



# DURHAM CATHEDRAL AND CASTLE WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public Consultation Draft  
June 2006

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**DURHAM CATHEDRAL AND CASTLE  
WORLD HERITAGE SITE  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT**

Approved By: Dominic Watkins  
Signed:   
Position: Associate Technical Director  
Date: 28 February 2006

**CHRIS BLANDFORD ASSOCIATES**

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*Environment Landscape Planning*



## FOREWORD

Through the 1972 World Heritage Convention (WHC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has identified the formal recognition and management of World Heritage Sites (WHS) as a key means of conserving the world's cultural and natural heritage for present and future generations. There are now 812 WHS in 135 countries, and this list is continually growing. The UK Government ratified the WHC in 1984, and in 1986 submitted their first nominations for UK WHS. The singular importance of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS within the global heritage was not only recognised in its inclusion on this first UK list, but also in its inscription by the World Heritage Committee onto the World Heritage List in the same year.

The effective management of WHS to conserve their international significance is a global challenge, and it is the legal responsibility of national governments under the WHC to ensure that this challenge is met. The UK government has prioritised WHS Management Plans as a key method of ensuring this conservation. Each UK WHS is charged with producing an agreed WHS Management Plan by the end of 2004.

The Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS Management Plan is therefore a local response to a national issue of global importance. This Plan seeks to conserve the architectural, townscape, religious, community and cultural significances of the WHS, and to provide a framework for ensuring access for all to the WHS. One NorthEast has funded the production of this vitally important Draft Management Plan by the consultants, Chris Blandford Associates, and it has been produced under the close direction of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS Management Plan Steering Group. The Steering Group comprises representatives from:

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Durham Cathedral Chapter
- Durham City Council
- Durham County Council
- English Heritage
- ICOMOS-UK
- One NorthEast
- University of Durham
- St Chad's College
- St John's College

A wide range of organisations and individuals, including local interest groups and residents, are being consulted on the Draft WHS Management Plan. It is important that the views of as many stakeholders as possible are reflected in the preparation of the WHS Management Plan. We look forward to receiving your comments on this consultative document. Your views will help shape the final plan, and the future of our WHS.

*Margaret Fay*  
*Chairman, One NorthEast*

*February 2006*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The WHS Management Plan was funded by One NorthEast and prepared on behalf of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS Management Plan Steering Group by Chris Blandford Associates (CBA). The preparation of the plan was assisted by the WHS Management Plan Steering Group. The members of the Steering Group are listed in Appendix 1, and comprised representatives of:

- Department of Culture, Media and Sport
- Durham Cathedral Chapter
- Durham City Council
- Durham County Council
- English Heritage
- ICOMOS-UK
- One NorthEast
- St John's College
- St Chad's College
- University of Durham

Thanks are also due to the members of the many institutions approached during the development of the Management Plan, who made available the information necessary for the development of the Plan. Particular thanks go to:

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John Jennings	- Director of Environmental Services, Durham City Council
Fiona MacDonald	- County Archaeologist, Durham County Council
Lois Stuckenbruck	- Alumni/ae and Development Officer, St John's College
Maurice Tucker	- Master, University College
Alan Usher	- Estates Manager, St John's College
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The CBA team included:

Chris Blandford - Project Director  
Dominic Watkins - Project Manager  
Pippa Pemberton  
Andrew Croft  
Matthew Bright  
Andy Buckley  
Katherine Stronach

*and*

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Marc Mallam - Marc Mallam & Co.  
Lesley Morisetti - Economic Research Associates  
Julian Munby - Oxford Archaeology  
Barry Stow - Barry Stow Architects

Chris Blandford Associates  
February 2006



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Built in the late 11th and early 12th centuries to house the relics of St Cuthbert, the evangelist of Northumbria and the Venerable Bede, the Cathedral attests to the importance of the early Benedictine monastic community and is the largest and best example of Norman architecture in England. The innovative audacity of its vaulting foreshadowed Gothic architecture. Behind the Cathedral is the Castle, an ancient Norman fortress which was the residence of the Prince-Bishops of Durham.*

### Introduction

*World Heritage Sites* are places or buildings of Outstanding Universal Value, recognised as constituting a world heritage 'for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate'. Once approved by the World Heritage Committee, WHS are inscribed onto the *World Heritage List*, which is maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Through the 1972 World Heritage Convention (WHC), UNESCO has identified the formal recognition and management of WH Sites as a key means of conserving the world's cultural and natural heritage for present and future generations. There are now 812 WH Sites in 135 countries, and this list is continually growing.

The Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS was inscribed onto the World Heritage List in 1986, after being nominated by the UK Government in its first list of potential WH Sites. This place on the UK's first list firmly locates Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS within the company of such prestigious and well-loved UK WH Sites as Stonehenge and Avebury, the Tower of London and the Giant's Causeway. The 1986 inscription of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS recognises the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site that results from its rich architectural legacy; its unique history as the defended home of the Prince-Bishops and its associations with key figures in the development of the Christian Church in England.

As one of the first UK inscriptions onto the World Heritage List, the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS was not initially required to have a WHS Management Plan. However, it is now a government requirement that all the existing UK WH Sites agree a WHS Management Plan during 2004. The core aim of any WHS Management Plan is to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site is sustained and conserved for the benefit of future generations.

This Management Plan describes the WHS, its Outstanding Universal Value and related significances, and analyses the issues facing the conservation and management of these. Through this understanding, a *Vision for the Future* of the WHS is outlined, along with *Key Principles* to be considered when working towards this Vision. The *Vision for the Future* of the WHS will be delivered through 27 *Objectives* and accompanying actions. The

entire Management Plan is to be monitored and reviewed every 6 years, and whilst the Vision for the Future and the Key Principles are intended to be long-lasting and to inform such future revisions of the Plan, the Objectives are expected to be short-lived and regularly reviewed.

***Preparation of the Management Plan***

The Management Plan has been prepared in broad accordance with the general procedures and requirements published in 1998 by ICCROM, ICOMOS and UNESCO as *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites*. The Plan also takes into account other documents including the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 1999), the Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (ICOMOS 1987) and the Budapest Declaration on World Heritage (UNESCO 2002).

The first draft of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS Management Plan was prepared by the Environmental Services Department of Durham City Council. The WHS Management Plan Steering Group chair, One NorthEast, appointed the consultants Chris Blandford Associates to expand this draft into a full Consultation Draft of the WHS Management Plan. The preparation of the Consultation Draft of the WHS Management Plan has been closely guided by the *WHS Management Plan Steering Group* (members are listed in Appendix 1).

***The Purpose of the Management Plan***

The Management Plan has been developed to sustain and conserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS. The overarching aim of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS Management Plan is:

To describe an approach to the future management of Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS that will retain and strengthen the balance between conserving the historic environment, enhancing the local character and amenities of the WHS and surroundings with the need to keep the WHS in active and appropriate use, primarily as a religious, educational and residential working environment.

The Management Plan has the following key aims:

- To enable the definition of the significance of the WHS, in line with World Heritage Committee procedures;
- To maintain the quality and local distinctiveness of the WHS and its environment;
- To understand the processes and history of the WHS and use this knowledge to better inform plans for the current use and enjoyment of the Site for its resident religious and educational establishments, as a visitor attraction and as a local community resource; and for future uses and enjoyment of the Site;
- To set out guidelines for the use of land, buildings, landscape, townscape and cultural assets of the WHS, and include guidance for their sustainable conservation and maintenance;
- To recommend how the educational and interpretational potential of the Site could be realised further, to better inform the public as well as the formal users of the various buildings and functions housed within the WHS;
- To develop sustainable tourism and a positive visitor experience;
- To develop a programme of projects to implement the above, conserving and enhancing the WHS for all;
- To sustain the current uses of the WHS as the most appropriate way of maintaining and enhancing its significance.

### **Why is the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site so Significant?**

Once the home of the powerful Prince-Bishops, the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS is globally significant for the medieval architecture it contains, with the iconic Norman Cathedral and its associated Castle set within the surviving remains of their medieval bailey and defensive wall. Together this architecture creates an unforgettable skyline and a unique townscape, described by Pevsner as "*one of the great experiences of Europe*" and by The *Sunday Times* as "*one of the most sublime places on earth*".

### ***The Outstanding Universal Values of Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS***

In 1986, when the Site was inscribed on the World Heritage List, the Site was considered to be of Outstanding Universal Value for the following cultural elements:

- The Site's exceptional architecture demonstrating architectural innovation;
- The visual drama of the Cathedral and Castle on the peninsula and the associations of the Site with notions of romantic beauty;
- The physical expression of the spiritual and secular powers of the medieval Bishops Palatine that the defended complex provides;
- The relics and material culture of the three saints buried at the Site.

Since that time the understanding of the Site's Outstanding Universal Value has expanded, to also include:

- The continuity of use and ownership of the Site over the past 1000 years as a place of religious worship, learning and residence;
- The Site's role as a political statement of Norman power imposed upon a subjugate nation, as one of the country's most powerful symbols of the Norman Conquest of Britain;
- The importance of the site's archaeological remains, which are directly related to the Site's history and continuity of use over the past 1000 years;
- The cultural and religious traditions and historical memories associated with the relics of St Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede, and with the continuity of use and ownership of the Site over the past millennium.

On the basis of this expanded understanding, this Management Plan proposes a new Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) for the site, which also contains new understandings developed since 1986. An outline summary of this proposed new Statement is provided below.

It is proposed that the State Party recommends to the World Heritage Committee (WHC) that the new SOUV for the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS be formally recognised alongside the Justification for Inscription and Criteria as the definitive statement of the Site's Outstanding Universal Value. The proposed SOUV takes into account the boundary amendment proposed in Section 2.2, and could be presented to the World Heritage Committee along with the formal request for the proposed amendment to the Site's boundary (see Objective 2).

### ***Outline Summary of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS***

The architecture of the Cathedral represents the first globally important stage of the transition of Old World architecture from Romanesque to Gothic style. The high stone vaults of the Cathedral are one of the earliest examples of rib vaulting in Europe. They are also one of the most significant and most influential developments in the emergence of the new style. One of the most important features of the interior is the Neville Screen, which is noted as being one of the most aesthetically perfect examples of the emerging Perpendicular style. The combination of architecture, location and history of the Cathedral have led one commentator to express the commonly held sentiment that is formalised by the building's inscription on the World Heritage List: "*I unhesitatingly give Durham my vote for best cathedral on planet Earth*" (Bill Bryson).

As places of worship, residence and education, the Cathedral (incorporating the buildings of the medieval Priory) and the Castle have a well-documented history of continual use that stretches back over the past 1000 years. Together, the Cathedral and Castle within their defended walls on the top of the dramatic peninsula, manifest in no uncertain terms the physical, political, social and religious power of the Norman conquerors, and the medieval Prince-Bishops. This powerful skyline still dominates the City of Durham, and is a globally iconic image. The conversion of this defensive secular and religious peninsula landscape to a peaceful use, as 18th century terraced gardens and a 19th century University, has created a new layer which is significant in its own right, and which contributes to the internationally important story of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS.

The WHS embodies important intangible values, including sanctuary, sainthood, pilgrimage and education. The WHS is also significant as being the resting place of three important figures of Christianity: St Cuthbert, the northern miracle worker; St Oswald, the warrior king and Christian martyr; and the Venerable Bede, the earliest English historian.

### ***The Related Significances of the WHS***

In addition to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site, the WHS also contains a number of related significances. These include its role as an important reservoir of valuable heritage skills, including the practical heritage conservation skills of skilled stone masonry and joinery. The WHS is a gathering point for the entire community. The Cathedral is informally held to be the spiritual capital of the North East as well as being a local place of worship. The Site also acts as a community resource for the holding of such regionally important events as the Miners' Gala. The WHS is also the home of a University of international importance, standing at the heart of the worldwide Diaspora of University of Durham alumni. The WHS enjoys a special place at the heart of these local, regional and international communities: a connection that they passionately express.

The Site's collections also add to the significance of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS, though moveable collections are not considered by the WHC to be part of the Outstanding Universal Value of a Site. The Site contains extensive collections of objects that reflect its history of patronage and secular and ecclesiastical power, as well as its role as home to the University. These collections are an intimate part of the history and story of the WHS.

### **Key Issues for the Management Plan**

The WHS is managed by its three owners: The Cathedral Chapter, the University and St John's College, with key advice and technical support being provided by other members of the WHS Management Plan Steering Group, such as the City of Durham Council and English Heritage. However, due to the early inscription of the WHS, the managerial procedures and structures found at most other UK WHS have not yet been put in place in Durham. This lack of WHS-specific managerial structures is one of the main issues for the Management Plan. Therefore, some of the key outputs of this Management Plan will be the creation of a WHS Coordinating Committee; the consideration of the appointment of a WHS Officer; and the establishment of monitoring and review processes.

The key issue currently facing the Site is the poor condition of Durham Castle, which is included on the English Heritage 'Buildings at Risk' Register. The condition of the Castle was identified as the key issue facing the Site in the ICOMOS-UK 1995 *Monitoring Review of UK World Heritage Sites*, and, due to funding difficulties, this issue has not yet been adequately resolved. The Castle is a fundamental component of the WHS's Outstanding Universal Value and the lack of funding for essential repairs is a key issue for the Site.

The Management Plan also addresses the issue of the WHS's boundary. As an early WHS inscription, the process of drawing WHS boundaries had not been refined when the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS was nominated. As a result the Site has been defined by a boundary that was drawn too tightly around its two main buildings, and which does not encapsulate, and therefore protect, some of the key significances of the WHS. The WHS Management Plan Steering Group has therefore decided to ask DCMS to recommend to the World Heritage Committee that the boundary be extended to include Palace Green. The success of this expansion and any need for future expansion will then be reviewed during the next revision of the Management Plan in 2011.

The only agreed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is the Justification for Inscription contained in the nomination in 1986, together with the ICOMOS evaluation of that nomination. This is different from current practice under which the World Heritage Committee would agree a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value at the time of inscription. This is considered by the Steering Group to require amplification, and the Management Plan proposes that the State Party be invited to submit the revised proposed Statement of SOUV contained in the Plan to the Committee for approval.

In addition to the above key issues, the other issues facing the site have been organised into five general themes:

- Managing the WHS;
- Conserving the Site and its Significances;
- Using the Site;
- Understanding the Site; and
- Enhancing Access and Sustainable Transport.

### Vision for the Future

The Management Plan provides a Vision for the future of the WHS. The Vision is designed to sustain the WHS's Outstanding Universal Value and broader significance for the benefit of future generations, whilst maintaining its authenticity of function.

The World Heritage Site (WHS) is, and will continue to be, a holy and tranquil place that is inspiring and life enhancing for all who come into contact with it. Separated from the rest of the City by the peaceful river gorge, the Durham peninsula will continue to be a welcoming and atmospheric space with a strong sense of its own identity, providing sanctuary from the pressures of everyday-life.

The globally significant cultural assets and setting of the WHS will be conserved sensitively, to ensure that they are handed down from generation to generation in the best possible condition. All works at, and in the vicinity of, the WHS will continue to be of the highest quality, with the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS as their core aim.

The WHS is the iconic, beautiful and historic heart of the City, the Diocese and the University, and it will continue to be made accessible for all. The continued relevance of the WHS and all it contains will be ensured through the ongoing high level of community use of the WHS, whilst its Outstanding Universal Value will be celebrated and promoted through accessible and informative educational programmes.

As the social, religious, educational and geographical centre of a number of communities, the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS will seek to use its globally significant status as a tool to benefit all who either live nearby or who use the site. Appropriate opportunities to benefit the communities that surround the peninsula, socially, spiritually, educationally or economically through their association with the WHS will actively be sought and pursued. The traditional core purposes of the Site will be maintained as an essential part of the WHS's Outstanding Universal Value and related significances.

## Key Principles

The management of a WHS is aided by the establishment of Key Principles. The six Key Principles for the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS are designed to be long lasting, and to remain relevant during all future revisions of the Management Plan. All actions at the WHS need to be tested against these Principles to ensure that they are in keeping with the spirit of the Management Plan, and that they hold the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS at their core.

- The Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS will be managed by consensus, achieved through an active partnership between all of the site managers, owners and relevant statutory agencies.
- The Management Plan's vision, key principles and objectives will provide the overarching framework for all plans, policies and decisions relating to the WHS.
- All decisions and actions at the site will have at their core the need for the high quality and informed conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value and related significances of the WHS.
- The management of the WHS will aim towards an increase in its accessibility, including the reasonable and practicable removal of physical, sensory, intellectual, social, cultural and organisational barriers to access.
- The management of the WHS will promote and increase knowledge and understanding of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS and its significances for all.
- All decisions and actions at the site will be based on the principles of sensitivity and appropriate sustainability, as defined by the Budapest Declaration on World Heritage.



**Management Objectives**

The Vision and Principles are complemented by a series of management objectives that seek to deliver a sustainable future for the WHS. The Management Plan's objectives have been developed through a clear understanding of the issues facing the Site. The intention is to review these objectives every 6 years; the Vision and the Key Principles are intended to provide a longer-term framework for the Site.

<i>Managing the World Heritage Site and its Setting</i>	
<b>Objective 1:</b>	Establish a WHS Coordinating Committee.
<b>Objective 2:</b>	Recommend that DCMS invite the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to approve a revised Statement of Significance and the extension of the Site to include Palace Green and undertake a future review of the WHS boundary.
<b>Objective 3:</b>	Conserve the setting of the WHS and encourage appropriate and sensitive development to support the ongoing regeneration of Durham and its environs.
<b>Objective 4:</b>	Monitor risks and periodically review the risk monitoring process.
<b>Objective 5:</b>	Seek funding for the management, conservation and promotion of the WHS.
<b>Objective 6:</b>	Regularly monitor the condition of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS in line with the indicators in the Management Plan and periodically review the Management Plan.

<i>Conserving the Site and its Outstanding Universal Value</i>	
<b>Objective 7:</b>	Continue to monitor and deepen an understanding of the built heritage resource to ensure that change is well managed and problems are rapidly identified and addressed.
<b>Objective 8:</b>	Ensure that the WHS's owners are supported in their management and conservation of the WHS.
<b>Objective 9:</b>	Ensure that the built heritage of the WHS is conserved, and that sympathetic materials, styles and techniques are utilised by all conservation projects within the WHS.
<b>Objective 10:</b>	Complete the works necessary to remove the Castle from the English Heritage 'Buildings at Risk' Register.
<b>Objective 11:</b>	Continue to develop and implement the high quality management of the Peninsula's archaeological and architectural history resource.
<b>Objective 12:</b>	Conserve and enhance the historic character and form of the Peninsula's and the WHS's historic townscapes, landscapes and open spaces.
<b>Objective 13:</b>	Continue to research, document and conserve the WHS's intangible values, qualities and significances.
<b>Objective 14:</b>	Continue to support the skills present at the WHS, including those skills relating to Christian worship, education, built heritage conservation and music.
<b>Objective 15:</b>	Further develop the high standard of collections curation at the WHS.

### *Using the Site*

- Objective 16:** Ensure that the aims of the University complement the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value and related significances of the WHS.
- Objective 17:** Ensure that Christian worship remains the primary use of the Cathedral, and that other uses do not impact upon this function.
- Objective 18:** Maintain, enhance and support community access and activities in the WHS.
- Objective 19:** Continue to develop a co-ordinated, high quality sustainable visitor experience at the WHS, which does not impact negatively on the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS.
- Objective 20:** Maximise the benefits brought to the region by the sustainable and appropriate use of the WHS as a visitor attraction, and maximise the benefit to the WHS of the local and regional development of Durham's tourism offer.

### *Enhancing Understanding of the Site*

- Objective 21:** Continue to support and enhance the high quality educational provision at the WHS in a manner that is inclusive and accessible to all.
- Objective 22:** Support high quality research that enhances the understanding and management of the WHS.

### *Improving Access and Sustainable Transport*

- Objective 23:** Improve access to the WHS for non-vehicular users and promote pedestrian and cycle modes of transport.  
Improve access between the bus and rail stations and the WHS, and encourage
- Objective 24:** improvements to the facilities and information available at the stations.  
Improve the facilities and experience for coach parties to the WHS in a way that does not
- Objective 25:** impact upon the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS and its setting.  
Monitor and assess car use within the WHS.
- Objective 26:** Identify and remove physical, social, organisational and intellectual barriers to access
- Objective 27:** across the WHS, where reasonable and practicable.

## **Implementing the Plan**

Within the UK, WH Sites are not statutory designations. However, the government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) encourages local authorities in England to develop specific planning policies for the WH Sites in their districts. The status of WH Sites in legislation is currently under review as part of the Government's national

designations Review (DCMS). At present WHS Management Plans have no statutory basis, rather they provide an advisory policy framework for guiding and influencing current, planned or potential management initiatives at a variety of scales and for different purposes. Achieving the desired aims for the WHS therefore depends on those signing up to the Management Plan working effectively together in partnership towards the agreed objectives.

The organisations that have worked together to develop the Management Plan for the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS now need to continue to work in partnership to implement its aims and objectives to secure the protection of the Site and its Outstanding Universal Value for future generations. The implementation of the Management Plan's objectives requires the support and participation of these and other organisations, individuals and funding bodies. The Plan itself can provide the focus for coordinating this effort, but it requires a significant level of continued commitment and resources if it is to succeed. Resolving the key issue of the condition of the Castle sufficient to remove it from the English Heritage 'Buildings at Risk' register will require particularly high levels of internal and external investment, funding and other forms of fundraising.

The recognition of this commitment to the WHS and the implementation of the Management Plan are implicit in the work of the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS Management Plan Steering Group. This group was responsible for bringing this WHS Management Plan to fruition, and have been working together for several years in this capacity. The existence of the Steering Group represents a long-term commitment by its members to conserving and improving the WHS.

The members of the Steering Group have a central role to play in the implementation and monitoring of the Management Plan. They have an important role to play in creating a sense of ownership and support for the objectives of the Plan amongst all users of the Site, and those that may be affected by the Plan. They have a responsibility to promote the Plan to potential funders, to raise the funds necessary to address the key issues raised in the Plan and to work towards the removal of the Castle from the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register. In order that progress with the plan may continue, the advisory and coordinating role of the WHS Management Plan Steering Group needs to continue; this Steering Group will be reconstituted as the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS Coordinating Committee. One of the first actions of this Committee will be the consideration of the appointment of a WHS Officer, to support them in their work.

The Management Plan's objectives will be achieved through a wide range of actions. These are outlined in the Plan along with their associated objectives, and are summarised in an Action Plan Summary Table contained in Section 5.0. This table identifies those agencies with the lead responsibility for the delivery of key actions, and identifies the target dates for their completion.



**London Office**

*Swan Court 9 Tanner Street London SE1 3LE  
Tel: 0207 089 6480 Fax: 0207 089 9260 Email: mail@cba.uk.net*

**South East Office**

*The Old Crown High Street Blackboys Uckfield East Sussex TN22 5JR  
Tel: 01825 891071 Fax: 01825 891075 Email: mail@cba.uk.net*