3.1.7 Case Study Seven: Micro-business Alan Mould – Artist/Illustrator

Alan Mould – Artist/Illustrator, established by artist Alan Mould, produces original wildlife art, as well as prints, wildlife cartoons and commissioned portraits.



Figure 13: Alan Mould's artwork on interpretation boards at Sherburn Towers kite-roost watch-point (Northern Kites).

The reintroduction of the red kites provided Alan with the market to begin trading at a time when he was looking for a starting point after graduating from Sunderland University. Since 2005, Alan Mould has been inspired to produce red kite themed artwork, including paintings, prints and bookmarks. Specially commissioned work has been supplied to the Project and Gateshead Council for display and use in interpretation panels, whilst Thornley Woodlands Centre and the National Trust's shop at Gibside have served as retail outlets for Alan's work.

Alan supplies his artwork, and red kite themed products to outlets within the Project's core area. He is the only major commercial producer of red kite artwork in the local area. The principal commercial outlet for Alan's artwork is the Rowlands Gill craft shop, 'Something With a Difference', which has prominent displays of artwork, cards and other materials bearing Alan's red kite themed work. A selection of work may also be viewed at www1.clikpic.com/amould/

Positive press exposure of Alan's red kite themed artwork, predominantly in the *Journal*, but also in the *Gateshead Herald and Post*, and *Artist Network Newsletter* have raised the profile of his company and offered opportunities for networking. Red kite themed artwork, between 2005 and 2008 has accounted for 55% of turnover, benefiting this small business by £3,000.

3.1.8 Case Study Eight Red Kites and Public Houses

Public houses are often hubs for local communities, and a traditional meeting venue. It was very convenient that red kites were frequently seen from the premises of two pubs in the region, making the development of relationships between Northern Kites and public houses a 'natural one'. Two pubs, the Black Horse at Barlow and the Moorcock Inn at Eggleston, Teesdale, have worked closely with the Project, and have gained commercial benefits as a result.

3.1.8a The Black Horse, Barlow, Tyne & Wear

The car park of the Black Horse public house in Barlow, near Winlaton on the urban fringe of Gateshead has, since September 2004, offered 'kite watchers' a first-class vantage point to observe red kites. Since May 2008, the pub has been signposted in the Red Kite Trail leaflet.

A good working relationship was quickly established with the landlord, Steve Lancaster, who was happy to allow the use of the car park for kite watching purposes.

Specific work has included staging a 'Red Kite Night' (a presentation, displays and information) held in January 2007, on one of the pub's traditionally 'quiet' nights. This event proved so popular that it led to the presentation having to be given twice, with 'standing room only' in the pub, and the

publican opening his kitchens to provide meals. Close to 100 people packed the Black Horse providing at least £500 in takings.

The Black Horse is a regular stop-off for guided walks and has received coverage in newspapers (including a two-page feature in the *Sunday Sun*), on national Radio 4 (*Open Country*, 2009) and on television. Because of the kites' presence, many people who would not otherwise have called at the pub have done so. This includes parties (of over 20 people) booking for Christmas meals at the pub's restaurant in December 2007, mainly on the strength of seeing kites. If the individual spend of each party member amounted to a conservatively estimated figure of £12.50 per head,



Figure 14: Steve Lancaster, landlord of the Black Horse, pulling a popular pint (Kaleel Zibe).

the average spend of such a group would amount to at least £250.

If, over the period since they became established in the area around the Black Horse, the kites have added only a very modest £20 per week, average additional revenue, to the pub's takings (since September 2004), then this would amount to additional takings of over £1,000 per annum.

3.1.8b The Moorcock Inn, Eggleston, Teesdale

Since the beginning of 2007, growing out of the Project's Community Kite Cluster work around Barnard Castle, the Project has worked with the Moorcock Inn. The pub is located in the rural village of Eggleston, some 9km north west of Barnard Castle in Teesdale.



Figure 15: 'Red kite' night in rural Northumberland (Northern Kites)

This work has included the staging of red kite themed ‘family days’, information talks and the pub is now a regular stop for kite safaris and similar ventures. Specific events have included two ‘Red Kite Nights’, with well over 100 people attending. The events were deliberately staged on traditionally quiet nights for the pub, when footfall would have been usually quite low. Because of the promotion of the events, ‘bar take’ was significantly increased and many additional meals sold. A conservative estimate of takings for just these events is £500. Several guided walks have started from the pub. These have been promoted as ‘Breakfast Red Kite Rambles’, the food being provided by the pub kitchen, with consequent revenue benefits. The Project, in conjunction with the Moorcock also arranged several ‘Family Fun’ days, which also boosted takings and heightened public awareness of the pub, as these events were extensively advertised in the Teesdale area.

Importantly, the business believes that the red kite events held at the pub have provided a tool to combat lower turnover and profit caused by the current downturn in the economy. Such a boost to the business is especially significant, given its rural location within the rather isolated community of Eggleston, and the relative lack of further commercial opportunities in this locale. The Moorcock Inn has received local media coverage for its red kite work, and is highlighted as the kite watching location in the Project’s information material distributed in Teesdale.

3.1.9 Case Study Nine Working Wonders TV Ltd

Working Wonders TV Ltd is an independent television production company based at Humshaugh near Hexham. The company produced the long running, architecture series ‘Grundy’s Wonders’, and ‘Grundy’s Northern Pride’ for Tyne Tees and Granada, which starred the popular presenter John Grundy.



Figure 16: ‘Northern Kites’ documentary, produced by Working Wonders (June Atkinson)

In 2006, Working Wonders produced the documentary 'Northern Kites' telling the story of the red kite reintroduction programme and its impact upon local schools, businesses and the countryside. This was narrated by Tyne Tees News presenter, Jonathan Morrell, and was screened in the ITV Tyne Tees area in March 2007. A series of progress updates and news reports were produced for regional news programmes during the production process, March 2006 to December 2007. With an audience, which peaked at 240,000 in the North East, the documentary was the jointly most-watched regional broadcast in England, during the week of its transmission. It had a 20% audience share, averaging 209,000.

In 2008, the documentary was entered in the best factual production category of the Royal Television Society Awards for the North East and Borders, which were held at The Sage, Gateshead. The production of 'Northern Kites' helped the company increase its turnover by £16,000 in the 2006 to 2007 financial year. Footage from the work on Northern Kites has been sold on to a number of other companies and for other uses, including films commissioned for ONE, securing additional small-scale revenues for the company.

3.1.10 Case Study Ten

Let's Go Flying Kites, Children's Storybook

Written by North East illustrator and author, Jules Burnett, *Let's Go Flying Kites* is the first children's picture storybook

about red kites in England and is a good example of new business being stimulated and influenced by the presence of the red kites and the Project.

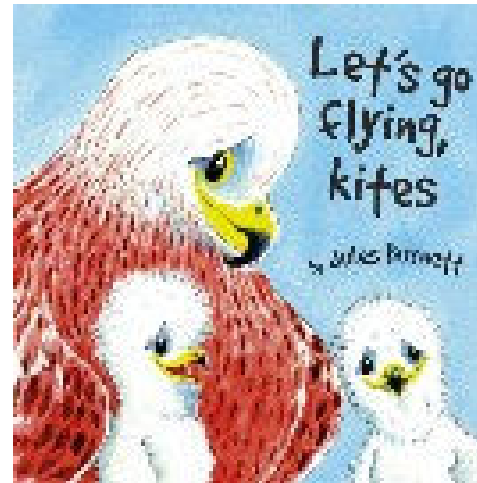


Figure 17. "Let's go flying, kites", written by Jules Burnett

Jules was inspired by the innovative work of Go North East and the Northern Kites Project on the branding of the company's 'Red Kite' bus service. Go North East sponsored the book's production and the company donated 400

copies of the book for use with the Project's Adopt-a-Kite schools across the North East. A benefit to these schools of more than £2,000, at retail price.

Aimed at 3-8 year-olds, this storybook cross refers to the National Literacy Strategy and delivers an engaging story about two cheeky kite chicks, 'Squawk and Squeal', and how people come to see them as they grow up in their nest in Gateshead.

In November 2007, the book was launched at the Seven Stories Centre for Children's Books, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Copies are available at Seven Stories and direct from the author (contact squawkandsqueal@talktalk.net).

Net profit from the book has generated over £5,000 for the author up to April 2008, and provided £2,370 of income to a County Durham printer.

The book is proving popular with Gateshead library users. Since its launch, it has been borrowed 200 times across the Gateshead library network, (Gateshead Library Lending statistics).

3.1.11 Summary Information From Other Businesses

The presence of the red kites, and their high public and media profile, in the North East has afforded a number of other commercial organisations and individuals, increased business opportunities or the chance to adapt the kites to their business needs.

3.1.11.1 Nature-based Tourism Supported by Red Kites

a. Kite Tourism Offer

The potential that the kites have to support the region's tourism offer is highlighted by the fact that the birds are now featured in one of the four ONE commissioned tourism films that can be viewed online (www.visitnortheastengland.com). In further developments in this area, it is possible that the kites will form one of a suite of day trips offered to participants

in the developing cruise trade now operating on the River Tyne.

b. Bird and Wildlife Watching Tours

A number of individuals and companies in the region offer commercial 'birding watching tours' of the area. The chance to see 'Gateshead's famous Red Kites' is used as a promotional offer, to attract potential clients by a number of these, via their literature or websites. For David Brown, this has included North American visitors who were shown kites on Tyneside. Martin Kitching, of Northern Experience Wildlife Tours, has also shown kites to a number of his clients. This included a couple from London who had read about the work of Northern Kites in the *Guardian* newspaper, and then visited the North East to see wildlife specific to the region, including red kites. This amply demonstrates the value of wide press coverage in creating business opportunities.

Importantly, Martin also raises the success of the Northern Kites Project with all of his customers, thus 'engaging the public positively in a relationship with raptors'. Customers of Cygnus Bird Tours, based in the Tees Valley, including visitors from Spain, have enjoyed three trips to the North East since 2006, and all have incorporated the kites directly in the itinerary. This has not only benefited Cygnus financially, but also local hotels, and the Black Horse pub at Barlow. An additional outcome, although non-financial, but highly significant, Kevin Spindloe of Cygnus reports, is that clients gained transferable kite identification skills that they were able to utilise at a later stage when they returned 'home'.

Tour companies known to have used red kites as part of their promotional offer in the North East include:

- Cygnus Bird Tours: Kevin Spindloe.
- Durham Bird Tours: David Brown (Tour Leader)
- Island Holidays: Offering guided wildlife tours of the Northumbria area, featured red kites in their 2008 brochure.
- Northern Experience Wildlife Tours: Dr Martin Kitching.

c. Accommodation

Visitors from outside of the region, and especially those on organised tour trips, wanting to view kites, obviously need somewhere to stay. For instance, Cygnus Bird Tours report that their trips incorporated overnight stays at hotels in Northumberland and Durham, and in spring 2008 a group of 14 falconers chose to stay at Baldersdale Holiday Cottages in Teesdale because of the presence of kites in the vicinity. More specifically, it is known that two guesthouses in the Derwent valley have also taken bookings from customers who came to watch the kites. Indeed, Christine Armstrong, of East Byermoor Guest House and Tearoom, reported that the kites have contributed to an increase in turnover and profits, as guests and tearoom customers 'are able to watch and hear kites from our dining area'.

It is noteworthy that a survey of visitors carried out in the Derwent valley, in August-September 2008, recorded that 7% of visitors came from outside of the 'North East of England'. Indeed, this finding is further substantiated by the same

survey, which found that 8% of visitors to the Derwent valley were staying over in the Derwent valley. Although 25%, of these were staying with friends or relatives, it is significant that a further 74% reported that they were in camping or caravan accommodation. Given the proximity of the Derwent Park Caravan Park to the Derwent Walk Country Park, it is probable that most of these respondents were staying at this site. As the sample size is small, any conclusions drawn from this data should be treated with caution, nevertheless it does point to potential future commercial opportunities for businesses offering accommodation (O'Keeffe, 2009). One local businessman, who has been developing a suite of self-catering properties from farm outbuildings close to Rowlands Gill, is planning to market these using the red kites and the Red Kite Trail during his first marketed season, in 2009.

Local accommodation businesses known to have benefited from the presence of the red kites and the work of the Project, include:

- Angel Guest House, Swalwell
- Baldersdale Holiday Cottages, Barnard Castle
- Cut Thorn Caravan Site, Burnopfield
- Derwent Caravan Park, Rowlands Gill
- East Byermoor Guest House and Tearoom, Whickham
- Gibside Hotel, Whickham
- Marriott Hotel, Gateshead
- Romaldkirk Holiday Flats, Barnard Castle
- Wensley House, Rowlands Gill

3.1.11.2 Photographers and Artists

The striking beauty of the red kites, against a backdrop of local landmarks or rural landscapes, has led to the birds being sought out by photographers keen to capture iconic images. Most are amateurs, however a number of photographers are using red kite images commercially. These include Stephen Fryer and Ray Wilby, who have had photographs of kites published in commercial magazines, such as *The North East Times* and the *Journal Culture* magazine. An image of one of the Northern Kites' red kites formed the centrepiece of the Spring 2007 in-flight magazine of Eastern Airlines, who commissioned local photographer Carl Ingram to provide images of the Project's birds.



Figure 18: Paul Henery artwork (Paul Henery).

An obvious place for red kite photographs is in a publication promoting the region and its wildlife. In this context, Newcastle-based wildlife photographer Kaleel Zibe, has supplied red kite images to the RSPB for publication of an article promoting red kites and other wildlife in the northeast in

Locally the kites have captured people's imagination encouraging them to purchase pictures/prints to adorn their walls.

Alan Mould
Artist/Illustrator

its *Birds* magazine (Allen, 2009). He has since gained further RSPB commercial commissions because of this work. Kaleel's website (www.kaleelzibe.com) highlights the work of the Project and carries his red kite images and associated work for the Project. Kaleel has plans to produce commercially available red kite calendars for 2010.

In addition to the work of Alan Mould, a number of other artists have produced red kite inspired artwork, albeit on a much smaller scale.

These include Paul Henery, Alan Hart, Mike Henry, and a number of artists from the Gibside Art Club and Gateshead Art Society who sell small-scale commissions.

3.1.11.3 Schools and Businesses

Two particular pieces of work underline how businesses have gained economic benefits after being commissioned by local schools engaged in some of the Project's environmental education work. In both examples, these undertakings related to specific 'kite branded' work.

a. Rowlands Gill Community Primary School



Figure 19: A soaring kite, for Rowland's Gill Primary School (Northern Kites).

Northern Kites Project has worked closely with Rowlands Gill Community Primary School on a range of red kite activities since the launch of the Project's Adopt-a-Kite scheme for schools, in October 2004 at the former Rowlands Gill Infant School.

Following the merger of the Rowlands Gill Infant and Rowlands Gill Junior schools, in September 2006, the schools moved to a new single site, and red kites were incorporated into many of the new school's designed elements. These include: a mosaic, a tapestry,

outdoor benches, and a wildlife totem pole, appropriately topped with a red kite. The new school's badge was also designed to recognise the relationship between the school and the birds, and now incorporates a soaring red kite. The badge is used on the pupil's uniforms, bags, school signage, stationery and prospectuses. On 28th March 2008, the school was awarded an Environmental Merit Award for its work in championing red kites.

In total, this re-branding and construction work, in and around the school, generated £30,000 of economic activity. This was

funded variously from school funds, grants and through the Parent Teacher Association. Such work has created commercial opportunities for a range of individuals and companies, including local artists, Melanie Hopwood and Steve Marshall, who created the totem pole and mosaic respectively. Larger items of expenditure included £17,000 for kite-badged uniform orders and £8,000 for the production of the red kite benches used in the school.

b. Fellside Community Primary School, Whickham



Figure 20: Designed and used by pupils, Fellside School's Red Kite Gazebo (Northern Kites).

In 2006, the Rok building company and Warmseal Windows were commissioned to construct a gazebo/summerhouse at Fellside Community Primary School. Artwork was based on the children's ideas inspired by their adopted red kite and the glass artist at Warmseal incorporated these into the glazing. The costs of erecting the summerhouse, with red kite leaded windows were *circa*. £20,000. The presence of the red kites design feature was a material consideration in the school being able to generate the funding to deliver this project. According to Kevin Doran, the head teacher at Fellside School, the facility is very popular with pupils, being used on a daily basis.

3.1.11.4 Property Sales and Promotion

Three estate agents, based in Rowlands Gill, have used the presence of the red kites to support the sale of local properties in a variety of ways. One of them, Halifax Estate Agents, was featured in the *Journal Homemaker* for this activity. Indeed, J.D. Estates suggested that just the presence of the kites and kite-related information offered an excellent point of discussion with

We have found that many prospective clients desire to move into the Derwent valley...

[Northern Kites] information leaflets are very good to hand out to visitors looking for property in the area.

Miriam Haynes, J.D. Estates

potential house-buying clients, and the company always kept a supply of the Project's leaflets to hand to provide information about the kites.

In relation to property, a number of companies are using the kites to market their products, most notably Red Kite Construction (see Case Study Five), but other companies have also used the kites to promote their housing developments. The prospectus for a townhouse development at Axwell Park, at the northerly end of the Derwent valley, undertaken by the DARE Group, plays heavily on the creation of a secret rural idyll, as 'until recently only the herons and red kites knew about this place' (www.axwellpark.co.uk). Furthermore, a farm outbuildings re-development at Barlow is being marketed by Foster Maddison Property Consultants, as 'Red Kite Barns'. The specifications for this particular property extol the virtues of Barlow as a special place to live, and Foster Maddison specifically underline that the community is 'today perhaps most famous as one of the best places to see Red Kites' (www.fostermaddison.co.uk).

3.2 Northern Kites Local Business Surveys

To understand how the return of the red kites may have economically benefited businesses in the Project's core area of the Lower Derwent valley, forty businesses were approached to participate in two surveys. For details on survey design and content, see *Appendix Three* and *Appendix Four*. These surveys sought to determine two things. Firstly,

how local businesses, and business people, felt about the kites and their return to the North East. Secondly, to identify and quantify any benefits derived by local businesses from the kites and the use to which they put them. Between August and October 2008, thirty businesses responded to these surveys (75% return rate). The following sections summarise the results from these surveys.

3.2.1 Business Attitudes Survey

The first of the surveys (*Appendix Three*) was a short attitudinal survey that attempted to determine the value ascribed to the red kites and the work of Northern Kites by local businesses, and then, from a business perspective, how this might offer financial benefits. A summary of the results is offered below.

Q1: From the business perspective, do you think that bringing red kites back to North East England was (A great idea/good idea/okay/poor idea/bad idea)?

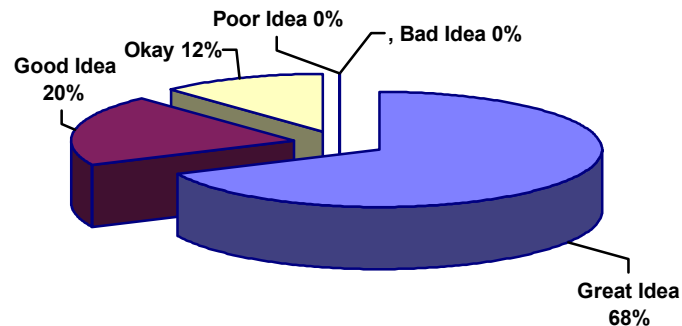


Chart 2: Business support for the red kite reintroduction programme

Support for nature conservation was strong (*Chart Two*). Business support of the red kite reintroduction project was wholly positive, with 26 respondents suggesting that it was either a 'great' or 'good' idea. There were no negative responses.

Q2: From the business perspective, is it your opinion that the work of the Northern Kites Project has contributed to 'regeneration'?

Seventy-four percent of respondents believed that the Project had contributed positively to the economy of the lower Derwent valley. However, analysis of responses from businesses seemed to suggest that they believed the influence of the Project declined away from the core area. For instance, only 13 of the 30 businesses responding believed that the Project could have beneficial economic implications for the North East region as a whole. Such statistics are interesting, and indicate that some businesses, at times, need to see the 'bigger picture' with regard to their business offers in relation to the wider economy of the region.

Q3: Has the work of the Northern Kites Project started to contribute to the economy?

The ability of the Northern Kites Project to contribute to the local economy was firmly recognised by 20 businesses. Again, the potential economic impact of the Project was thought to diminish further a field, with just six respondents believing that the Project might contribute to the broader

economy of Gateshead, although several businesses felt unable to comment here because of a lack of information/knowledge.

Q4: From a business perspective, do you think that bringing back red kites has been very useful/not at all useful?

From a business perspective, the return of the red kites was rated as, either 'very useful' or 'useful' by 23 businesses (*Chart Three*) thus demonstrating the awareness of 'potential' perceived, though perhaps not yet fully realised, of

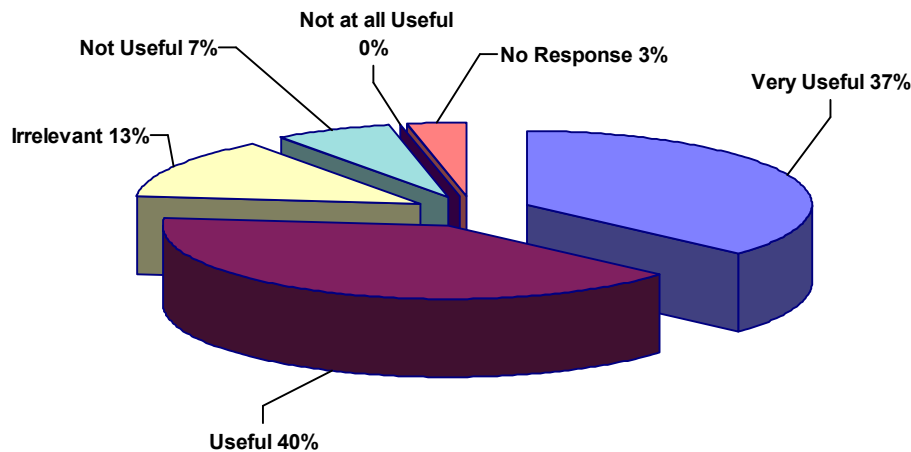


Chart 3: Commercial value of the red kite reintroduction programme

commercial opportunities that might arise out of the red kites or the Project. Some respondents, who clearly supported the

work of the Project, did not realise possible benefits to their particular business need.

Q5: Does bringing back the red kites offer real business potential?

Seventeen respondents (57%) thought the Project had the capacity to offer commercial opportunities (*Chart Four*). Those businesses operating in the food, drinks and retail sector, and could therefore perceive obvious advantage from upturns in visitor numbers, fully believed the Project offered them a financial advantage. By contrast, the weakest responses came from businesses that could see no immediate economic benefits, such as those offering financial services or those in the motor trade.

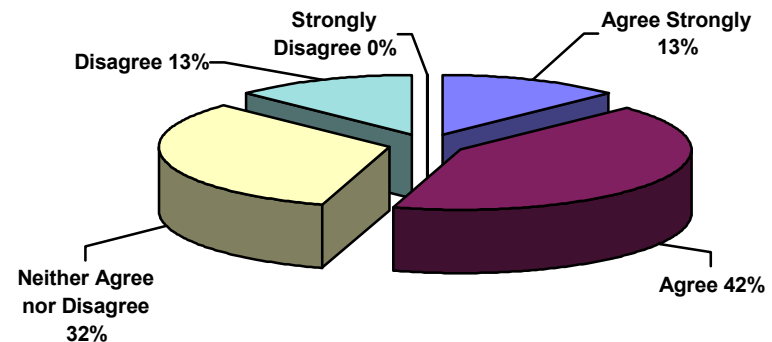


Chart 4: Red kites as a means of offering business potential.

Q6: Would a brand, such as ‘Gateshead’s Red Kite Country’, confer a business advantage?

As a possible marketing exercise, companies were asked their opinion of the business potential of branding ‘Gateshead’s Derwent Valley’ as ‘Gateshead’s Red Kite Country’ (Chart Five). Sixteen respondents (53%) believed this would have a positive impact. There was a correlation with Q5, as responses were very much tailored to the type of business, with those providing food or drink giving more affirmative response than those, say, offering services, such

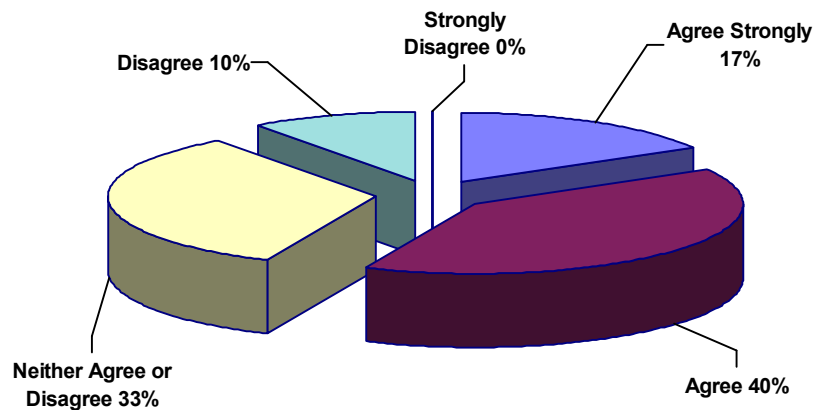


Chart 5: Business support for the brand ‘Gateshead’s Red Kite Country’.

as financial or beauty products. An interesting comparison can be made with the survey of Derwent valley visitors carried out in summer/autumn 2008. These visitors represent the

potential clients and customers of the businesses canvassed in this survey. In that instance, 77% of the individuals responding approved this branding proposal as either ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’. When considering only those offering an opinion, either positive or negative, this percentage approval rose to over 90% (Northern Kites & Lamb, 2009).

3.2.2 Local Business Survey

The second study was a more detailed exercise that asked

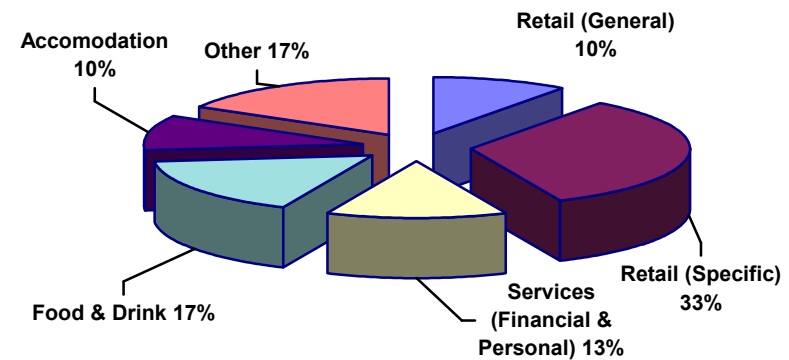


Chart 6: Primary activity of business

businesses to give examples of how they regarded the kites, as assets, and whether the birds conferred real commercial benefits upon their businesses.

Thirty businesses, the majority of which were based solely within the Project’s core geographical area of the lower

Derwent Valley, responded to this more detailed survey, and a broad profile of these companies is offered below, graded by their primary business activity and company size (*Chart Six*).

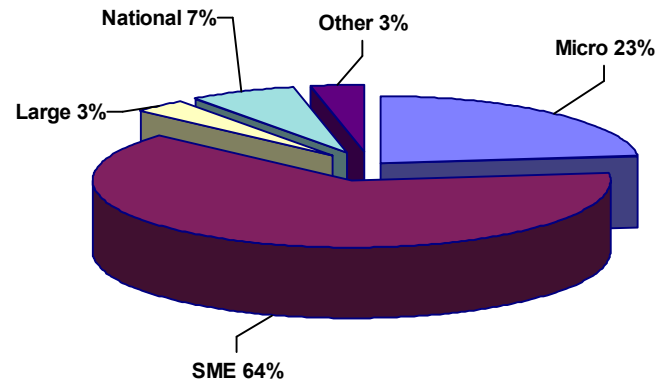


Chart 7: Size of business.

Unsurprisingly, for a largely 'high street' economy based largely in the village of Rowlands Gill, the majority of businesses in this survey were retailers, and fell into the 'Small/Medium Enterprise' [SME] category (*Chart Seven*).

Whilst no business was able to easily quantify the exact financial benefits the kites might have conferred upon it, it is noticeable that eighteen respondents (60%) thought the Project had provided an economic benefit to their business. This was particularly true for those offering food, drink or accommodation (*Chart Eight*), which is strongly underlined by the case studies of the Moorcock Inn and the Black Horse public house (Case Study Eight). It is not surprising that specialist companies, such as those offering financial or

health products, perceived no advantage from the Project. These businesses do not have an easy means of relating directly to the Project or provide an immediate relevant product for visitors, although in reality they may have benefited from some increased footfall (*Chart Nine*).

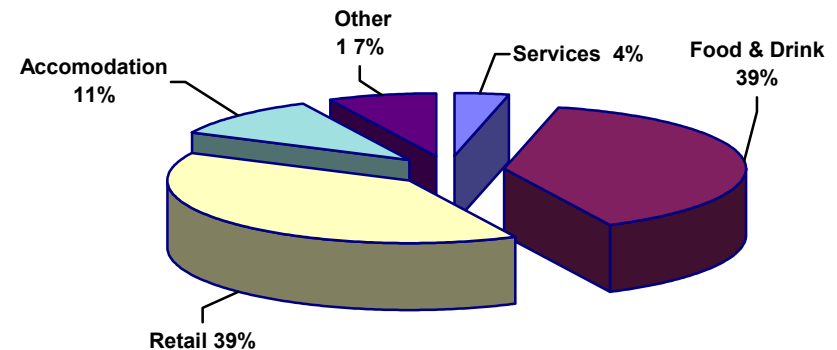


Chart 8: Businesses, by sector, reporting positive opportunities or recognising the value of the Project as a means of increasing the value of the area

Chart Eight identifies the sectors in which the red kites and the Project had contributed the most, in a financial sense, from a reply sample of 30 respondents. Increased footfall, turnover and therefore profits, were reported by seven, eleven, and nine businesses respectively. Converting this gain into exact figures proved difficult for all of the respondents, nevertheless the figures of one company vividly underline a significant financial benefit. The Tea for Two tearooms, in central Rowlands Gill, reported that it had undergone a 20%

increase in turnover and profitability, which in turn helped sustain the business through difficulties, and it was felt that

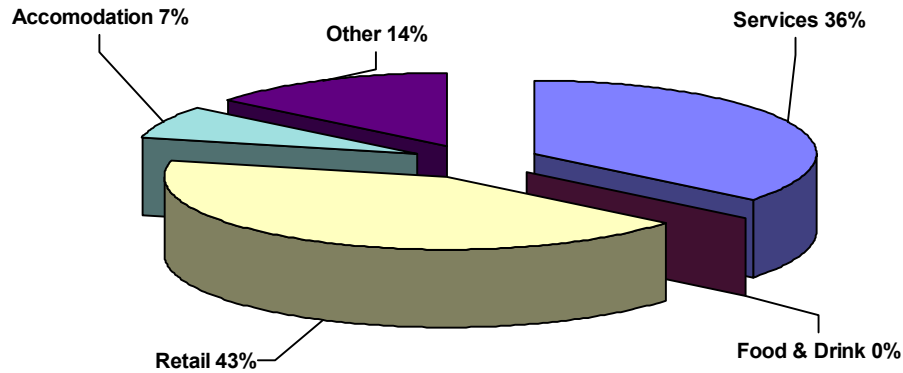


Chart 9: Businesses, by sector, reporting no perceived benefit from the Project.

this was directly attributable to the kites and the work of the Northern Kites Project. Notably Tea for Two is one of the seven businesses featured in the Red Kite Trail leaflet. In an attempt to realise this business potential, four local companies offered specific kite-related promotional activities. For instance, Flower Design florists has designed and marketed 'Red Kite Bouquets' and a Red Kite dried flower 'collage'. On a broader level, there was widespread appreciation that the Project had contributed to adding value to the area by increasing its profile. The public awareness of the red kites, J.D. Estates (estate agents) believe, has

increased the attraction of the Derwent valley as a desirable place to live. There was overwhelming belief from businesses, that even if the Project was not directly benefiting them, it was providing an advantage to other companies in the area.

Specific red kite related products are offered by a number of outlets. For example, the Something With a Difference art and craft shop, sells Alan Mould's red kite artwork as well as a range of 'red kite' related products (bookmarks, key rings, fridge magnets, bottle openers, and Christmas cards).



The shop advertises in the monthly community magazine, the *Rowlands Gill Directory*. This magazine has carried monthly articles about the kites since April 2006, which, as owner Ashley Patchett, acknowledges, have 'helped the magazine become an integral part of the community'. The magazine itself has grown in both quality and size over this period, from a largely black and white 24-page production back in 2006 to, in late 2008, an all-colour,

glossy publication numbering 40-plus pages and containing a number of similar 'community' feature articles, to those trailed by the Project in April 2006.

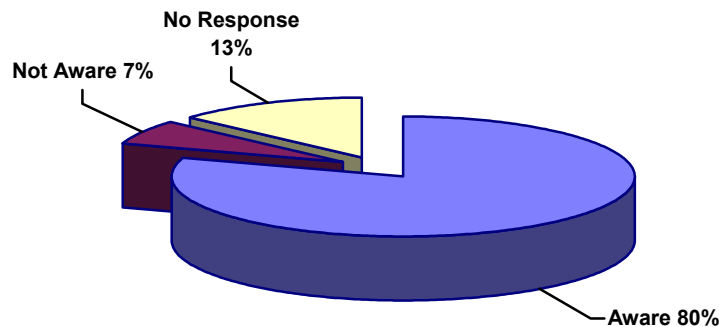


Chart 10: Perceived Awareness of red kites (and kite-related products) among customers

There is clearly a potentiality for the creation of red kite specific business opportunities as 80% of the companies reported that their customers were 'fully aware' of the red kites (Chart Ten).

A comparison with the visitor survey carried out in 2008 is noteworthy. As part of a survey into the social impacts of the red kites, (Northern Kites & Lamb, 2009) individuals were also asked for their views on the economic potential of the kites. Seventy-four percent of respondents believed that Northern Kites had contributed to the economy of the lower Derwent valley, whilst 55% also believed that this commercial contribution extended to Gateshead. Therefore, this would appear to demonstrate expectancy for business-related

opportunities, and a public acceptance for this commercial work.

This awareness offers prospective sales opportunities, and four businesses reported that they planned to offer some form of red kite related product within the next twelve months. It is interesting to compare the results of this survey with the feedback from the survey of visitors to the Derwent Valley (Northern Kites & Lamb, 2009). This illustrated that 89% of visitors were aware of the Red Kite buses, and between 15-19% were aware of Northern Kite beer, the *Let's Go Flying Kites* book and red kite artwork. Even what might be considered 'niche' products, such as the children's book, still had a major impact on the public's consciousness, and therefore a potential to generate sales.

The Northern Kites Project is acutely aware of its duty to work in partnership with businesses. The Red Kite Trail leaflets, produced at no cost to the companies involved, specifically highlight a number of food and drink outlets, which help to service users of the Trail. Thus the 'Happiest Sandwich Shop in the World' has reported increased business from red kite 'watchers', whilst 'Lintzford Garden Centre', is a popular stop-off for Trail walkers wanting café facilities. A number of other businesses expressed an interest in working

Business since the kites arrived...
It's increased quite considerably, to be honest, including Sunday lunches and during the week.
Steve Lancaster,
Black Horse public house
Radio Four, January 2008

more closely with the Project, particularly in relation to the increased footfall generated by the Red Kite Trail. This included the specific advertising of products and the possibility of an observation point at one accommodation site that guests might use. Additionally, the increase in visitor numbers has prompted one retail outlet to plan to be a point of sale for maps of walks and cycle routes, whilst another shop has also envisaged a complete re-branding exercise that would see red kite logos incorporated into the name of the shop. The Project has since contacted all interested parties and offered, where appropriate, free consultative advice and support.

3.3 Spending by Visitors to the Lower Derwent Valley

Iconic wildlife, well marketed and promoted, attracts visitors and visitors, where there is the facility for them to do so, spend money (Dickie *et al*, 2006). This spending can be very significant to the local economy and may benefit a wide range of enterprises in a given area. Today, ever-greater numbers of people are cultivating a more specialised interest in wildlife, birds in particular, and such people visit holiday areas and destinations because of their high biodiversity value or interest (Rayment *et al*, 2000).

It does bring more people into the village.

Kerry Anne Pearson,
Wensley House B & B,
Rowlands Gill

Through both direct and indirect impacts, such activity can help to generate income and support the

employment of local people. The benefits that can be derived from large-scale visitor activity and the resultant spend are, in many instances, larger than those that relate to the direct employment of staff and expenditure on wildlife programmes by conservation organisations in a particular area (Rayment *et al*, 2000).

Visitors to the Derwent valley, and other locations where kites have settled (for example, the Eggleston area of Teesdale), spend money on local goods and services, which helps to support the local economy. For many years, a wide array of organisations have used a variety of surveys and other techniques to assess the importance of features such as biodiversity and landscape to the tourism sector and local economies (Rayment *et al*, 2000).

In the local context, some of these impacts were assessed through a visitor survey conducted by Northern Kites, in the lower Derwent valley (August to September 2008). This included questions about visitors' local spending patterns and about the importance of the red kites in encouraging them to visit the area. From such work, it is possible to estimate visitor expenditures that can be attributed to the presence of the kites themselves (O'Keeffe, 2009).

The detailed visitor survey at a number of visitor access points in the lower Derwent valley drew data from 282 visitors. Using a conservative figure of 250,000 visitors to the lower Derwent valley each year, with an estimated minimum spend of £1,462,800 per annum it is suggested that nearly 11.5% of

this spend, i.e. £168,200 per year is directly supported or contributed to, by the presence of the red kites. Over the lifetime of the project (4½ years), visitor spending is estimated to be £757,000. This figure is derived from the results of the visitor survey, which established that the red kites were the 'main reason' why 4% of interviewees were visiting the Derwent valley, with a further 30% giving the red kites as the 'part reason' for their visit. 'Full spend' was thus attributed to 4% of visitors, and 'quarter spend' to 30% of visitors (O'Keefe, 2009). It is worth underlining, that these figures are a minimum calculation, and calculated solely from visitors to the Derwent valley. The true figure for visitor spending relating to the red kites for the Derwent valley, and further a field, is certainly a lot higher than these figures indicate.

Most people surveyed in the Derwent valley were frequent visitors, 59% visiting, on average, on a monthly basis or more frequently. Just 15% of visitors expected to visit three times or less in a year, therefore the scope for potential visitor spending is extensive (O'Keefe, 2009).

The expenditure supported by Gateshead's red kites is 45% higher than a comparable study carried out in 2000, which revealed that additional visitor spending of £116,000 per year was attributable to the red kite project on the Black Isle in Scotland (Dickie *et al*, 2006) after an eleven year establishment period.

Spending by visitors to the Derwent valley is obviously spread across a number of retail outlets. The majority of visitors

surveyed (73%), including local residents, travelled to the recreational areas of the valley in a private car (O'Keefe, 2009). Therefore, it suggests that service stations must benefit from visitors needing to refuel their cars, and possibly purchasing sundry goods such as food, drink and newspapers.

Food and drink outlets are particularly popular with visitors, as are those selling kite related products. Some specific areas for spend include:

- Cafés: Gibside Tearooms and Larder (National Trust), Tea for Two, Lintzford Garden Centre
- Public Houses: Golden Lion, Run of the Mill, Black Horse
- Other: Happiest Sandwich Shop in the World, Something With a Difference, Thornley Woodlands Centre.

Visitor spending, as the proprietor of Tea for Two has specifically indicated, creates uplift in turnover and profitability. This obviously supports employment. At 2005/06 prices, it has been determined (Dickie *et al*, 2006) that the equivalent of one full-time local job is supported by every £38,650 of visitor spending to an area. Therefore, the financial benefit generated by red kite watchers (based upon a minimum spend calculation) is supporting at least 5.3 FTE local jobs in the local area.

3.4. Direct Project Expenditure

This part of the report is divided into three sub-sections, relating to the direct employment of staff, an analysis of the spending habits of Northern Kites volunteer workers, and the discretionary spend of the Project's budget.

3.4.1 Staff

The following have been directly employed since the inception of the Project in 2004:

- Project Manager (FT 2004-2008)
- Project Administrator (2/3 Time 2004-2008)
- Access & Education Officer (FT 2005-2008); 4/5 time 2008)
- Visitor & Events Officer (FT 2006-2008)
- Seasonal Information Officer (6 months, 2/3 time, 2006,2007 & 2008)
- Educational Information Officer (FT Jan 2007-Jan 2008; 3/5 time 2008)
- Kite Warden (4 month contract: 1/2 time, 2005 & 2006)

This amounts to 3.84 FTEs over the period 2004-2008. The total salary costs for the above staff, are £226,400 gross, since the inception of the Project (March 2004 to December 2008).

In addition, Giedre Tomkeviciute, an economics student from Vilnius University, worked for the Project during the summer of 2007, and received £3,260 funding from the European Union, through the British Council, to undertake a project entitled, *Red Kites: For and About*.

As the majority of staff employed through the Project live within Tyne and Wear, and some within the lower Derwent valley itself, it is reasonably safe to assume that the majority of spending by staff is largely done within the local economy, providing further aid for North East businesses and supporting local jobs. In 2008, the Project employed 4.4 FTE staff. As Rayment (1995) points out, 'for every person employed in nature conservation, their wages are likely to create a further 0.2-0.25 extra jobs in the local economy'. This would indicate that at least one further FTE was supported by staff spend in the local economy in that year.

3.4.2 Spending by Volunteers

Volunteers are people who work for the Northern Kites Project but are unpaid. They have played a crucial role in delivering the aims and objectives of the Project, taking part in a wide variety of work on behalf of the Partners in Northern Kites. Northern Kites volunteers are active on a daily basis on behalf of the Project and their work includes leading walks, clerical duties, public speaking and red kite observational fieldwork. Thus, they not only save the Project vital resources, but also through their promotional work, for instance, volunteers add

economic value to the Project's work with the public. Although volunteers are unpaid, clearly they contribute to local economies by spending money on goods and services around the Northern Kites office base and the Project area when undertaking volunteering duties. The main local economic impact resulting from spending by volunteers is in local retail outlets and on travel-related costs.

Between April 2004 and October 2008, more than 60 volunteers completed over 1,950 volunteer workdays on behalf of the Northern Kites Project. Assuming a daily expenditure of £7 per volunteer, per volunteer day (this is based on a survey of fifteen Project volunteers that work on a regular basis, who were asked to determine their average spend whilst volunteering over a monthly period), it has been calculated that volunteers have spent nearly £14,000 whilst volunteering. This is worth just over £3,000 per annum to the local economy. In addition to this, the value of 'in-kind' volunteer work needs also to be factored in. Using the industry standard figure of £50 per day for volunteer costs, it is therefore determined that the economic value of the Project's team of volunteers, over the period 2004-2008, is £97,500.

3.4.3 Discretionary Project Spend

As well as employing staff, Northern Kites has spent money on a variety of goods and services to deliver the Project. Where this spend was discretionary and, economic, cost

effectiveness, and good procurement practice criteria were met, then this spend was directed wherever possible to local providers. The services and products purchased included construction materials, many different retail products, office servicing, communications, transport and a range of other business services.

This direction of discretionary spending into the local economy has helped to provide income for and support employment in some local businesses. As well as these direct impacts, there will also be indirect effects on the local economy (since a proportion of the receipts of these suppliers will be spent on other local goods and services) and induced effects, as the suppliers' employees spend money locally.

A detailed examination of the Project's procurement history and financial activity, in order to determine its pattern of spend in the local economy was undertaken. During this process, the levels of benefits to local suppliers and businesses were highlighted and overall impacts from generic spend collated.

Companies that have benefited significantly from the existence of Northern Kites and its discretionary spend include:

- Bakehouse Craft Bakery and Greggs North East, Whickham
- Bonsers, Newcastle upon Tyne (optical equipment)
- Chromazone, Team Valley
- Collins' Stampley Moss, Winlaton (timber and builders yard)

SERVICE OR GOODS PROCURED	LOCAL (£)	NATIONAL (£)	TOTAL 5 YR SPENDING (£)
Transport of Kites & Pens	3,670	558	4,228
Kite Collection		7,961	7,961
Kite Husbandry		618	618
Vet Costs	179	15,145	15,324
Kite Food	296	489	785
Kite Security	342		342
Equipment (transmitters, rings etc.)		16,188	16,188
Aviaries	1,003		1,003
Optical Equipment	711	1,895	2,606
Interpretation (artwork info. boards, signage etc.)	9,067		9,067
Promotion (Leaflets, info packs etc.)	14,903		14,903
Staff Uniform		1,026	1,026
Staff Training		500	500
Staff & Volunteer Travel	24,932		24,932
Hotels & Catering	890	266	1,156
Food, drink etc	6,294		6,294
Rent & Service Charges	39,508		39,508
Utilities	4,326	1,283	5,609
Stationery, Postage, Office Equipment, Building Maintenance etc	2,452	9,455	11,907
Total (£)	108,573	55,384	163,957

Table 1: The economic impact of expenditure (discretionary spend) by the Northern Kites Project, March 2004 - September 2008 (actual prices).

- Kwiksave, Fresh Mart, and Co-operative food stores, Whickham
- Lidl UK, Swalwell (optical equipment)
- Run of the Mill and The Golden Lion public houses, Winlaton Mill (events)
- Signs, Signs, Signs (sign manufacturer)
- Travis Perkins, Burnopfield (timber and builders yard)

The annual average discretionary spend by the Northern Kites Project (2004-2008 or 4.5 financial years) is £36,435 per annum. Of this, it is estimated that £24,127 per annum (around 66%) has been spent within the North East of England, the vast majority of it with businesses located on Tyneside or the immediate surrounding area (*Table One*). Indeed, one of the greatest costs is 'Staff & Volunteer Travel', which predominantly relates to fuel costs, spent largely at local service stations. This expenditure contributes to the outputs of a variety of different economic sectors.

Like visitor spending, commercial spending has positive effects on the local economy by supporting jobs, and using the RSPB's job 'multiplier figure' of £38,650 of spend equalling one FTE job, this can be calculated (Dickie *et al*, 2006). Factoring in the detail that two-thirds of the discretionary spend by Northern Kites can be classified as 'local', then it can be stated, with some confidence, that the above levels of financial activity will have supported an additional one FTE local job.

3.5 Partner Benefits

The Northern Kites Project is a Partnership endeavour and the organisations represented within the partnership, i.e. the 'Partners', as well as working in collaboration to deliver the core aims of the Project by supporting it financially (see *Appendix One*) and offering expertise, will also have derived additional 'business' benefits from its work. This sub-section summarises the additional financial and business benefits that may have been accrued by these Partners because of the presence of the kites.

3.5.1 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds [The RSPB]

The RSPB is Europe's largest conservation charity with over a million members and a network of 200 reserves (www.rspb.org.uk). Northern Kites and the RSPB work together to promote their mutual activities, for instance the RSPB has attended five Northern Kite events, such as Kitewatch, for the purpose of recruiting members. Northern Kites has attended 19 public events in conjunction with the RSPB, such as the annual Gateshead Flower Show. The Project is known to have secured at least 48 memberships over the period 2006-2008 for the Society. Furthermore, at least seven RSPB memberships have been generated from Project volunteers, and five memberships have been retained because of the Project.

Over 25,000 'name-gatherer' RSPB leaflets have been distributed in the region, by the Project, which will also have generated additional members for the RSPB, although precise figures are unavailable.

It can be estimated that each member recruited to the RSPB contributes around £100 to the Society during their lifetime of membership, therefore the membership recruitment and retention attributable to Northern Kites, could equate to a value of at least £6,000 to the Society. This assumes the retention of 'made members', year on year 2004-2008.

The Project has generated 'Sales' of red kite pin badges have totalling over £5,500, with generic and specific donations to the Society, elicited by the red kites or the Project, amounting to over £1,000. As regards more substantial financial benefits, such as legacies, which might have originated because of the red kites, there is no evidence to show that this has happened yet. However, by their very nature, legacies can take some time to appear in any system, and it is notable that other, earlier, kite re-introduction projects have attracted legacy income.

Additional benefits to the RSPB have included the wide media exposure of the various Project activities, which in turn, raises public awareness of the Society's work, which is particularly significant in a region that has a paucity of RSPB reserves or retail outlets compared to other English regions.

3.5.2 The National Trust

Since 1895, the National Trust has worked to protect land and buildings of importance or historical interest, and it today protects more than 300 houses and gardens, ancient monuments, nature reserves and parks. The National Trust at Gibside has worked with the Project since its inception, being one of the original rearing and release sites for the red kites. As the ancestral estate of the Bowes-Lyon family, Gibside comprises a suite of magnificent, landscaped eighteenth-



Figure 22: Shotley Bridge Junior School at Gibside to see kites, transported by the Red Kite Bus (Claire Guthrie).

century gardens, a Palladian Chapel, the Column to Liberty and Banqueting Hall, as well as the ruined Gibside Hall. The red kites were used by the trust in the application for a grant for the construction of a wildlife-watching hide, which recently opened as an added attraction. Gibside is one of the more popular visitor attractions within Gateshead, attracting over 105,000 visitors in 2008 (Gibside visitor figures).

Although the 'kite' effect upon National Trust membership is difficult to quantify, statistics collated by the Project indicate that at least 28 National Trust memberships were secured over the period 2006-2008 during 10 Northern Kite events at Gibside. These memberships cannot all be directly attributed to the presence of the Project, but it can be said, with some confidence, that Northern Kites will have helped to achieve at least some of these. In addition, the Project is aware of 15 National Trust memberships secured at the 2006 Gateshead Flower Show because of the kites, and a further four Project volunteers and staff have joined the Trust because of Project associations. Northern Kites has also delivered 20 events at other National Trust properties, and although no statistics are available for recruitment, the increased visitor numbers probably led to higher membership enrolment on these days.

There has been a general rise in visitor numbers to Gibside since 2003-04, and the actual presence of red kites at Gibside, has been accompanied by a 58% increase in membership recruitment on-site. For instance, in 2003-04, 455 members were recruited, by 2007-08 this had risen to 719. The presence of kites at Gibside might have contributed to this increase in numbers. Over the same period, National



Figure 23: Red kite activities at the National Trust's Wallington Hall (Northern Kites).

Trust properties at Wallington and Cragside (where kites have only been seen intermittently) also witnessed substantial increases in memberships (54% and 49% respectively), it is noteworthy that Gibside enjoyed the greatest rate of recruitment increase (National Trust, Gibside). Although people join the Trust for many reasons, the Trust believe that red kites offer a useful 'selling' tool and 'conversation opener' in the effort to recruit members. At Trust properties elsewhere

in the North East, such as Wallington, Cragside and the Farne Islands, it is known that staff regularly use the kites to 'sell' the benefits of membership.

The Gibside Larder (food and gift shop) sells local produce, including Northern Kite beer, red kite artwork, and gifts such as red kite toys, books and badges. Sales of these red kite related items have totalled £2,300 over the period 2007-08. School visits to Gibside to undertake 'red kite' related activities have also contributed significant funds, by purchasing badges and enrolling as National Trust Education Group Members. Red kites, the Trust acknowledge, have helped raise Gibside's profile across the region, via regular press exposure, and these frequent media appearances have led to increased visitor numbers, for instance in the aftermath of the Working Wonders television documentary in 2007. The Trust has also capitalised upon its relationship with the Project, and successfully applied for grants to fund optical equipment, and craftwork materials.

There is a very strong working relationship between the Gibside National Trust property and Northern Kites. This has generated at least £3,700 of sales and income for the Trust, with further substantial income being derived from the increase in attributed membership recruitment. This demonstrates a clear business advantage for an organisation, whose main income is derived from 15 million visitors to its properties and its 3.56 million members (www.nationaltrust.org.uk).

3.5.3 Gateshead Council

Gateshead Council is a unitary local authority, administering a borough on the south bank of the River Tyne covering an area of 136 square km and serving a population numbering around 200,000 (www.gateshead.gov.uk). Half of the borough is rural, and within this area is the DWCP, which is owned and managed by the Council. This site has a mix of natural



Figure 24: Visitors from the Netherlands enjoying the DWCP (RSPB).

woodlands, meadows, wetlands, riverside, and reclaimed

industrial sites all linked by the Derwent Walk, the track-bed of the old Derwent Valley Railway, and criss-crossed by public footpaths. Two visitor centres, at Swalwell and at Thornley Woods near Rowlands Gill, offer facilities for visitors, and the Thornley Woodlands Centre is a point of sale for red kite artwork and other gifts. The presence of the kites has generated increased visitor numbers to the Thornley Woodlands Centre in particular. A conservative estimate of spending on kite-related products, in 2008 alone, is £250. Other retail facilities managed by the Authority sell red kite related products, but sales figures were not available.

I well remember the day in 2005 when I was invited to release a young kite into the wild for the first time. It was a thrilling experience.

Through this trail, everyone can enjoy that same thrill of watching what must be the northeast's greatest and, thanks to the Trail, most accessible wildlife spectacle.

Councillor Mick Henry,
Official opening of the Red Kite Trail
The Journal, May 2008

In the DWCP, Gateshead Council, supported by the Project, has held a 'Kitewatch' event each summer since 2006. This offers visitors an excellent opportunity to see breeding red kites, with experts and volunteers assisting and interpreting. The event is very well publicised, for instance, in Gateshead's bi-monthly *Council News* magazine, which is delivered to all Gateshead households, and helps to attract considerable

numbers of visitors to the Derwent valley. Over the first two years, Kitewatch attracted more than 20,000 visitors. In the area tourism partnership brochure for 2009, the Derwent Valley is highlighted as a place to get 'back to nature' and see 'Rare Red Kites', as is the Red Kite Trail (One NorthEast, 2008). Such an increase in visitors to an essentially woodland recreation area, also helps Gateshead Council to work towards the vision outlined in its *Open Spaces Strategy*; 'People who enjoy and contribute to attractive, accessible and safe open spaces, that enhance their quality of life and help to build sustainable communities' (Gateshead Council, 2008).

Gateshead Council has accrued many benefits from the reintroduction of the red kites, many of which remain unquantifiable in purely economic terms, but have just as much value to the local authority as increased visitor numbers. Increased numbers of people to the countryside also bring about a greater appreciation of nature, and with this a pride in local amenities and the environment. This can help reduce the amounts of vandalism and other anti-social activity, which can translate into positive financial benefits for Gateshead. Equally, by educating young people in schools, a similar appreciation of iconic wildlife is developed, which results in a generation of Gateshead schoolchildren having a better understanding of their natural environment (Hills, 2009).

Any publicity relating to the kites, whether in a local or national context, brings about positive exposure for Gateshead and its Council, especially for an area that is traditionally viewed as generally urban, and lacking in truly iconic natural scenery or

wildlife, unlike Northumberland's coastline or National park. In January 2009, the Project was the subject a thirty-minute 'Open Country' programme broadcast by Radio 4. This made the point of beginning in an area not normally associated with wildlife (the MetroCentre) and then 'toured' Gateshead's lower Derwent valley (*Open Country*, 2009). Such media coverage of Gateshead, helps shift public perceptions, certainly on the national stage, about the North East as a whole.

3.5.4 Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission is the government agency responsible for the protection and expansion of Britain's forests and woodlands. It is the largest land manager in Britain and the biggest provider of outdoor recreation (www.forestry.gov.uk). Managed by the Forestry Commission, Chopwell Woodland Park is a 360-hectare mixed woodland in the lower Derwent valley. The absence of retail outlets or any entry fees to the Chopwell Wood site makes it difficult to calculate any quantifiable financial benefits derived from visitors. Nevertheless, the Commission suggest that in the period 2004 to 2008 visits to Chopwell Wood increased, which they believe may then translate into increased spend in the local economy.

3.5.5 Northumbrian Water

Northumbrian Water Limited serves a population of 2.6 million people in the North East of England with water and sewerage

services (www.nwl.co.uk). Although the company offers no facilities that can directly benefit visitors to the Derwent valley, by supporting the Project the profile of Northumbrian Water has been markedly raised and has informed its corporate responsibility reporting mechanism.

3.5.6 Natural England

Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings (www.naturalengland.org.uk). The work of Natural England has 'benefited' from the return of the red kite, in that the project has demonstrated the above elements of its Strategic Direction. Notably, the successful reintroduction of red kite (a major enhancement to the biodiversity of the Region), encouraged economic activity, and increased the sense of wellbeing of the local community through interacting with kites.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The fourth section of this report discusses the outcomes and findings of this study of red kite related economic activity. It is in three sections:

1. Summary of results and findings.
2. Summary of marketing and attracting visitors.
3. Potential for new red kite related economic activity.

4.1 Summary of Results and Findings

The results of the Case Studies and the Business Surveys, combined with the actual financing of the Project itself, confirms that the Northern Kites initiative has had a marked economic effect. Although the majority of surveyed businesses may have been unable to offer any explicit financial figures to fully calculate the true financial value of the Project to them, it has been possible, from data available, to offer the statistics below.

4.1.1 Total Economic Activity

Since the inception of the Northern Kites Project in March 2004, a conservative figure of £1.73 million total economic activity has been generated by the workings of the Project. This can be split into four distinct areas:

1. At January 2009, the actual Project costs, including staff salaries and grants, were approximately £610,000. Projected lifetime costs, at 31 July 2009, are estimated to be *circa.* £760,000.
2. The net worth of the 'in-kind' work by the Project's team of volunteers (2004 to 2008) was estimated to be £97,500.
3. Visitor and volunteer spending was estimated to be £771,000, over the period 2004 to 2008, inclusive.
4. The value of funds generated by the Project, as reported by local businesses, agencies and individuals, was calculated to be £254,000.

There are some caveats to these figures:

1. With the exception of the Project costs, all figures are estimates. The majority of survey respondents were unable to give precise figures of red kite related sale activity.
2. These are also minimum estimates. They do not take into account the very probable increased sales received by businesses because of the Project. Many businesses reported definite increases in sales because of the Project. Such uplift in sales, particularly those linked to the Red Kite Trail and selling food and drink, would therefore see the above figure increasing further.
3. There is likely to be some duplication of sales figures, albeit very small. For instance, sales estimates for Alan Mould artwork were reported by a number of retail

outlets, and these receipts were likely to be included in the cumulative figure given by the artist himself.

4. Funds generated by the Project also include the value of RSPB memberships.

Although there is some, relatively small, potential double accounting in portions of the reported income, it is important to stress that the Project has generated genuine new sales and business opportunities that could easily be exploited. These fall into two categories; businesses developing or taking sales opportunities opened up by the Project; and those businesses that have gained income as a direct result of the Project's discretionary spending.

Two case studies exemplify the first category. Wylam Brewery developed the Northern Kite Ale in response to the appearance of red kites breeding in Northumberland. The Ale has since gone onto become the company's second best selling beer, and generates 15% of its sales income, as well as opening up new opportunities for the development of further products. In addition, the 'red kite effect' helped the Brewery to its best year ever in 2008, against steeply falling performance by the brewery and pub sector more generally. Such hard data is unavailable for many of the businesses approached, but some, for example Tea for Two tearooms, reported a 20% uplift in profits that were attributed to the work of the Project, and the advertising provided by the Red Kite Trail.

Wherever possible, the Project has sought to direct its spend towards local businesses. Chromazone produced interpretative material for the Project, leading to £7,000 of income for the business. They also gained further commissions from this work, leading to additional sales activity of *circa* £9,000 and the use of its relationship with Northern Kites as a good practice case study to solicit further work. A further example of businesses directly benefiting from the Project was Chaplin's Restaurant and the Run of the Mill public house in Winlaton Mill, which has hosted several Northern Kites' activity launches, such as those for the Red Kite Trail and Northern Kite Ale, and entertained visitors, including MPs and international guests.

The Kite product was a part of a more general increase in positive media exposure and recognition of the quality of our products in general. This has resulted in a record year for turnover and record-breaking sales month on month across the whole range of our products.

The Northern Kites Project spin off was part of the drive of this growth.

Matt Boyle, 2008
Wylam Brewery

4.1.2 Employment Effects

One effect of this financial input to the economy has been to support jobs. In total, it is estimated that 12.5 FTE jobs have been supported over the lifetime of the Project. This includes 5.64 FTE jobs derived directly by the Project in the form of its own staff, their spending, and the Project's discretionary spending. Visitor spending and other income generated by the Project is estimated to have supported a further 6.86 FTE staff. Again, it is worth underlining that these are minimum calculations. It demonstrates the valuable contribution already made by Northern Kites specifically in stimulating economic growth and employment, and confirms that nature conservation activities can, and do, create jobs. Such job creation is to be welcomed in an area such as Gateshead, which has areas of high unemployment and attendant social deprivation.

4.1.3 Costing the Northern Kites Project

Has the Northern Kites Project delivered value for money? Public and private sector financial support is usually required for projects that provide conservation and employment benefits, as such schemes are unlikely to be stimulated by market forces alone. The total projected operational costs of the Project (staff costs, Project spending, office upkeep etc) from March 2004 to July 2009 are £610,000. As it is estimated that the Project has had the effect of stimulating an additional £1.1 million of financial activity over the lifespan of the Project,

it can be stated, with some confidence, that the Project has been a financial success.

The Project has always sought cost effective solutions to deliver its objectives, and some of these have been extraordinarily successful. By encouraging innovation, collaboration and networking amongst local business of many types and sizes, 'win, win' solutions have been engineered. A case in point is the development of the Red Kite Trail. This relatively new and valuable complement to the region's tourism offer was created without the need for a major investment of resources. Total development costs, which were largely borne by Northern Kites, for this Trail were in the region of £6,000 (not including staff costs). With the development of the Red Kite Trail in western Gateshead, the Project has been attempting to 'improve the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and foster competitive and sustainable rural businesses and thriving rural communities', which are key elements of the Rural Development Programme for England (Defra, November 2007).

4.2 Marketing and Attracting Visitors

The management of nature conservation can have a significant impact on local economies, especially in the lower Derwent valley. It is conservatively estimated that 250,000 visitors per annum come to this area. A survey in 1992 by Gateshead Council (Gateshead MBC, 1992) covering the main countryside sites in the lower Derwent valley, and

elsewhere in Gateshead, concluded that 79,500 visitors per annum accessed the DWCP via its two main access points (the Swalwell Visitor Centre and the Thornley Woodlands Centre). This survey further estimated that at least 140,000 visitors per annum visited the main countryside sites in the valley, i.e. Chopwell Woods, the Gibside Estate and the DWCP. Since this survey, the numbers visiting Gibside have increased by over 400% and Derwenthaugh Park, now the busiest visitor access point in the lower Derwent valley, has come 'on stream' (O'Keefe, 2009). The potential for the development of visitor facilities in the valley that have the ability and capacity to further increase the numbers of visitors to the area is considerable. Spending by visitors, who come to see the kites, occurs throughout the year, helping to extend a somewhat underdeveloped tourism offer on the edge of urban Tyneside.

Nature conservation management practices, which are purely land-based might be considered to be enacted at the expense of other beneficial economic activities. It is important to recognise that the return of red kites to the North East region has happened without any negative impacts, other than the original investment costs of the programme of works. The presence of red kites does not reduce the economic benefit of any other alternative land uses, such as agriculture and forestry. Just the opposite, from the economic perspective it has enhanced almost all other land use activities and provided additionally, or potential added value, to almost all aspects of

the local economy.

4.2.1 Marketing

Properly promoted, spectacular birds such as red kites can attract considerable attention from the media. This, in turn, stimulates an interest from the public, who want to visit sites where they can see the wildlife they has heard about. The value of such multi-media coverage, in particular that associated with the return of red kites to the North East region, is considerable. The number of newspaper articles alone, that have reported some aspect of the Project's work or a company's relationship with kites, is at the very minimum, in excess of 350 since the inception of the Project.

As an example of a typical period's press coverage, in November 2008, seven separate press articles carried news of:

- The Go North East Red Kite Bus branding award;
- The marketing of the Red Kite Barns at Barlow;
- Kaleel Zibe's photography work;
- The Project's continuing Adopt-a-Kite school initiative.

To this considerable press exposure, can be added exposure via web page articles, television and radio stories (both local and national stations). The Radio 4 'Open Country'

Local retailers benefit from footfall in customers through new visitors to the area.

Ashleigh Patchett
Rowlands Gill Directory

programme, broadcast in January 2009, concentrated on many aspects of the Project's socio-economic work including the Red Kite buses, the Black Horse pub, Northern Kite ale, the kite installations at Rowlands Gill Primary School and the MetroCentre's 'Red Kites in the Red Mall' work, (*Open Country*, 2009).

This latter initiative is an excellent example of how business can work in innovative ways to support wildlife and the environment. The 'Red Kites in the Red Mall' project between Northern Kites and the MetroCentre saw the unveiling of a large (3m by 3m) banner in June 2007, featuring a striking image of a red kite, situated close to the pedestrian entrance of the Red Mall in the MetroCentre. This has the potentiality of reaching a truly massive audience, as the MetroCentre has recorded 25 million people-visits per annum. This feature is supported by information panels, located close to the Red Mall Customer Services Desk, which relate the story of the kite reintroduction programme in Gateshead. Literature about Northern Kites and directions for sites to see kites are also available.

The Project has directed a multi-layered approach to promoting an awareness of the presence of the kites.

Permanent red kite interpretation material can be found at venues across Gateshead and beyond, such as the well-used Red Kite Trail in the Derwent valley, and the large interpretation panels in Barnard Castle Tourist Information Centre and the Cheviot Centre at Wooler in north Northumberland. The Red Kite buses add to this range of promotional materials and on a daily basis take the message and image of the red kites from the very heart of central Newcastle, through urban Gateshead and the busy MetroCentre, into the Derwent valley and on into Consett. Furthermore, Northern Kite ale takes the red kite branding into public houses, in to the private sphere of people's houses and out of the North East. All of this publicity material is seen, by thousands of people each day. This might then encourage people to experience the kites for themselves or, at least, subconsciously, absorb the messages regarding the kites, conservation and attendant products.

It's the wider element actually, clearly it's a great symbol, a fantastic symbol when you see them flying in the sky, people immediately associate with that, but its actually the other issues, that underpin the environmental issues, which are really crucially important. It's a symbol that things are maybe getting better in the area, which is enormously helpful.

We, ourselves in the Centre spent a huge amount of time and trouble reducing energy consumption....so its critically important to the area, I believe to get the message across. This is a great way of getting an unusual message across, it's great symbolism.

Barry Turnbull,
General Manager MetroCentre
Radio Four, Open Country, January 2008

It is difficult to estimate the exact numbers of people who might see these messages, but a calculation based on the Red Kite bus timetable gives some indication of the scale of this messaging tool. A Red Kite bus leaves or enters Eldon Square Bus Station on average 712 times a week or

approximately 37,000 times a year (www.simplygo.com/timetables). Given its route through central Newcastle, stopping at the Central Station and then travelling across the busy Redheugh Bridge, these buses are seen by thousands of people each day, in Newcastle City Centre alone. If only 50 people took note of the red kite images/message on a single bus on its journey through Newcastle, and then perhaps a further 25 noted the same bus on its arrival in Consett or along its journey, this would equate to 2.77 million 'people registrations' of the Red Kite bus, and consequently the red kites, per annum. Such immense delivery of these messages is further augmented if we consider that the Red Kites buses carry 1.27 million people each year, who are exposed to the internal freezers and storyboards.

Quantifying the worth, in purely economic terms, of this press profile and coverage to businesses and the region is difficult, although it is important to stress that the majority of the press coverage gained by businesses has been facilitated by Northern Kites and has cost the benefiting businesses little or nothing. Furthermore, for some of this press coverage, such as the Open Country programme, this has been the result of the media approaching Northern Kites in order to produce positive news stories. Indeed, it is worth reiterating that the increased profiling of the 'product placement' of the Go North East branded buses alone, has been valued at £30-£40,000 by this company. Furthermore, it is also important to stress that although this company has invested an extra £9,000 in branding part of its bus fleet as 'Red Kites', and also funded

the production of the *Let's Go Flying Kites* children's book, its return from this relatively small extra outlay has been £70-90,000 of additional net revenue to date. This represents an excellent, cost effective investment and is of immeasurable value in improving the image of the company. Certainly, it is doubtful whether many of the SME companies that have been surveyed by this report would have been able to attract the media attention or undertake the wider publicity campaigns, without the work of Northern Kites and the profile of the red kites. It is important to note that all of this publicity generated has resulted in only positives, and no negative outputs have been identified.



Figure 25: Seen by thousands of shoppers each day, Red Kites in the Red Mall of the MetroCentre (Kaleel Zibe).

4.2.2 Attracting Visitors

One particular marketing strategy that has not been used, so far, is the branding of the Project's core area as 'Kite Country'. Such area branding has been used successfully in other parts of the region. For instance, South Tyneside has taken advantage of its setting for many of Catherine Cookson's best-selling novels, and used the label 'Cookson Country' to promote tourism, including a summer 'Cookson Country Festival' (www.southtyneside.info). For the red kites, in Wales this particular strand of marketing has been very successful since 1994. 'Kite Country' was launched with the intention to promote both wildlife viewing and develop a distinctive identity for rural Mid Wales (Rayment, 1997).

Customers like the kites and are always willing to talk about them

Steve Hair,
Red Kite Construction.

A survey of businesses and the public provided firm approval for the idea of some form of area branding utilising the kites. Certainly, the majority of businesses surveyed by the Project believed that this would confer a commercial advantage upon them and the area. Already some business, such as those in the housing and tourism sector have used the kites to market their products, the region or to 'sell' the lower Derwent valley as a desirable place to live or stay. Thus, there is an appreciation that the kites portray a positive image, which in turn can be used commercially to promote a business and its products. Indeed,

as Stephen Wilson of the Rowlands Gill Barber's Shop said, and others implied, the work of the Northern Kites Project has led to 'people talking about the area', and thus firmly elevating the profile of the Derwent valley.

There is substantial public support for the concept of such branding, and the main positive aspects of developing a branded 'Kite Country' identity in the North East would be economic and strategic.

The target audiences for this work are mainly outside the region and any benefits accrued would be in the long rather than short or medium terms, but as the success of the Welsh branding initiative shows, the use of a totemic species provides not only identity, but real economic growth (Dickie *et al*, 2006). The cost of this would be significant, for instance in road signage, and the process would require an integrated approach that refers to and complements the Regional Tourism Strategy, especially to 'enhance and conserve the region's natural, heritage and cultural assets' (ONE, 2005). New investment would be required to produce regionally relevant literature and this initiative would require considerable support, both in principle and tangible forms from both Government Office and the Regional Development Agency. Despite this and given the support from businesses and the public, there may be considerable merit in further exploring such a branding scheme for the lower Derwent valley.

It's one more subject of interest that could sway a decision on where to stay.

Kerry Anne Pearson,
Wensley House B & B,
Rowlands Gill

Northern Kites has supported the relevant Area Tourism Partnerships to deliver a series of business generating marketing campaigns. A marketing programme, by the One North East Tourism Team extolling the tourism attractions of Newcastle-Gateshead, features red kites as exciting wildlife to be seen in the lower Derwent valley (www.visitnortheastengland.com). Activity will complement regional image campaigns, helping to build awareness and interest in North East England. This will be supported by high profile national press activity and tactical web campaigns. Emphasis will be placed on generating business through the Desti-ne 'e-business' platform.

The Project's high level of media exposure, and widely distributed interpretation material, has created positive images of the birds and plays a vital role in stimulating visitors to see red kites as part of the tourism experience. The example of the Red Kite bus, amply demonstrates the potential audience for such messages, which now have the potential of reaching millions of people per year.

4.3 Potential for New Red Kite Related Economic Activity

Northern Kites' location in the west of Gateshead, centred on Gateshead's Derwent valley, close to areas of heavily populated Tyneside and areas of Major Employment, (ONE, 2007) such as the Team Valley Trading Estate and MetroCentre, means that there were substantial opportunities

to undertake imaginative red kite related activities in those areas. Certainly the evidence of businesses offering food and drink to visitors and residents alike, suggests that the Project has offered clear economic opportunities in certain fields, with scope for expansion.

4.3.1 Tourism and Red Kites

A number of companies offer viewing trips to see red kites, and all report that visitors have been satisfied with their experiences. Kite viewing is an all year round activity, therefore it can extend the tourist season. Companies that offer red kite viewing do so from a broader suite of nature based tourism services. Case Study Six, underlines the

The local hotels in Alnmouth, High Force and Seaton Carew all benefited from the trips as did the Black Horse pub near Rowlands Gill from our interest in the kites, the latter directly.

Kevin Spindloe,
Cygnus Bird Tours

success of Express Travel. This demonstrated how a bus and coach hire company began the process of diversification to take advantage of the commercial opportunity opened up by the

presence of red kites. There is certainly potential for other businesses, not necessarily currently involved with wildlife tourism, to do likewise.

The proximity of the core Project area to the Hadrian's Wall Corridor, enhanced by the likely range expansion of kites

along the Tyne Valley, offers considerable potential for enhancing visitor related businesses using the kites. The Corridor attracts overnight visitors representing 6.27 million nights per annum, worth £105 million to the local economy, as well as 1.5 million day-trippers, worth £29 million. This supports 3,700 directly related jobs (ONE, 2006). Many people visit primarily for the historic heritage, but a significant percentage will be drawn from those interested in the wider natural environment and countryside. Red kites are very visible assets that could extend the visitor offer.

A number of businesses offering accommodation have already benefited from the presence of the kites. This is a sector whose development, both in the Derwent valley and elsewhere, might be enhanced by using the red kites. Overnight stays by visitors bring obvious increased financial benefits, and holidaymakers at some wildlife watching sites spend six times more than day-trippers (Dickie *et al*, 2006). A number of businesses within the Project's core area, offer some form of accommodation, but there is still potential for this sector to expand, given the opportunities for 'kite tourism' that this report has identified. A survey of visitors (O'Keeffe, 2009) identified a lack of self-catering accommodation available to visitors in the lower Derwent valley. This situation may change in early 2009, given the plan to market self-catering properties, developed from farm outbuildings close to Rowlands Gill, using the red kites and the Red Kite Trail.

4.3.2 Red Kite Merchandise

To date, the provision of 'red kite' merchandise has been limited to primarily a narrow range of food and drink produce, and art and craft products. However, the success of the Northern Kite ale demonstrates that a carefully designed and well-marketed 'kite' product can have broad public appeal, and create further business opportunities for its producers. Even in relation to this very successful product, there is potential for its future growth. For instance, Northern Kite beer is not stocked in any of the three off-licence outlets or Tesco's supermarket within the Project's core area of central Rowlands Gill. There is, surely, further scope for food and drink produce that capitalises upon the red kite brand. Potential future products, which might be sold at retail outlets

Cross-selling products to kite watchers on the Trail...

Eating outside and watching the kites, selling of wild bird products and books.

Gerard Humble,
Lintzford Garden Centre

on the Red Kite Trail and thus specifically targeting its users, might include 'red' ice cream, biscuits or confectionary. Existing food and drink outlets, which have already benefited from the

Project, might want to consider developing further 'red kite' themed products or events. This might include kite breakfasts and lunches, which would link to the Red Kite Trail and draw in what is essentially a captive audience. Such activities have proved popular at other venues, such as the Moorcock Inn,

Eggleston. An event that would most certainly prove popular, would be a beer festival serving Northern Kite ale, but might also feature other locally produced beers or those with a 'wildlife theme', such as that produced by the Devon based Otter Brewery (otterbrewery.com).



Figure 26: Red kite mugs for sale at the Gibside Larder, National Trust (Northern Kites).

One product line that has not been locally produced or marketed is clothing. A precedent for this has been set by the Welsh Kite Trust, which offers a range of clothing, including

jumpers, fleeces, and t-shirts embroidered with the Welsh Kite Trust logo, orderable via the Kite Trust website. There is demonstrable demand for 'red kite' products in the form of the RSPB-marketed red-kite fluffy toys and red kite badges; therefore, there is certainly scope for further 'personal' products that could be marketed to visitors coming to view kites.

4.3.3 Kite Viewing Areas

The Red Kite Trail and Kitewatch viewing areas have demonstrated that well marketed 'kite facilities' have the potential to draw visitors. There is also potential to expand this type of facility and offer visitors a further 'kite experience'. Kite 'feeding stations', in Wales and Scotland, create 'bird tables' for kites, and provide for visitors guaranteed ways of seeing, sometimes dozens of kites, at close hand. At Gigrin Farm in Powys, visitors are charged £4 entry to the site and can view kites from hides surrounding the feeding area (www.gigrin.co.uk). It is obvious that such a facility in the

North East could confer economic benefits to its developer, as well as the surrounding area, but such feeding stations have to comply with strict environmental health and safety issues. Furthermore, current Defra legislation strictly controls the sites at which kite feeding can be provided. There are potential downsides in that kites

It lifts the spirits of everyone who actually sees them.

**Barry Turnbull,
General Manager MetroCentre**

using such a facility might develop some measure of dependency upon it and would not 'forage naturally' for food. A potential way of providing further kite 'viewing experiences' would be the provision of a CCTV viewing area, which would offer visitors the opportunity to watch images of nesting kites. This would avoid the complexities surrounding the kite feeding stations, but would still require meeting the strict legislation protecting a Schedule One nesting species. Such 'nest watch' facilities have been widely organised by the RSPB for watching peregrines and ospreys, and since 2003, the Chilterns Conservation Board has organised a red kite watching facility. In 2008, live images of nesting kites were



Figure 27: A crowd of kite-watchers at the Black Horse pub, Barlow (Northern Kites).

broadcast to a garden centre coffee shop (www.chilternsaonb.org). Whilst the establishment of such a facility is fraught with technical problems and is, of course, subject to the behaviour of the kites themselves, the public's appetite for watching such footage, as demonstrated by the millions who tune into Springwatch to view nesting birds, is considerable. A remote viewing facility, perhaps in a pub, café or retail outlet, in the Derwent valley or beyond, which provided high quality kite viewing experiences would therefore have the potential of attracting increased numbers of visitors, conferring significant financial benefits. Such a proposition might be tempting for a local business, and could be extended to other species once benefits are demonstrated.

4.3.4 A Kite Centre

The Northern Kites Project has operated since 2004 without the existence of a dedicated 'kite information' centre. Although the offices of the Project have dispensed information and coordinated the work of the Project, they are not open to the public, nor do they host interpretation facilities. The potential for such a facility is clearly illustrated by the example of the Red Kite Centre in Fineshade Wood, Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire. Opened in 2001, for 120 days a year, it averaged nearly 12,000 visitors a year from 2002-2004, and 77% of the 5,500 visitors who signed the visitors' book in 2002 came from within 80kms of the Centre. Facilities at the centre include, CCTV footage from a nearby nest, plus interpretation,

guided walks and an education programme for local schools (Lambert, 2005).

There are already visitor centres that cater for visitors to the DWCP at Thornley Woods and Swalwell, with other facilities at Gibside, and, in a limited fashion, Chopwell, and there is potential here to develop these further into 'kite information' centres, without little additional cost. Alternatively, although many businesses have supported the Project by dispensing information leaflets, there is an opportunity for this to be taken further in the commercial development of a red kite interpretation facility. Already one business has indicated that they are investigating the possibility of dedicating sales space to cater for products that would be attractive to visitors to the Red Kite Trail.

4.3.5 Kites in the North East

The lower Derwent valley has featured predominantly throughout this report and the above analysis has offered discussion of envisaged potential business opportunities linked to the red kites that might be located within the Project's core area. However, it is important to stress that although the valley remains a key location to view kites, the mobility of the birds themselves has led to Northern Kites' birds locating away from the core area and into south west Durham and Northumberland. This natural spread by the birds has offered business opportunities, for instance in upper Teesdale. This has also seen the business offer provided by

the presence of these birds extend from urban Gateshead to the more rural parts of the region, which as ONE point out, can suffer from similar high levels of joblessness as the region's inner city areas. Indeed, this geographical pattern is unique to the Northern regions, and fostering the renaissance of key rural settlements is a prioritisation of the Market Town Programme within the RES (ONE, 2006). It is certainly envisaged that the continued population growth and expansion of the range of the kites will lead to greater opportunities for the public to see kites away from the Project's original core area. This increases the potentiality for businesses located in other parts of the North East, especially those located in rural areas, where opportunities for business growth are more limited, to take commercial advantage of the birds.

One easily realisable opportunity is to extend the usage of the 'red kite' brand, which as this report has demonstrated is a strategy adopted by businesses elsewhere in kite reintroduction areas. Businesses in the lower Derwent valley reported that there was high public awareness of the red kites,

As kite awareness increases then so should opportunities for myself as a business, more potential customers wanting more products.

Alan Mould
Artist/Illustrator

this would seem to offer a means for businesses to capitalise on this public recognition of these iconic birds. For a relatively small outlay, this would not only give a business a distinctive and highly recognisable logo, but also confer upon it an image of environmental responsibility,

that would strengthen its profile and enhance its social standing.

4.3.6 Sustainable Transport

The Go North East Red Kite buses have been tremendously successful. From a business perspective, they have

On receiving the 2008 marketing award...

Receiving this award is a credit to the whole team involved in the project – from the design of the livery to the drivers who took the time to learn about the red kites for the benefit of their passengers.

Of course, the Red Kite bus would not have existed without the birds and Northern Kites and it has been a pleasure to share and support each other in so many joint initiatives.

Martin Harris,
Go North East's Commercial
Director.

generated positive publicity and increased profit, as well as heightening public awareness about the kites and helped increase visitor numbers at the same time as reducing environmental impacts. However, the 2008 visitor survey (O'Keeffe, 2009) found that public transport was used by just 4% of visitors surveyed. Those who travelled by car, by contrast, were 73%. This suggests that there is considerable scope to expand and promote public transport usage, which would have both monetary and environmental benefits (O'Keeffe, 2009).

Go North East has already developed further 'nature' themed branded buses following the success of the Red Kite bus. There is therefore potential for other public transport operators to develop links with their services to nature conservation schemes or locations, such as sites on the Northumberland or Durham coastline that are already on existing public transport routes. Any innovative solution that could reduce road congestions and environmental impact would help to meet objectives on sustainable transport as outlined by the RES (ONE, 2007).

4.3.7 Working with other Nature Conservation Schemes

By developing a strong relationship with other 'nature conservation' agencies, Northern Kites has delivered mutual benefits for all concerned. Such work demonstrates that by working together, nature conservation associations can increase interest in each other's activities, thus boosting valuable income and with the net result of benefiting the natural environment. In 2001, *Valuing the Environment of the North East* called for the continuation of the work of voluntary agencies to enhance environmental improvement (Environmental Resources Management, 2001). There would seem to be obvious benefits in creating more active and imaginative networks between the region's various

Red Kites have offered an extra attraction to ongoing members and have undoubtedly helped improve member retention.

National Trust,
Gibside Estate

conservation organisations, which often share the same members and volunteer workers. This could encourage coordinated activities, the sharing of best practice and more cost-effective delivery.

4.3.8 Other Iconic Wildlife Species

The Northern Kites Project, like the osprey protection schemes and red kite reintroduction schemes that have gone before it, has shown how it is possible to turn a once vilified bird of prey, into a much admired species and a massively successful nature conservation story. Part of the appreciation for these birds lies in the realisation that red kites can be used to generate real business opportunities. They are a 'resource' to be 'appropriately' exploited. Such schemes can be used as exemplars for other wildlife species that still face illegal human persecution. The hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) is one such species that would certainly benefit from positive relationships with business, as its population is severely curtailed by illegal persecution especially within upland areas of England (Sim *et al*, 2007).

Translocation removal schemes for hen harries away from grouse moors to lowland farmland locations are a possibility. A white tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) reintroduction scheme for Norfolk has also been mooted, with a possible start date in 2009 (Carter *et al*, 2008). It is to be hoped that any such reintroduction scheme takes note of the good

practice demonstrated by the Northern Kites Project, for the benefit of birds, communities and businesses.

4.3.9 Kite Fatigue

Prior to the creation of the Northern Kites Project, red kites were close to impossible to see in the North East of England, but the Project has ensured that these spectacular birds are now accessible to all. The breeding success of the kites has



Figure 28: Kitewatch in the DWCP provides an accessible way to see kites (Northern Kites).

meant that the population has increased and extended out of its core area of the lower Derwent valley, allowing people elsewhere in the North East, to enjoy seeing kites.

As wildlife watching schemes elsewhere in the UK have demonstrated, for instance the Loch Garten Osprey Centre, as even spectacular birds become more familiar and extend their range, the 'pulling-power' of a site can diminish (Dickie *et al*, 2006). With regard to red kites, at the feeding station at Gigrin Farm in Wales, there has been a noticeable decline in visitor numbers, which has, been attributed, by the proprietor, to the increased population of kites elsewhere and the public's greater familiarity with the bird (per comm. Chris Powell, Gigrin Farm). With this in mind, it is essential that the momentum of the Northern Kites Project, which comes to a close in the summer 2009, is continued and that steps are put in place to stop public interest in the red kites from dwindling. Numbers at the Kitewatch site in 2008 were less than in previous years, although inclement summer weather and reduced promotion might have been partially to blame. Techniques to sustain interest in the kites might include the continuation of the work of the Northern Kites volunteer network, the adoption of some of the schemes outlined above and wider publicity.

5. Red Kite Economic Activity in the Strategic Context

The Integrated Regional Framework [IRF] for the North East (Sustaine, 2008) provides a framework for a coordinated plan of action to work towards sustainable development in the Region. It emphasizes the importance of good quality employment opportunities available to everyone; conditions that enable businesses success; building the skills and capacity of the population and vibrant communities. The IRF underpins and connects all regional strategies, some of which are detailed below, alongside governmental policies for sustainable economic growth.

From the first day of its programme of work, Northern Kites set out to deliver its core environmental objectives, constantly adding value to all that it did in the socio-economic areas of its work, whilst engaging people at every opportunity in order to create a truly participatory project. It has done this in an innovative and compelling fashion, but also managed to achieve this with an eye on fulfilling the objectives of many strategic processes and plans, at the national, regional and local level. It set out to do this in order to demonstrate that 'environment-led' regeneration work can effectively deliver across a range of sectors in society, in particular the economic, the social and the cultural, whilst also delivering the core environmental goods that they are set up to deliver.



Figure 29: Red Kite House, built by Red Kite Construction & Development (Hillary Florek, PR).

By adopting this top-down, and integrated, strategic approach, the Northern Kites Project has been able to work in a coordinated fashion that has delivered synergistic benefits far beyond what was originally envisaged. It seems highly unlikely that this additionality would have been deliverable had such connectivity not been factored into the Project's *modus operandi*.

5.1 Strategies for Growth

The North East will be a region where present and future generations have a high quality of life. It will be a vibrant, self-reliant, ambitious and outward looking region, featuring a dynamic economy, a healthy environment, and a distinctive culture. Everyone will have the opportunity to realise their full potential (ONE, 2006).

This shared and agreed *Vision for the North East* (www.northeastassembly.gov.uk; ONE, 2006; GONE, 2008) sets out a challenging agenda, which seeks to redress the social and economic disparities between the region and the rest of the country. The Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS] defines the spatial planning framework for delivering this and the Regional Economic Strategy [RES] seeks to do the same through economic development. In addition the Regional Image Strategy, 'Passionate people, Passionate places', supports initiatives arising from these strategies by promoting the attractiveness of the North East, particularly to areas outside the region, but also to address poor awareness within the region, of our special assets.

As one might expect, some of the strategic plans against which Northern Kites has delivered relate directly to the environment, for example, the North East Strategy for the Environment [NESE], but many others are cross-sectoral and relate to planning (RSS), cultural (*Spreading Our Wings: Gateshead Cultural Strategy*) or economic issues (RES). At

the national policy level, Northern Kites has demonstrably delivered the environmental benefits one would expect from a major wildlife project, but it has also helped deliver against the whole of the region's strategic agenda. For example, in relation to the Government's *Planning Policy Statement Strategy* (2008) and its objective of 'creating strong safe and prosperous communities' through local spatial planning on core strategies for 'physical social and green infrastructure', Paragraph 2.6 states:

Spatial planning provides a means of safeguarding the area's environmental assets, both for their intrinsic value and for their contribution to social and economic well being by:

- protection and enhancing designated sites, landscapes, habitats and protected species; and
- creating a positive framework for environmental enhancement more generally.

It is obvious that through the work of the Project, that the delivery of these objectives in the context of North East of England has been enhanced, especially in relation to the latter bullet point. Indeed, in working within local frameworks for improving the environment that integrates the principles of sustainable development set out in the *Local Agenda 21 Strategy*, then Northern Kites has also been successful. For instance, in respect to Gateshead Council's objectives to enhance biodiversity (Gateshead Council, 2005b);

- To maintain and enhance the variety of animals and plants in Gateshead;
- To maintain and improve habitats and protect species;
- To generate greater awareness of local wildlife and global biodiversity;
- To create greater public access to wildlife and wildlife habitats, where appropriate.

5.2 North East Strategy for the Environment [NESE]

The conservation of biodiversity is regarded as a key test of sustainable development. As the region continues to see declines in key habitats and species, the regional biodiversity targets (Street & Brodin, 2004) are crucial in focusing action that will counter these trends. Among the objectives for conserving, and indeed increasing the region's biodiversity are 'Landscape-scale biodiversity projects'. These not only conserve existing conservation areas, but assist the conservation needs of particular species, many of which require a mix of habitats within a landscape in order to survive. This provides a 'joined-up' approach that addresses issues associated with the fragmented nature of much of the countryside's natural features (Street & Brodin, 2004). One such project envisaged by the *Biodiversity Indicators and Targets for the North East of England* (Street & Brodin, 2004), was to 'Re-introduce the red kite to one site within the North East by 2005'. Clearly, Northern Kites has met this particular regional target in this set of plans, and has created a positive

trend for what is now one of the region's most high profile wildlife species.

In relation to the regional environmental perspective, it is clear that Northern Kites is a very important piece of work, both in terms of its suite of deliverables and in its role as a model of good practice. In this regard, it has worked towards many of the NESE's objectives.

These include:

- Demonstrate the wider social and economic benefits of the environment
- Ensure the environment is given weight in strategy making and spatial planning through its integration into regional plans and strategies
- Work in partnership to achieve long term environmental outcomes
- Deliver the environmental, social and economic benefits of Green Infrastructure through landscape scale partnerships and projects
- Demonstrate, promote and deliver health and wellbeing benefits from the use and experience of the environment.

Clearly, Northern Kites is exemplary, and it is noteworthy that a red kite featured in NESE's framework document (Environment Forum North East, 2008).

5.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS]

Through the RSS the Regional Assembly has a key role to play in ensuring that the environment, both natural and built, is considered in all key strategies, plans, programmes and planning proposals. The spatial strategy (GONE, 2008) for all future development is based, *inter alia*, on the following principles-

- To promote an urban and rural renaissance
- To contribute to the sustainable development of the region

One of the key themes of the RSS is the built and natural environment, and it seeks to deliver its objectives through a set of linked key policies. Clearly, Northern Kites has worked to deliver against a number of these, including:

- **Policy 1 - North East Renaissance:**

Strategies, plans and programmes should support a renaissance through the North East by... conserving, enhancing and capitalising on the Region's diverse natural and built environment, heritage and culture.

Although the Northern Kites Project has only been running since 2004, such has been its success in terms of: the establishment of a sustainable breeding population; its contribution to the local economy; its very high media profile;

and, the many other outcomes highlighted in this report, it is clear that red kites are already firmly embedded within, and have enhanced, the region's cultural heritage.

- **Policy 2 - Sustainable Development:**

Planning proposals and LDFs [Local Development Frameworks] should support sustainable development and construction through the delivery of the following environmental objectives [*inter alia*]...

- c. to protect and enhance the Region's biodiversity, geodiversity and soil quality;
- g. to protect and enhance the quality and diversity of the Region's rural and urban land and landscapes;
- j. to protect and enhance the Region's cultural heritage and diversity.
- k. to promote the concept of green infrastructure, a net work of linked multifunctional green spaces in and around the Region's towns and cities.

- **Policy 8 Protecting and Enhancing the Environment:**

Strategies plans programmes and planning proposals should seek to maintain and enhance the quality, diversity and local distinctiveness of the environment throughout the North East by [*inter alia*]...

- d. seeking to conserve and enhance historic buildings and landscapes.
- g. identifying and protecting existing woodland amenity and nature conservation value.
- h. encouraging and facilitating the implementation of the Regional Forest Strategy... related biodiversity strategies and other woodland planting.
- j. encouraging and supporting the establishment of green infrastructure including strategic wildlife corridors.

The core area of the Northern Kites Project is centred on the lower Derwent valley, a key green space and established strategic wildlife corridor in the west of Gateshead (Gateshead Council, 2007). Through the DWCP and the extensive footpath and cycle way network, the public already enjoy excellent access to this area. However, the Project has fundamentally improved and enhanced this facility (for example, the Red Kite Trail), and increased its long-term sustainability. Furthermore, through working with its key Partners, the National Trust, Northumbrian Water, Gateshead Council and the Forestry Commission, it has improved the biodiversity, visitor attractiveness and thus the sustainability of their land holdings within the area. Put simply, the more that locals and visitors appreciate these facilities and green spaces, the more likely they are to be protected and further enhanced. Red kites are playing a key role in this recognition.

Throughout its programme of works, Northern Kites has striven to deliver against the RSS in a raft of ways, in

particular on biodiversity and green infrastructure issues (GONE, 2008). More specifically, Northern Kites is one of the most high profile delivery mechanisms in the region for the objectives contained within Policy 33 - Biodiversity & Geodiversity (GONE, 2008). This states, that:

strategies, plans and programmes, and planning proposals should ensure that the Region's ecological and geological resources are protected and enhanced to return key biodiversity resources to viable levels by:

- b. reversing habitat fragmentation and species isolation particularly in Biodiversity Target Zones;
- c. developing habitat creation / restoration projects particularly in the priority Habitat Creation and Enhancement Areas;
- d. providing for the expansion and linking of existing habitats and species populations including the creation of semi-natural green spaces in and around urban areas and for habitat restoration.

With respect to the above objectives, Northern Kites has delivered in abundance. Furthermore, the Project has helped deliver on aspects of the green infrastructure programme, in particular for the RSS *Policy 8- Protecting the Environment* and, in the west Gateshead context, on *Policy 9*, in the Tyne and Wear City region, especially 'broadening and better integrating the city-region's tourism offer' (GONE, 2008).

5.4 Integrated Regional Framework [IRF]

As part of the outworking of the IRF, Northern Kites has helped meet the requirements of Objective 7, 'Safeguarding and enhancing the region's environmental infrastructure', in particular working towards delivering the Regional Headline Indicator that makes provision for the population of wild birds to be used as a measure of the region's quality of life. Northern Kites has worked very effectively to enhance the region's environmental infrastructure, which has attracted and retained businesses and visitors (Sustaine, 2008).

5.5 Cultural Strategy

Through the development of a number of flagship projects such as The Sage Gateshead, the Angel of the North, Gateshead Millennium Bridge and the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead has become well established as a centre for cultural excellence, and in conjunction with Newcastle upon Tyne, was short-listed in the bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2008. In 2005, the *Gateshead Cultural Strategy* (Gateshead Council, 2005a) set out a vision for culture, outlining five outcomes and priorities for action, which in turn feed in to the national governmental framework that puts culture at the heart of its sustainability agenda.

Gateshead's vision for culture was to:

Work through culture to improve the quality of life for local people and to ensure that Gateshead is one of the best places in Europe to live, work in and visit.

To achieve, the *Gateshead Cultural Strategy* set priorities. These were to:

- Encourage local involvement, particularly from young people in all aspects of the cultural development of Gateshead
- Maximise the role of culture in regeneration and increasing tourism
- Position Gateshead as a centre of culture both in its own right and in partnership with Newcastle
- Continue to improve existing cultural facilities.

The reintroduction of red kites has given the lower Derwent valley, an increased public profile, and from this has amplified Gateshead's profile in the national sense. Where the kites have extended their range, such as in upper Teesdale, this has also enhanced the cultural aspect of these areas. Through the Red Kite Trail, Northern Kites has provided Gateshead with a permanent and popular tourism attraction that has been utilised by the tourism sector as a visitor attraction for the North East. An addition to the Trail are the popular 'Health Walks', which intend to improve the quality of life for local people who participate in these events, thus meeting a core outcome of the *Cultural Strategy* that voiced

an aspiration for 'Local people enjoying more active and healthy lifestyles' (Gateshead Council, 2005a).



Figure 30: A recently installed red kite bench in the grounds of Rowlands Gill Primary School (Northern Kites).

Through its work with schools, Northern Kites has striven to promote an extensive and participatory educational programme. Part of this work, were the red-kite themed artistic installations at Rowlands Gill Community Primary and

Fellside Community Primary Schools that not only created eye-catching artwork by working with local school children, but provided local artists and businesses with an opportunity to display their talents, and earn valuable income.

5.6 The Regional Economic Strategy [RES]

Leading the Way, the Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2016 (ONE, 2006) sets out a strategy for the 'sustainable, inclusive economic growth necessary to underpin the fulfilment of the overarching vision for the North East Region'. The RES identifies the need to accelerate the renaissance of the North East to make the whole of the region more attractive to local and national investors and entrepreneurs. Whilst most of the strategy necessarily concentrates on business, innovation, skills, education, and leadership, the region's natural, heritage and cultural assets are also recognised as having economic importance with strategic potential for growth.

The approach ONE adopts, sets out to-

- Maximise the potential of these assets
- Use our image to meet the economic needs of the North East
- Driving our competitive offer in the interests of North East plc
- Promote regional assets to engender pride and aspiration among local people

This report demonstrates how activities that enhance the region's natural environment, particularly high profile ones such as the Northern Kites Project, have already contributed to these aspirations in a number of ways and it identifies potential areas where this contribution could be extended and enhanced in the future. For more details on how Northern Kites has contributed to the delivery of a large suite of the RES Action Plan's objectives, in at least some degree, see *Appendix Six*.

In its 2006 published report, *Working with the Grain of Nature – Taking it Forward: Vol. 1* Defra recognised the value of the Northern Kites Project. This report highlighted progress under the England Biodiversity Strategy 2002-2006. It emphasised the importance of working at the landscape scale in large-scale ecosystem restoration projects and features the Northern Kites Project as one of its best practice Case Studies. This underlines the intention of the Project to show how its conservation work could also benefit the local economy (Defra, 2006). The Association of North East Councils (ANEC, 2008), also highlighted the broad work of the Project, and more specifically the Red Kite Trail as a means to 'brand an area of countryside and deliver economic, social and environmental well-being' to demonstrate how the *Green Manifesto*, formulated by ANEC, could be achieved (ANEC, 2008).

6. Conclusion

Red kites are iconic birds. They present powerful and attractive images, which are being used by increasing numbers of businesses in their promotional endeavours. The Northern Kites Project is an environmental, economic and cultural success story. As such, it is already playing a significant role in the campaign to improve the region's image of itself and as perceived by those outside the North East. It is therefore well placed to play a part in the 'Passionate people. Passionate places' campaign led by ONE, which seeks to raise awareness of the region as an 'excellent place to live, work, study, visit and do business' (www.onenortheast.co.uk). The iconic image of the red kites and their location on the urban fringe of Tyneside demonstrates how the Project has contributed to the very positive promotion of the Region and its rich cultural and environmental heritage.

This report has illustrated how the Northern Kites Project has contributed to both the environmental improvement and the economic development of local communities, who have keenly participated in the Project. The presence of the red kites, initially in the lower Derwent valley, and then venturing naturally further a field, has enabled a geographically and commercially diverse range of financial opportunities to be realised. This has been recognised by individuals and commercial entities in the development of specific 'red kite' products/services and by the increased numbers of visitors to

the area, attracted by the possibility of seeing red kites. Where possible, Northern Kites has offered its expertise, advice and helped to stimulate interest for these. This has proved productive in a number of situations, largely through increased footfall, revenue and, ultimately, productivity.

It is hoped that the work of Northern Kites will act as a best practice example of how real economic growth can be achieved by the creation, development and work of an imaginative nature conservation scheme. This report has demonstrated that businesses are, without doubt, amenable to new ideas and will willingly work in tandem with conservation projects, provided there are potential commercial benefits from doing so. Clearly, there are many more economic benefits to be gained from the presence of red kites in the North East.

The effectiveness of the Northern Kites Project in publicising its activities, thus attracting visitors to the region, and contributing to the local economy, is illustrated in the positive feedback from one visitor to the area in June 2007.

I came up from Swindon for two weeks holiday in June, with my husband. I had seen a report about the Kites in Derwentside on BBC TV Countryfile and found more information on your web site. We decided to visit the Kitewatch event using the Red Kite bus from Newcastle and following your signs from the bus stop through the park. It was well worth the trip, although it rained. We have only seen Red Kites previously in Wales and we're excited to see them again.

C.V.
October 2007

Appendices

Appendix One: Northern Kites Partner Contributions to Northern Kites 2004-2008

Partner/Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
RSPB	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time	Staff time
Natural England (English Nature)	£2,600 & Staff time	£15,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Northumbrian Water		£14,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Gateshead Council		£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
National Trust		£ 0	£ 0	£ 0	£ 0	£ 0
Forestry Commission		£ 0	£ 0	£ 0	£ 0	£ 0

In addition, sunk funds included English Nature and the RSPB's time in developing the HLF bid during 2002 and 2003.

Over five years HLF has committed £303,000 of support and the RSPB secured £150,000 of funding for Northern Kites delivery, through the SITA Trust. Both of these funding streams are accessed retrospectively via claims against spend.

**Appendix Two:
Northern Kites - Business 'Case Study' Survey**

Northern Kites is gathering data for a study that will attempt to demonstrate how the Project has delivered socio-economic, as well as environmental, benefits through its activities.

The study, overseen by the Institute for Research into the Environment and Sustainable Development at Newcastle University, will attempt to quantify the economic value of the kites and the worth placed upon them by local people.

A key aspect of this larger work is to develop an understanding of how the return of red kites may have benefited business in the northeast. Hence, a study into the red kite's role in the economics of the area, which is being conducted by a consultant engaged by Northern Kites.

This economic study includes the development of a suite of case studies featuring businesses that have 'connected' to the Project in a variety of ways. These case studies will be based upon evidence gathered using this questionnaire.

Section 1 - About Your Business

Q1) What is the name of your business?

Q2) Please tell us about some aspects of your business. For example, what are your main products, services and customer base (see text box below)?

Description (e.g. micro-business, small or medium enterprise; main business activity):

Products/services produced or delivered:

What is/are your main market(s):

What is your main geographical area of operation:.....

What is your company's annual turnover (most recent figures):

How long has your company been established:.....

Other information:

Q3) How many people does your business employ (in the northeast region)? Please tick one of the boxes.

	√
1-5	
6-15	
16-50	
51-150	
More than 151	

Q4) Is your business (please tick one of the boxes):

	√
Wholly located in the Northern Kites Project area	
Wholly located in the northeast	
Partly located in the northeast	
Other (please specify below)	

Section 2 - Your Business and Northern Kites

Q5) From the business perspective, do you think that bringing red kites back to northeast England was? (please tick one answer)

	√
A great idea	
A good idea	
Okay	
A poor idea	
A bad idea	

Q6) From your business' perspective do you think that bringing red kites back to northeast England has been (please tick one answer)?

	√
Very useful	
Useful	
Irrelevant	
Not useful	
Not at all useful	

Can you explain why you answered as you did above?

.....

Q7) From your business' perspective, do you think that bringing red kites back to northeast England offers you real business potential in the future (please tick one answer)?

	√
Agree strongly	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

Can you explain why you answered as you did above?

.....

With the exception of the red kites, have you or your business been involved with any other environmental project in the past or are you currently involved with any other project at present?

Project.....
Outcome...

Q8) How and why did your business become involved with red kites or the Northern Kites Project?

How?.....
Why?.....
With hindsight, would you have done anything differently?

Q9) Please list the red kite 'products and services' you offer/supply?

--

Q10) Investing in red kite business developments. What have been your costs in developing the red-kite related strands of your business (please provide, if possible, detail in the table below)?

Financial Year	Expenditure Type	Expenditure per cost type
2004/05	Product development..... Marketing..... Raw Materials..... Personnel..... Other Costs.....	
2005/06	Product development..... Marketing..... Raw Materials..... Personnel..... Other Costs.....	
2006/07	Product development..... Marketing..... Raw Materials..... Personnel..... Other Costs.....	
2007/08	Product development..... Marketing..... Raw Materials..... Personnel..... Other Costs.....	
2008/09	Product development..... Marketing..... Raw Materials..... Personnel..... Other Costs.....	

Q11) Future plans – do you have you any plans to extend or launch further red kite products/services in the next twelve months?

Can you anticipate the costs associated with this work?

Q12) From your business perspective is it your opinion that the work of the Northern Kites Project has contributed to the 'regeneration' of (please circle Yes or No):

the Northern Kites Project area..... Yes/No
 the lower Derwent valley Yes/No
 Gateshead Yes/No
 the region (i.e. the northeast) Yes/No

Q13) From your business perspective, is it your opinion that the work of the Northern Kites Project has now started to contribute to the economy in (please circle Yes or No):

the Northern Kites Project area..... Yes/No
 the lower Derwent valley Yes/No
 Gateshead Yes/No
 the region (northeast) Yes/No

Can you explain why you answered as you did above (Q. 12 & 13)?

Section 3 - Red Kites and Business Benefits

Q14) In the broadest sense, how strongly do you feel that the red kites have 'added value' to 'your' company's:

a) Products or services –

	√
Very strongly	
Strongly	
Not at all	
Detracted from	
Strongly detracted from	

b) Company image

	√
Very strongly	
Strongly	
Not at all	
Detracted from	
Strongly detracted from	

c) Profile

	√
Very strongly	
Strongly	
Not at all	
Detracted from	
Strongly detracted from	

d) Position in the market place

	√
Very strongly	
Strongly	
Not at all	
Detracted from	
Strongly detracted from	

Q15) Are you able to highlight any other specific business benefits for your company that have arisen because of, or are associated with, your red kite work?

	√
Promotional opportunities	
Cross-selling	
Networking	
Brand association	
Raising profile	
Other -	
Other -	

Q16) As a business, can you rank the most important aspects of red kites/the Northern Kites Project in relation to your business needs ('1' being the most important, 2 second most important etc.)?

	√
It has brought red kites back to the northeast	
It has involved people in many aspects of the Project	
Offered up new markets	
Helped to change people's view of the northeast	
Provided inspiration for new products/services	
Been good value for money	
Earned money for the company	
Offered opportunity to work with an environmental project	
Generated positive publicity for businesses	
Given a high profile to Gateshead's green environment	
Made businesses aware of 'green-profiling'	
Made customers aware of business 'green profiling'	
Offered contact opportunities with customers/other businesses	

Q17) Please highlight those aspects of your business that have materially benefited from your red kite activities (place a tick in the central column).

Where possible, can you quantify these benefits in percentage terms or in actual figures (right hand column), assuming that this information is not commercially sensitive?

Red kites have: -	√	Detailed Information
- helped to increase turnover		
- helped to improve profits		
- increased footfall to your business		
- added to the 'value' of other attractions in the area, and as a result, to your business		
- secured a higher profile for the area, generally (with consequent generic benefit)		
- helped support the launch of a new business		
- helped sustain business through difficulties		
- created a new, successful business stream or product		
- offered promotional opportunities		
- supported other business activity		

Other comments.....

Q18a) Is it possible to quantify (in economic terms) the benefit of a kite association to your business in the **last financial year**? Please tick the appropriate box.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Are you able to estimate this?

.....
b) Is it possible to quantify (in economic terms) the benefit to your business **since the start of Northern Kites in 2004**? Please tick the appropriate box.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Are you able to estimate this amount?

.....
c) In terms of headline financial figures, can you say how much 'red kites' have benefited your business?

.....
d) Might this better stated by referring to a specific aspect of your business e.g. increased customer nos.?

.....
e) Is this effect seasonal or year round?.....

Q 19a) Have you received any special recognition or press coverage for your involvement with the Northern Kites Project?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Details.....

b) Is it possible for you assign a 'monetary value' to this profile?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

What is this?.....

Section 4 - Your Customers

Q 20a) Demographic and economic profiling of your customer base. How would you describe your **main** target market(s)?

Main age groups (please tick as appropriate) :

- Under 20 yrs 20-29 yrs 30-39 yrs 40-49yrs
- 50-59 yrs 60-69 yrs 70+ yrs

Socio-economic grouping of your **main** customer target audiences.

- A B C1 C2 D E

Q 21) Do you believe that there is an awareness of red kites (and kite-related products) amongst your customers?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

If 'Yes', how would you summarise their attitudes?

.....

Q 22) Do you believe that this awareness might confer upon you a business opportunity or advantage?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If 'Yes', in what way?

.....

Other Information

Q23) Any other comments?

.....

Date of completing the questionnaire.....

Company Details:

Company Name:

Telephone:

Address:

Contact Name:

Position in Company:

Email:

Signed

THANK YOU

Northern Kites, the project that has brought the red kite back to the northeast of England, is a partnership between the lead partners English Nature and the RSPB and Gateshead Council, Northumbrian Water, the National Trust and the Forestry Commission supported with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Sita Trust.

**Appendix Three:
Questionnaire: Northern Kites - Business
Attitudes Survey**

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Return the completed form to the researcher or send to the FREEPOST address at the bottom of the page. Circle or tick the answers that best represent your views about red kites and the Northern Kites Project.

1. From the business perspective, do you think that bringing red kites back to northeast England was? (please circle)

A great idea A good idea Okay A poor idea
A bad idea

2. From the business perspective, is it your opinion that the work of the Northern Kites Project has contributed to the 'regeneration' of (please circle Yes or No):

Your local area.....
Yes/No
the lower Derwent valley
Yes/No
Gateshead
Yes/No
the region (i.e. the northeast)
Yes/No

3. From the business perspective, is it your opinion that the work of the Northern Kites Project has started to contribute to the economy of (please circle Yes or No):

Your local area.....
Yes/No
the lower Derwent valley
Yes/No

Gateshead
Yes/No
the region (northeast)
Yes/No

4. From your business' perspective, do you think that bringing red kites back to northeast England has been (please tick one answer)?

- Very useful
- Useful
- Irrelevant
- Not useful
- Not at all useful

5. From your business' perspective, do you think that bringing red kites back to northeast England offers you real business potential in the future (please tick one answer)?

- Agree strongly
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. Would the marketing of 'Gateshead's Derwent Valley' under a brand such as, 'Gateshead's Red Kite Country' confer advantages to your business?(Please tick)

- Agree strongly
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Company Name:
Telephone:

Contact Name:
Position in Company:

Appendix Four: Questionnaire: Northern Kites – Local Business Survey

To try to understand how the return of red kites may have benefited business in the northeast, a study is being conducted. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions, then place your completed survey form in the envelope provided, and send it to the FREEPOST address at the end of this form.

Background

Northern Kites, the project that is bringing the red kite back to the northeast of England comprises four key work-area elements. These are:

- **Wildlife** - the return of the red kite to its former range in north east England;
- **People** - the opportunity to give people and communities access to the kite;
- **Economics** - the chance to show how such a project can be good not just for wildlife and people, but also for the local economy;
- **Partnership** - the illustration of how partners from the charitable, private and public sectors, working in an imaginative way together can better deliver rewards not just for wildlife but also to improve local people's quality of life

Northern Kites Project Area

Northern Kites core project area can be considered the lower Derwent valley (in the west of Gateshead), an area roughly

bounded by: Whickham, Burnopfield, Rowlands Gill, High Spen, Greenside and Blaydon.



Ordnance Survey Licence Agreement No. LA071618X

Northern Kites – Local Business Survey

Type of Business

Q1) What type of business are you involved with? Please tick one or more boxes.

Business type	√	Detail (if required)
Retailing (general)		
Retailing (specific)		
Financial/Personal Services		
Tourism		
Pub/Restaurant		
Accommodation		
Other (please specify)		

Q2) Would you describe your business as being: Please tick one of the boxes.

Business type	√
A micro-business	
A small or medium Enterprise (SME)	
Larger business	
Part of a national or regional chain	
Other (e.g. part of a Multinational)	

Q3) How many people does your business employ (in the northeast region)? Please tick one of the boxes.

	√
1-5	
6-15	
16-50	
51-150	
More than 151	

Location of Business

Q4) Is your business (please tick one of the boxes)

	√
Wholly located in the Northern Kites Project area	
Wholly located in the northeast	
Partly located in the northeast	
Other (please specify below)	

Other

Business Benefits of Northern Kites

Q5) At the time of filling in this questionnaire do you feel that the existence of the Northern Kites Project has benefited your business?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Material Benefits of Northern Kites

Q6) If the answer to Question 5 was “Yes”, could you expand upon this?

Please tick the boxes in the central column and provide estimated percentages or actual figures, in the right hand column if this information is not commercially sensitive.

	Yes	Detailed Information
Has helped to increase turnover	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has helped to improve profits	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has increased footfall to your business	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has added to the ‘value’ of other attractions in the area, and as a result, to your business	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Secured a higher profile for the area, generally	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Helped support the launch of a new business	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Helped sustain business through difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Created a new, successful business stream or product	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Offered promotional opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supporting other business activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Other comments.....

Q7) Can you, in financial terms, say how the Northern Kites Project has benefited your business? Is this effect seasonal or year round?

.....

Q8) How are these benefits reflected in each of the following categories:
(Please tick boxes or supply figures, if these are available and not commercially sensitive)

	Decline	No change	Increase	Not relevant to business
Turnover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Profitability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Footfall to your business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Provided your business with 'added value'				
Helped sustain business through difficulties				
Created a new business stream				
Offered promotional opportunities				
Supporting other business activity				

Q9a) Is it possible to quantify (in economic terms) the benefit to your business in the **last financial year**? Please tick the appropriate box.

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Are you able to estimate this amount and are you willing to share this information with us?

.....

Q9b) Is it possible to quantify (in economic terms) the benefit to your business **since the start of Northern Kites in 2004**? Please tick the appropriate box.

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Are you able to estimate this amount and are you willing to share this information with us?

.....
 Q10a) Do you believe that there is an awareness of red kites (and kite-related products) amongst your customers?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Q10b) Do you believe that this awareness might confer upon you a business opportunity or advantage?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If 'Yes', in what way?

.....

General Business Benefits of Northern Kites

Q11a) If you do not feel that the existence of the Northern Kites Project has benefited your business specifically, do you think it has benefited other businesses in the area?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If 'Yes', in what way?

.....

Q11b) If you do not currently offer any specific 'Red Kite products or services', have you any plans to do so in the next twelve months?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

If 'Yes', and this information is not commercially sensitive, please provide details.

.....

Other Information

Q12) Can you think of anything that the Northern Kites Project might be able to assist you with in relation to your business - information, marketing, training, promotion?

.....

Q13) Can you think of anything that might support the work of the Northern Kites Project, from a business perspective?

.....

Q14) Any other comments?

.....

Date of completing the questionnaire.....

Company Details:

Company Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Contact Name:

Position in Company:

Email:

Signed:

THANK YOU

Please return the completed survey to:

Freepost RRXU-CASY-TSCZ, Northern Kites, Office 3b, 33 St. Mary's Green, Whickham, Tyne & Wear, NE16 4DN

Northern Kites, the project that has brought the red kite back to the northeast of England, is a partnership between the lead partners English Nature and the RSPB and Gateshead Council, Northumbrian Water, the National Trust and the Forestry Commission supported with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Sita Trust.

Appendix Six: Northern Kites: Helping to Deliver the Regional Economic Agenda

This Appendix tabulates how the Northern Kites Project has helped deliver against the stated objectives and elements (underlined in main left hand column) of *Leading the Way: The Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan, 2006-2011* (ONE, 2006).

	New Enterprise Surge	How Northern Kites Has Contributed Towards Delivering this RES Objective?
A.2.	We must create many more new businesses with the ambition to grow -as a minimum increasing VAT registrations from 4,300 to 5,600 each year by 2011. We also must actively support existing businesses to strive for sustainable growth. We will invest heavily in an innovative and integrated approach, which starts with building a revitalised and ambitious enterprise culture. This includes: • focusing the <u>Regional Image Campaign</u> to increase awareness of the North East as a place where modern and <u>innovative businesses flourish and which can attract new entrepreneurs....</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported the Regional Image Campaign through the Project's work with Working Wonders TV Ltd, on the TV documentary 'Northern Kites'. Screened in 2007, this had an audience of over 240,000 in the North East. • To January 2009, the Project has featured in more than 50 television and 25 radio broadcasts, both regional and national. For example, the 'Open Country' Radio Four transmitted in January 2009, and a documentary featuring the Project and kites has been recorded for transmission as part of the BBC1 'One Show' in 2009 or early 2010. • Over 350 press articles since the Project's commencement.
	Three: Creating 21st Century Transport and Digital Connections	
A.8.	We will concentrate on: • delivering a modern digital infrastructure that allows the Region to enhance competitiveness by: <u>supporting digital content development in innovative companies; ensuring wide community access to digital technologies;</u> and getting regional SMEs to adopt e-business practices; • <u>building strategic transport planning capacity through partnership working,</u> the Northern Way Compact and using the Transport Innovation Fund, to provide the evidence to support investments in capacity which will make a real economic impact....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked very successfully with Go North East to promote the use of sustainable transport. • Northern Kites website, links and provision of downloadable information to reduce printing and environmental impact. • CCTV developments (on red kite nest, images to be transmitted to high profile public venue) in 2009.
B.	COLLECTIVE REGIONAL LEADERSHIP NEW WAYS OF WORKING	
B.11.	We will invest to improve <u>capacity and capability in transport planning and delivery</u> within the region. We will identify how we can contribute to achieving sustainable development priorities; moving towards One Planet Living; and mitigating and adapting to climate change via the Regional Climate Change Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with Go North East and Nexus to integrate transport use with environmental awareness raising.

C	BUSINESS	
C.2.	The growing global commitment to sustainable development presents significant opportunities. Businesses in the North East are already demonstrating that they can achieve <u>increased productivity, competitiveness and market penetration in new energy and environmental technologies and services</u> , and resource efficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seventy-four percent of Business Survey respondents believed that the Project had contributed positively to the economy of the 'lower Derwent Valley'. • Twenty businesses believed the Project had to contributed to the local economy. • Encouraged more sustainable lifestyles through 'Reduce, Re-use, Recycle' with Sprite the Kite campaign, The use of Sprite the Kite is now being used by Gateshead's Local Environmental Services as a recycling icon. (Hills, 2009).
	BUILDING A NEW ENTERPRISE SURGE SUPPORTING OUR BUSINESSES	
C.11.	The creation of the regional Business Link North East presents a unique opportunity to provide an <u>extensive business support service for enterprises of every type</u> . It will be the preferred point of access for private businesses, social enterprises, self employed people, and the voluntary sector.....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated support of businesses along the developing Red Kite Trail to enhance the visitor experience and provide potential commercial opportunities. • Ten companies/business people have worked in partnership with Northern Kites or individually, to offer specific 'red kite' products/services.
C.13.	In addition business support will be provided via strategic sector development specialists whose aim is to maximise regional business growth and competitiveness in specific sectors, including: • Process Industries • Healthcare and Health Sciences • Energy and Environmental Technologies • Digital and Creative Industries • Automotive • Knowledge Intensive Business Services • Defence and Marine • <u>Tourism and Hospitality</u> • Food and Drink Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalysing the development of the Red Kite Trail and highlighting visitor facilities along the route into the process. • Prompting the development of Northern Kite Ruby Ale with Wylam Brewery.
C.14.	This will include working through specialist business representative organisations such as the North East Process Industry Cluster (NEPIC), Northern Defence Industries (NDI), NOF Energy, the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF), <u>the Tourism Network North East and the Regional Food & Drink Group</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to develop red kite themed products to support the business along the Red Kite Trail, particularly those in the food and drink sector.

D.	PEOPLE	
D.1.	<p>A more diverse, knowledge intensive economy will only be created across the Region if the adult workforce - and young people entering the labour market - acquires additional skills. Increasing participation in the labour market is fundamental to our efforts to boost the Region's GVA. To achieve this we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that skills training provision is employer demand led and thus better able to respond to changing labour market needs; • integrate skills and employment services in the Region; • focus on meeting the skills needs of strategically important sectors; • raise aspirations and attainment, particularly among our young people; • shift the balance of provision of intermediate skills training from level 2 to level 3 and seek to increase significantly the number of people qualified to level 4 and above; • improve the North East's competitiveness in the international labour market by attracting and retaining skilled people; • promote economic inclusion by reducing worklessness, and promoting equality and diversity in skills and employment provision; and • ensure linkages between opportunity and need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with local universities through the Northern Kites Student Research Menu (Hills, 2009) to support graduate and post-graduate research. • Nine research projects were completed 2004-2009.
Raising Aspirations and Attainment		
D.19.	<p>We will increase efforts to <u>raise aspirations and attainment across the North East. We will do this by building on the successful Regional Image Strategy to develop aspiration raising campaigns.</u> Efforts will be concentrated on the most disadvantaged areas and groups complementing that of other social and economic regeneration programmes. We will also use campaign activity to raise the aspiration of employers to invest in a highly skilled workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At December 2008, local University students have completed 9 red kite research projects, with another 3 in progress. These were stimulated by the production of a Red Kite Student Research Menu, formulated by the Project (Hills, 2009).
D.21.	<p>We will increase activity to raise the <u>aspirations and attainment levels of young people by offering a choice of high quality, relevant learning opportunities</u> to equip them with the skills for employment, further or higher learning and wider social and community engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnerships with higher education students and institutions (see above). • Lifelong learning delivery. 'Red Kites in the North East', adult education courses affiliated to Sunderland University and delivered in 2006 to 7 adult learners, attending classroom sessions and field trips to see kites (Hills, 2009). • Volunteering engagement. From 2004-2008, more than 60 volunteers, completing 1,950 workdays, have worked for the Project delivering variously fieldwork, educational duties and administration roles (Hills, 2009).

D.25.	Partners will work <u>to improve regional co-ordination of education and business links</u> , and involvement of employers, refocusing ASPIRE as a campaign to actively engage employers to raise aspirations of young people. <u>Education Business Links will continue to focus on the coordination and commissioning the delivery of a range of activities.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support of the red kite reintroduction project was wholly positive, with 26 respondents suggesting that it was either a 'great' or 'good' idea. There were no negative responses. • Northern Kites input to education 'business links day' at Burnopfield Primary School, October 2008 (Hills, 2009). • Business event for the Northumberland Junior Chamber at Burnside Secondary School (North Tyneside), November 2008.
D.27.	We are looking to develop a new "community of schools" in the Region. • Association of Schools for the North East - Education and skills partners will work with local authorities and Children's Trusts to support the development of this "Association" to maximise the critical role that schools have in <u>addressing the economic and social needs of our region</u> . Activity will support schools as a business sector in their own right. The "Association" will ensure that we have a much more <u>powerful method of engaging schools with regional development as a driver for transformational change</u> . • Build on Every Child Matters - More effective linkage of the skills and economic development agenda will be supported via a stronger partnership with the Every Child Matters Agenda and Children's Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Northern Kites Adopt-a-Kite scheme for schools, has involved 107 schools across the region, to adopt one of the region's red kites, to name it and follow its progress from chick to adult. • Northern Kites has developed Kids4Kites, a web-based system, which provides teachers and children with free, downloadable red kite activities for the classroom. • <i>Let's Go Flying Kites</i>, England's first children's storybook about red kites, written by North East illustrator and author, Jules Burnett. Over 2,000 copies of the book have been sold or distributed across the region.
Enhancing the role of the voluntary and community sector		
D.46.	<u>Voluntary and community organisations</u> are crucial in terms of delivery of activity in the area of economic inclusion. We will therefore develop capacity and skills within the sector to maximise income generation and other resources; and will promote and support their role in the delivery of key services. We will also examine the potential for asset based development within the context of wider regeneration initiatives, outlined in greater detail in section E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created new and greater opportunities for volunteers and local community groups to engage with its work. Recognised by the presentation in the Nationwide Building Society's Heritage and Community Awards of the regional Heritage Heroes Award, July 2008 to Northern Kites' volunteers. • The Project and its volunteers has inspired local people to set up a new community-driven organisation (Friends of Red Kites), which will have the capacity to deliver future red kite work, 'for the people, by the people'.
Unlocking potential through cultural volunteering		
D.48.	We will implement a <u>Regional Cultural Placement/Volunteer Programme to create stronger routes for individuals to use volunteering in cultural, environmental, social and community contexts as a route to economic activity</u> ; and will promote business engagement in volunteering as a key component of corporate social responsibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of the Northern Kites volunteers were represented at the 2007 and 2008 conferences, facilitated by Natural England, to look at the development of regional environmental volunteering mechanisms. • Estimated spend of Northern Kites' volunteers is nearly £14,000, or £3,000 per annum to the local economy.

E.	PLACE	
E.1.	Achieving sustainable improvements in economic performance across the North East will depend on creating the conditions to provide sustained business growth, <u>create job opportunities</u> and attract private investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Kites' discretionary spend in the region is estimated to have supported an additional 2.8 FTE local jobs per annum averaged over the lifetime of the Project
E.2.	Strong city regions, centred on thriving urban cores, drive economic growth. In the North East, the prosperity of our two city regions - Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear - are key to the future economic growth of the Region as a whole. At the same time we need strong rural communities, which <u>complement the city regions</u> ; contribute to the quality of life offered by the Region as a whole; are at the heart of our visitor offer; and provide alternative locations for many types of businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The red kites of the Northern Kites Project are the only red kites in England that can be credibly 'marketed' as part of the City experience, courtesy of their presence in Gateshead, within the 'Tyne & Wear city region'. The spread of red kites from the lower Derwent valley into rural Northumberland and Durham, in particular upper Teasdale, has generated commercial opportunities for public houses (the Moorcock Inn) and those businesses offering accommodation.
E.3.	Therefore, we will invest in our city regions as the main growth drivers for the region and build on the potential of our market towns and rural service centres to maximise their contribution to regional economic growth. Investment will focus on ensuring that we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the restructuring of the Region's economy providing the quality of place and physical infrastructure which strengthens the development of the knowledge based economy; • create, healthy, safe and sustainable communities to attract and retain businesses and skilled individuals in the region; • link areas of opportunity and need to assist greater economic inclusion; • ensure provision of appropriate, high quality business sites and premises, digital connectivity and transport infrastructure; • <u>promote, enhance and protect our natural, heritage and cultural assets to maximise their economic, environmental and social potential</u>; • <u>project a clear and positive image of the North East to attract people to live, work and invest here and to raise aspiration and participation</u>; • <u>provide infrastructure which moves the region towards environmental sustainability</u>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Project's ethos has been to use the red kites in order to promote and enhance the region's natural heritage assets and through this process, project a clear and positive image of the North East. To promote the principles of Sustainable Development, using the red kites. For example, the 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle with Sprite the Kite' educational campaign. Working with Wylam Brewery Ltd and Red Kite Construction Development Ltd. Work with Go North East and Nexus to integrate transport use with environmental awareness raising.

	QUALITY OF PLACE	
	A Strategic Approach to Market Towns and Rural Service Centres	
E.9.	Rural economic centres supply the services and 'heart' for the region's rural areas; they are also home to businesses in a number of important sectors. Through the SRPs in Northumberland and Durham, we will develop a new approach to market towns, identifying the contribution they can make to regional objectives and the type of investment that is best suited to making it happen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the Northern Kites Community Kite Clusters based in Barnard Castle and Wooler. • Working with rural businesses use the red kites to support their services/products, e.g. the Moorcock Inn, Eggleston.
	Sustainable Communities	
E.11.	Local Authorities, developers, house-builders and other partners will work <u>with local communities to offer people attractive places to live, more sustainable lifestyles and a good quality of life.</u> Investment will see the creation of sustainable communities well connected to areas of economic activity, with the right mix of housing that meets the needs of residents and attracts talented people currently outside the region to live here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Kite Construction • Red Kite Barns at Barlow • Estate agents using red kites to support the sales of houses in the lower Derwent valley
E.14.	One NorthEast and Culture North East working with local partners (including the area tourism partnerships) will <u>maximise the role of cultural and leisure facilities and our heritage offer which support: delivery and improvement of sustainable communities; education delivery and outcomes; quality of life; regeneration of communities; and promotion of economic and social wellbeing.</u> Clear, coherent and prioritised city region and rural area plans for investment in cultural infrastructure and facilities <u>will be developed to contribute to developing a strong quality of place.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Red Kite Trail opened in May 2008. The Trail is one of fifteen featured walks in ONE NorthEast's regional walking guide for 2009.
E.16.	We will also support wider regeneration and social inclusion efforts through the improvement of the local environment and promoting the development of high quality streetscape and green spaces. We will seek to maximise the gain in employment terms by <u>linking developments with skills and employment initiatives.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing developers using kites to sell products. • Red Kite Construction Development Ltd. • Rowlands Gill based agents using the red kites as 'conversation openers' and to sell the lower Derwent valley as a desirable place to live.
E.32.	We will look to new and <u>creative ways to enhance connectivity.</u> As part of our approach to "One Planet Living" we will investigate methodologies and approaches to <u>mitigating against the environmental effect of fossil fuel derived transportation methods</u> and adapting to climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative working joining up Nexus, Go North East's Red Kite buses and the Red Kite Trail to encourage use of public transport and minimise private car use.

NATURAL, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL ASSETS	
E.37.	<p>High quality natural, heritage and cultural assets have a key role to play in attracting people and businesses to the region. Activities will make the most of economic opportunities and create a sense of pride and aspiration among residents. We will focus investment on: • <u>developing the visitor economy</u>; • <u>investing in a regional programme of festivals and events</u>; • <u>analysing the role of cultural, leisure and heritage assets in relation to quality of place</u>, sustainable communities and economic growth to inform future investments; • <u>increasing the capacity and impact of existing cultural, tourism and natural assets to increase their contribution to the skills, economic inclusion, health and enterprise agendas</u>; • <u>promoting a positive image of North East England</u>; and • attracting highly skilled and creative individuals.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Kites has helped to promote the links that exist between biodiversity, culture and landscape by showcasing the kites as a headlining element of the region's natural heritage and then building this into social, cultural and economic strands of work.
Maximise the Potential of Our Natural, Heritage and Cultural Assets	
E.38.	<p>We will develop the North East Tourism Strategy and <u>strengthen the existing tourism product</u>; plugging identified gaps through improved research and analysis to inform public sector funding and facilitate private sector investment. Examples of research include the Coastal Framework, developing the regional heritage and activity visitor offers.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work of Express Travel, and its privately run red kites safaris, showing well over 400 people red kites in the lower Derwent valley
E.39.	<p>Key <u>investments in development</u> or under consideration include: a Regional Convention Centre, Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, Beamish Open Air Museum, Alnwick Garden, coastal investment, Saltholme Wild Bird Discovery Centre and Kielder - The Big Picture.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateshead Council are reviewing visitor servicing facilities in the lower Derwent valley, in the light of the success of the reintroduction of red kites to the area. It is scoping possible future Projects that may build the red kite work in order to enhance the region's tourism offer and provide improved visitor servicing and heritage access in the lower Derwent valley
E.40.	<p><u>Investment will take place against criteria to ensure that it:</u> • <u>contributes to tourism strategy objectives and key strategic themes</u>; • <u>makes a commitment to the environment and locality</u>; • <u>enhances quality of life and place</u>; • <u>protects natural, heritage and cultural assets</u>; • <u>maximizes additionality</u>; • <u>leads to increased visits from outside the region</u>; <u>considers wider infrastructure issues</u>; and • <u>that the funding package is balanced with the outcomes</u>.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above

E.41.	The Visitor Information Network Plan and the further <u>development of Desti.ne</u> , the Visitor Economy ICT Platform will support efforts to - ordinate and improve availability and access to information on events, attractions and accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern kites events and processes have been built into Desti.ne since the system's development
E.43.	We will also develop a programme of <u>regional festivals and events network</u> , including the continued delivery of Culture 10 and a programme post 2010. We will develop a better understanding of the <u>role of natural, heritage and cultural assets and the contribution they can make to quality of life, quality of place, sustainable communities and economic growth</u> . This will inform future investment in existing and new cultural and leisure facilities within city regions and market town service centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 25,000 visited the summer Kitewatch event in 2006-2008 to see breeding red kites. Between 2004 and 2008, Northern Kites has organised or taken part in more than 260 events, engaging (face-to-face) with 58,582 people. 6,544 families have participated in red kite activities.
E.44.	We will <u>work with partners to help develop innovative solutions</u> to improving sustainable revenue streams for key arts, cultural and leisure facilities in order to maintain and develop the high quality of the regional offer. We will also provide additional tailored development for tourism and hospitality businesses through the implementation of the business toolkit and quality awareness training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Kites has created a vibrant, go-getting partnership, which has been maintained throughout the Project. This has found new ways to deliver and sought out the expertise and knowledge embedded within the partner organisations to solve problems and to deliver 'value added' in many novel and effective ways.
Driving our competitive offer in the interests of North East Plc		
E.45.	We will invest in a comprehensive tourism marketing campaign which will <u>strengthen the region's image as a destination for city breaks, short breaks and longer holidays</u> . This activity will be aligned with the Regional Image Campaign. Campaign activity will see Tourism Network North East and its associated <u>Area Tourism Partnerships working jointly to achieve growth in national and international visitors by capitalising on new markets and ensuring that visitors are aware of the full diversity of the tourism product in the North East</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Red Kite Trail: an exercise in generating tourism business using red kites. 4 tour companies are known to have used red kites as part of their promotional offer in the North East.
E.46.	<u>Tourism Marketing</u> activity will make increasing use of marketing intelligence; ensuring activity is targeted and effective and increase use of Desti-ne and <u>other digital platforms to reach new markets</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red kites are featured in the 4 One North East commissioned online tourism films. Northern Kites' 2008 visitor survey of the lower Derwent valley.

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E.47. We will promote regional assets to engender pride and aspiration and link it to efforts to increase entrepreneurship, aspirations and attainment and to attract highly skilled individuals to the Region.

- Contributed to the improvement of people's Quality of Life and their perception of Quality of Place by:
 - Creating a high public awareness of red kites in the core Project area
 - Helping people place a higher value on wildlife than previously, particularly in terms of highlighting how special, in the sub-regional context, the green infrastructure resource of the lower Derwent valley is to the North East of England
 - Demonstrating how social benefits have been brought about by the red kites, e.g., kites acting as social glue within local communities
 - People bonding over the kites, people talk about the kites and consequently connecting in small ways, as people with something 'in common'
- Northern Kite Ale, a commercially successful flagship product taking the message of the kites outside of the region.

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GLOSSARY

Defra	Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs
DWCP	Derwent Walk Country Park
EA	Environment Agency
EN	English Nature
FTE	Full time equivalent (employment)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GONE	Government Office for the North East
IRF	Integrated Regional Framework for the North East of England
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
LA21	Local Agenda for sustainable development for the 21st century
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
ONE	One NorthEast, the Regional Development Agency for North East England.
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RES	Regional Economic Strategy
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds