

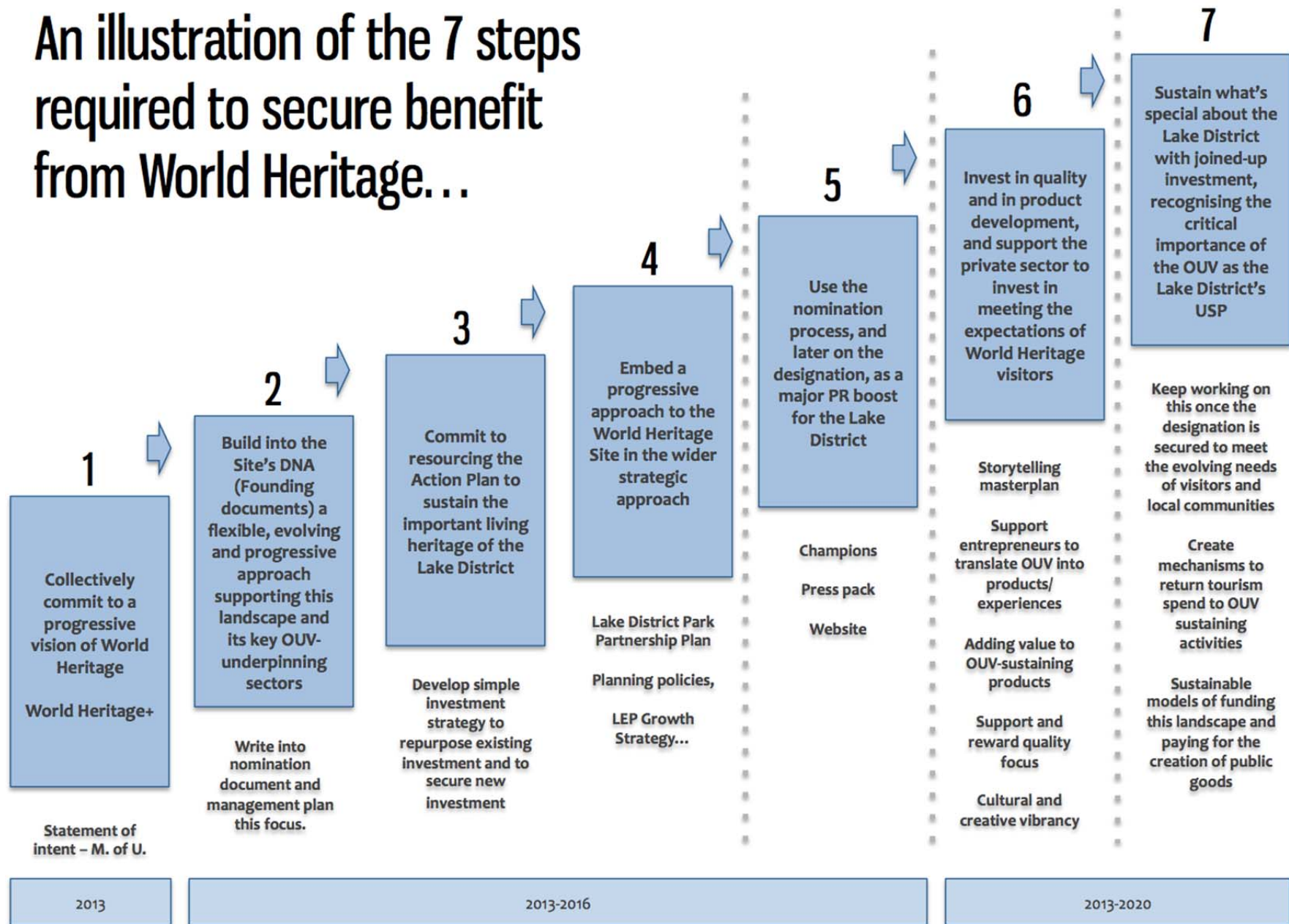
**How the Lake District
(and Cumbria)
can benefit from
World Heritage status
(and a simple action plan to make it
happen)**

James Rebanks, Rebanks Consulting Ltd

The Seven Potential Benefits from World Heritage+ for the Lake District (Cumbria)...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>Raising international profile and competitiveness</p> <p>Global PR boost—uniting behind a vision of what is best about this place endorsed by 190 countries</p>	<p>Upgrading the visitor economy</p> <p>Cultural (WH) visitors, quality and storytelling</p>	<p>Focuses efforts to sustain the ‘underpinning’ cultural landscape</p> <p>Farming and culture sustained and ideally given contemporary resonance</p>	<p>Enhancing ability to secure funding/ investment</p> <p>WHS would raise the profile of LD with funders</p>	<p>Attracting and retaining talent</p> <p>Civic and commercial pride in place focused on World-Class ‘lifestyle offer’ of destination</p>	<p>Creating entrepreneurial opportunities</p> <p>Translating OUV into £££</p>	<p>Being in the WHS elite club</p> <p>Opportunities for global collaboration/ research</p>
<p>The Lake District and Cumbria brands more powerful around the world</p> <p>Global media PR boost</p> <p>High quality brand associations</p> <p>Clear narrative of global significance...</p> <p>Endorsed by 190 countries</p>	<p>Attracting international visitors</p> <p>Entering developing World Heritage market</p> <p>Change visitor profile...</p> <p>Cultural tourism destination</p> <p>Develop better quality products and experiences</p> <p>Improve benefits for local communities</p>	<p>Giving clarity about focus on investment and efforts – sustaining OUV</p> <p>Raising profile of culture of Lake District and why it matters</p> <p>Development of a simple investment strategy for sustaining what matters</p>	<p>Raising heritage significance for funders like HLF</p> <p>Increased leverage of UK or EU funding to support evolution of farm businesses</p> <p>Raising profile with major global companies</p> <p>Emphasising importance of Lake District investment relative to other competitor areas</p>	<p>Using Cumbria’s two WHSs as key lifestyle assets</p> <p>Focus on liveability for highly skilled employees</p> <p>Focus on civic pride for retaining local talent</p> <p>Key identity to differentiate Cumbria as an investment location</p> <p>Recognition that sustaining place is valued and respected</p>	<p>Outdoor education</p> <p>Landscape conservation</p> <p>OUV interpretation</p> <p>Guiding</p> <p>New OUV-based visitor attractions</p> <p>Cultural tourism packages</p> <p>Farming culture experiences</p> <p>High value itineraries packages for WH market</p>	<p>Global partnerships on farming or cultural projects</p> <p>Access to significant donor programmes</p> <p>Partnerships at global level with other cultural landscapes</p> <p>International showcase for our solutions</p> <p>Minor perks of being in WHS club</p>

An illustration of the 7 steps required to secure benefit from World Heritage...



Glossary

UNESCO (World Heritage Centre)

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation – see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>. The UNESCO World Heritage programme is managed from the World Heritage Centre in Paris.

World Heritage

The World Heritage Convention has been signed up to by 190 states, making it one of the most adhered to global agreements. Only the Bahamas, Liechtenstein, Nauru, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu are not Party to the Convention. The World Heritage List is maintained by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed a committee of 21 state parties, and currently contains 981 places of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ or ‘OUV’ (see below).

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)

The overarching goal of the World Heritage Convention is the protection of cultural and natural properties of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ for mankind and to preserve it for future generations. Properties wishing to become World Heritage sites have to prove to UNESCO that they have something critical called, ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV) that is demonstrated in the physical attributes of the site. OUV means cultural and/ or natural significance that is exceptional enough to transcend national boundaries and to be relevant and of importance to the global community now and in the future.

See - <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/> - for the 10 possible OUV criteria.

Natural - World Heritage landscapes

The World Heritage list includes Natural sites like the Galapagos Islands, Yellowstone National Park, Everglades National Park, the Grand Canyon, the Norwegian Fjords, Serengeti National Park, Great Barrier Reef, and the Canadian Rocky Mountains. The Lake District is not, in World Heritage terms, a Natural landscape because its global significance lies largely in how it has been shaped by mankind over many centuries.

Cultural - World Heritage landscapes

The World Heritage list contains many iconic cultural sites like the Palace of Versailles, the Pyramids, The historic centre of Florence, the Taj Mahal, Machu Picchu, Paris, banks of the Seine, Uluru –Kata Tjuta (formerly known to many as “Ayers Rock”), the Statue of Liberty, Angkor Wat, the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (including Hadrian’s Wall) and Stonehenge, and Auchwitz Birkenau. But perhaps the most direct comparison with the Lake District is with some cultural sites that have been listed because of their having been shaped by a socio-economic tradition, places like the farmed terraces of Cinque Terre in Italy, the Rice Terraces of the Phillipine Cordilleras, the islands of the Vega Archipelago, the Coffee Cultural Landscape of Colombia, the Fujian Tulou earthen houses in China, the viniculture sites like the Wachau or the agro-pastoral shepherding landscape of the Causses and the Cevannes. These are places where the focus on conservation is on sustaining the living heritage that sustains the site.

World Heritage+

A simple concept entirely made up by the author to capture the point that whilst World Heritage is primarily about the conservation of globally important cultural and natural heritage, it can also be a powerful tool for socio-economic benefit for host communities. World Heritage+ simply describes the mindset and the aspiration to pursue this kind of approach above and beyond the necessary and important conservation objectives.

LDNPP

Lake District National Park Partnership – see <http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/aboutus/partnership>

LDNPA

Lake District National Park Authority – see <http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk>

Lake District World Heritage Project

The effort in recent years to coordinate partners into a successful nomination – See <http://www.lakeswhs.co.uk>

Lake District World Heritage Partnership (LDWHP)

The partnership of organisations, individuals and private businesses who have supported the nomination concept to date – see <http://www.lakeswhs.co.uk/partners.html>

Introduction

In 2009-2010 the Lake District World Heritage Project commissioned groundbreaking research on the economic potential of becoming a World Heritage site. Work that UNESCO described as ‘paradigm-changing’ and ‘the seminal research on the subject’.

That research and analysis has been used across the world, by the World Bank, UNESCO, ICOMOS, the governments of several countries including Japan, Mexico, Australia, Germany, Netherlands, and Italy, and by individual sites and private businesses. Readers wishing to understand the issues in more depth should read that document – **World Heritage Status: Is there opportunity for economic gain?**¹

Since 2010 we have worked around the world on the socio-economic impact potential of World Heritage Sites – and have witnessed the emergence of a growing body of evidence about how the designation can be used to best effect.

This paper is to help guide stakeholders in the Lake District, and Cumbria, to better understand the opportunity that WHS offers, to focus their aspirations on some key target socio-economic benefits that can be benefitted by World Heritage, and to understand the actions required to make these aspirations a reality.

A word of explanation on the World Heritage Nomination process...

For the Lake District to become a World Heritage it has to first be selected to go on the UK’s Tentative List. This was secured, after a review by a panel of experts in 2011.

The judgment of that panel of experts is that the Lake District probably has a very strong case for OUV, but needs to present its case effectively and address some technical issues before winning the UK’s slot for nomination. It is believed that the Lake District can address these issues and could be ready for submission by the UK government to the World Heritage Committee at some point in the next 2-4 years. The World Heritage Committee then examine the proposed sites from different state parties and decide whether to add them to the World Heritage List.

In reality, this means that the Lake District might win the UK’s berth of one for one of the coming years as soon as in the next 18 months, and would have several months to prepare its case. As will be seen in the pages that follow, if this proceeds as planned the Lake District needs to be ready to secure the potential advantage from this process. Some of the international media attention created by the nomination starts pre-inscription when the site is nominated by the states.

NB: Readers wishing to understand the OUV focus of the Lake District will soon be able to access this as the Technical Advisory Group 1 (TAG1) have been developing it with the support of UK national experts.

¹ **World Heritage Status: Is there opportunity for economic gain?** Research and Analysis of the socio-economic impact potential of UNESCO World Heritage Site status, Rebanks Consulting Ltd on behalf of the Lake District World Heritage Project (2009-10) – see <http://www.lakeswhs.co.uk/documents/WHSTheEconomicGainFinalReport.pdf>

A quick recap of the previous research...

It may be worthwhile to quickly recap the key lessons emerging from the 2009-10 research before going into greater detail about the opportunities and actions below:

- Most World Heritage Sites achieve very little by way of socio-economic impact – for the simple reason that this was not their motive for inscription and because they have not done anything to bring about socio-economic outcomes.

- The primary purpose of being a World Heritage Site is to conserve the globally important natural or cultural heritage of the destination.

- However a growing minority of World Heritage Site communities has chosen to use the designation in their marketing or to drive a process of placemaking – and many of these sites can show impressive socio-economic benefits.

- The motive for inscription is critical – by desiring a socio-economic benefit the Lake District is placing itself in the progressive minority of World Heritage Sites.

- A growing number of sites have experienced the benefits of the World Heritage brand through a ‘network effect’ – with a growing number of people around the world becoming World Heritage brand literate, understanding what it is, and seeking it out in their tourism itineraries. World Heritage brand literacy is greater amongst the most affluent societies – providing a significant marketing and PR opportunity to affluent, well-educated, cultural tourists.

- The tourism uplift is entirely dependent upon the way the designation is used – in some mature destinations the uplift in footfall is minimal, in other destinations a major uplift has been engineered using the designation.

- The maturity of the Lake District tourism product, and its scale, mean that any uplift in footfall would be incremental and constrained by tourism infrastructure capacity. More likely, with coordinated development of the product and marketing, is an incremental upgrade in the visitor profile to higher value international and cultural tourists (a 1% shift to cultural visitors with overall visitor numbers remaining static was valued at £20 million per annum).

Previous conclusion

A handful of World Heritage Sites have found themselves at the cutting edge of a movement around the world that seeks to focus the economic development of places on their uniqueness, their authenticity, their distinct sense of place, and the depth of their identity and culture (as validated and endorsed by UNESCO’s 185 countries). The impacts of World Heritage Site status are rarely accidental or unintended – they are overwhelmingly the result of coordinated and well thought through efforts to achieve targeted change. In short, sites that have achieved significant impacts have had a clear logic chain from the identification of the issues and problems they wished to address, a clear understanding of how WHS status could be used to catalyse change, following through to investing in the resources, activities and processes to deliver the impacts desired.

What's changed since the last report?

Since our initial analysis in 2009-2010 the potential value of being a World Heritage for the Lake District has, we believe, increased.

Why? Because the last 2-3 years have seen the emergence of a growing body of evidence showing significant impacts for a range of destinations that have seized the opportunity of being a World Heritage Site.

Four key trends are of strategic significance for the Lake District and Cumbria:

1. The continuing growth of cultural tourism as a key sector of the tourism market – with 40% of European visitors now being categorized as 'cultural tourists'. Cultural visitors are more likely to be new visitors, to travel further, to stay longer, spend more, and be more interested in having a meaningful relationship with the destination.

2. The increasing need to differentiate tourism or investment destinations from a homogenous mass of other 'clone' places – According to recent research 92% of commercial decision makers say the image and profile of locations is becoming more important – 60% say culture becoming more important in decision making. The old reliance upon hard infrastructure to attract talent and investment is not longer sufficient.

3. The growing awareness among high value consumers of the World Heritage brand – with a marked growth in the use of the brand in the tourism sphere in the past 3 years.

4. The growth of long-haul tourism in the developing world, where our traditional cultural reference points are less effective and World Heritage is recognized – global quality marks/brands matter more than ever as people become more affluent in the developing world and start to enjoy the leisure and travel we have long enjoyed. Visitation patterns are being established now that will last for many years.

5. Increased pressure (from the market and from changes to CAP) to find ways to add value to traditional farm businesses - so they can continue to sustain the distinctive sense of place of the Lake District. The average farm in the Lake District, according to recent research by Newcastle University, makes an £8000+ loss per annum.

NB. There is also a powerful pragmatic argument for proceeding with the Lake District's nomination, namely that a significant amount of time and money has been spent on it already, the lion's share of the cost of preparing the nomination documents, and it would be an unfortunate waste of that money not to pursue the process to its logical conclusion and reap the potential rewards.

What kinds of World Heritage benefits are possible?

The first thing that has to be said, again, is that becoming a World Heritage site does not automatically make anything good happen for a place. It will not result in new funding from UNESCO or anyone else. The benefits in the most successful sites are earned benefits.

Being a World Heritage Site offers the communities of the Lake District a significant potential socio-economic advantage. The key words are 'potential advantage', because World Heritage potential has to be realised by coordinated actions. As one study put it, 'World Heritage is what you make of it'².

If the Lake District wants to be a lazy World Heritage Site, with no vision for change, no programme of actions, no coordination, and no partner commitment then this will deliver little or no socio-economic benefits.

But there is a strong body of evidence to show World Heritage Site status being an effective catalyst for more effective **conservation, partnership working, civic pride, social capital, learning and education** and **additional funding and investment**.

A number of sites have used their World Heritage status as a boost to their **international profile**. There is a growing body of evidence around the world that the UNESCO World Heritage status gives places a greater global profile than they otherwise would have – because 'World Heritage' is increasingly understood by high-value employees, tourists, or inward investors, as **a statement of quality and exceptionalism**.

The UNESCO designation attracts priceless **global media** attention, and, if the opportunity is taken, can present a destination as a one of the world's 'must see' places. This global profile is a huge opportunity for destination marketing and development if it can be translated into visitation by effective on-line communication and booking systems.

Many destinations have found that being a World Heritage site presents them with a powerful brand that adds value to their existing brands; and often transcends them in the global sphere. This is one of the few destination brands that is truly global and at its best place-defining.

Some significant destinations, like Bordeaux, use the designation as **an endorsement of the quality of their area to promote themselves as places to live, work, invest and play**.

Some significant global companies use their proximity to World Heritage sites to promote their location to **attract or retain high value employees** – because of the crucial importance of differentiating an employment location, and showcasing its lifestyle offer for employees and their families.

The global evidence suggests that there is a growing market for World Heritage tourism – with visitors seeking out World Heritage sites or combinations of them (this is particularly true of growing markets like the Chinese or Indian middle classes).

² Study quoted - **World Heritage for the Nation: Identifying, Protecting and Promoting our World Heritage, A consultation paper**, DCMS, UK Government, December 2008

World Heritage status is increasingly used by the most affluent and well-educated tourists to differentiate between potential destinations based on quality. The evidence suggests that World Heritage visitors are more likely to be international, to be affluent, to spend more in the destination, to stay longer, and more interested in the values and the 'OUV' of the destination (including how they can contribute to conservation or sustainability).

The challenge is that World Heritage visitors expect to be able to access and understand the OUV narrative across the site – they expect a unified identity, a coherent narrative of the place and accessible interpretation.

World Heritage tourists are also more discerning, and more demanding of higher quality standards. Quite simply, they expect a world-class destination to match their World Heritage credentials. They also expect to find a destination that cares about conserving its Outstanding Universal Value.

Many companies around the world have discovered that **'World Heritage sells'**, and they are ideally placed to **translate OUV into products and experiences** that high value cultural visitors wish to consume. Other companies have succeeded in providing the transport, **accommodation, food and drink, retail and leisure or cultural experiences** that World Heritage visitors require. A number of companies have succeeded in packaging the elements of a site, or multiple sites, into **itineraries and packages** that are sold at a premium.

There are growing number of sites using the designation to focus efforts **to support producers of primary products lower the costs of production, or add value to products**, for their underpinning socio-economic systems – especially where there is an agricultural system sustaining the landscape.

What do economic stakeholders want this to achieve?

We have listened carefully to stakeholders in the Lake District on this issue since 2006 when we were first involved. In the past three months the following groups of stakeholders were given the opportunity to shape and input into the development of this paper and action plan:

The Cumbria Tourism and Business Parliamentary Group

Cumbria Tourism AGM

Lakes Hospitality Association AGM

Lake District National Park Partnership Business Task Force

The Cumbrian Cultural Tourism Steering Group

This paper also benefits from the author having been recently commissioned to work with the **Lake District National Park Partnership working group on Farming Strategy** developing a positioning statement for the Partnership, and the learning of the author as part of the **Technical Advisory Group 1 for the Lake District World Heritage Project** over several years.

This is, in total more than 300 important economic stakeholders, many of which commented and offered feedback.

The message from each of these forums has been clear and concise, **when stakeholders understand the nature of the potential benefits, and how these could be secured they are overwhelmingly supportive of the concept of a progressive economic-benefit-creating World Heritage Site.** For a purely conservation-based approach there is less support and more concerns about potential negative impacts.

Many stakeholders have expressed that they were skeptical about the potential benefits of World Heritage, but can now see how the nomination would, if handled well, help address fundamental issues for the Lake District.

Stakeholders are not foolish enough to think it is a magic bullet, but instead as an opportunity for securing advantage that can and should, be seized.

Economic stakeholders have been clear that they wish to see a WHS nomination developed that has economic benefits as part of its DNA, and are keen that private sector businesses are represented on the working groups that develop the nomination documents. It is encouraging that the potential for World Heritage is also written into many of the key strategic documents, like the National Park Partnerships Plan, and in recent statements on the future of farming in the Lake District.

The following diagram summarises what we believe the stakeholders have told us should be the priorities for benefit:

The Seven Potential Benefits from World Heritage+ for the Lake District (Cumbria)...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>Raising international profile and competitiveness</p> <p>Global PR boost—uniting behind a vision of what is best about this place endorsed by 190 countries</p>	<p>Upgrading the visitor economy</p> <p>Cultural (WH) visitors, quality and storytelling</p>	<p>Focuses efforts to sustain the 'underpinning' cultural landscape</p> <p>Farming and culture sustained and ideally given contemporary resonance</p>	<p>Enhancing ability to secure funding/ investment</p> <p>WHS would raise the profile of LD with funders</p>	<p>Attracting and retaining talent</p> <p>Civic and commercial pride in place focused on World-Class 'lifestyle offer' of destination</p>	<p>Creating entrepreneurial opportunities</p> <p>Translating OUV into £££</p>	<p>Being in the WHS elite club</p> <p>Opportunities for global collaboration/ research</p>
<p>The Lake District and Cumbria brands more powerful around the world</p> <p>Global media PR boost</p> <p>High quality brand associations</p> <p>Clear narrative of global significance...</p> <p>Endorsed by 190 countries</p>	<p>Attracting international visitors</p> <p>Entering developing World Heritage market</p> <p>Change visitor profile...</p> <p>Cultural tourism destination</p> <p>Develop better quality products and experiences</p> <p>Improve benefits for local communities</p>	<p>Giving clarity about focus on investment and efforts – sustaining OUV</p> <p>Raising profile of culture of Lake District and why it matters</p> <p>Development of a simple investment strategy for sustaining what matters</p>	<p>Raising heritage significance for funders like HLF</p> <p>Increased leverage of UK or EU funding to support evolution of farm businesses</p> <p>Raising profile with major global companies</p> <p>Emphasising importance of Lake District investment relative to other competitor areas</p>	<p>Using Cumbria's two WHSs as key lifestyle assets</p> <p>Focus on liveability for highly skilled employees</p> <p>Focus on civic pride for retaining local talent</p> <p>Key identity to differentiate Cumbria as an investment location</p> <p>Recognition that sustaining place is valued and respected</p>	<p>Outdoor education</p> <p>Landscape conservation</p> <p>OUV interpretation</p> <p>Guiding</p> <p>New OUV-based visitor attractions</p> <p>Cultural tourism packages</p> <p>Farming culture experiences</p> <p>High value itineraries packages for WH market</p>	<p>Global partnerships on farming or cultural projects</p> <p>Access to significant donor programmes</p> <p>Partnerships at global level with other cultural landscapes</p> <p>International showcase for our solutions</p> <p>Minor perks of being in WHS club</p>

The strategic need for World Heritage+...

Context is critical to how you think about the potential for a World Heritage Site in the Lake District. Whilst this is not the place for a detailed treatment of the economy of Cumbria it is necessary to provide a summary of the relevant issues as context for what follows. We believe that what World Heritage can be at its best, it exactly what stakeholders and key strategies suggest is most needed:

Tourism priorities for action

Success is sometimes the worst thing that can happen to a place. It can make places lazy and more resistant to change and new ideas... We believe that the Lake District and Cumbria cannot rest on its laurels (its attraction of 16 million visitors per annum spending £2.2 billion). It has some challenges that require careful thought and strategic solutions:

Need to strengthen the Brand – projecting an effective and distinctive image onto the world stage to compete with competitor destinations

The need to invest in quality improvements to the tourism infrastructure – transport, accommodation, food and drink, retail and leisure and cultural experiences

Need to increase visitor numbers (sustainably), visitor spend, occupancy levels in accommodation businesses to improve the quality and quantity of tourism jobs

Need to increase numbers of international visitors (and first-time visitors)

Developing new attractions and experiences – to better engage visitors with the places they visit

Marketing a distinctive and world-class product effectively to hold existing market share, and gain market share in developing markets

Improving the coordination and animation of the natural and cultural heritage assets of the county to visitors

Need for skills development to maximize human potential in key sectors

Raising environmental standards, resource efficiency and environmental stewardship role of tourism sector – not least through visitor gifting and other financial mechanisms

These challenges reflect government policy, the strategy of Visit England, and the Destination Management Plan for Cumbria. But it should also be noted that the economy of the Lake District (and the rest of Cumbria) is a lot more than simply tourism).

There is a need to reinvent and develop our tourism offer to address some of our most significant challenges – i.e. the economic productivity (GVA) of tourism, the wages earned in the tourism sector, the need for greater skills, training and career development, and the need for greater quality to drive added value.

Farming priorities for action

The Lake District National Park Partnership recently developed and agreed to adopt an Intention statement for Agriculture in the Lake District. This followed a research paper from Newcastle University that suggested that the average farm in the Lake District was making an £8000+ loss per annum. The Farming Intention Statement highlighted three key issues:

Increasing understanding, appreciation and awareness of the role of farming in this landscape in the past, present and future

Improving the profitability of farming, based on livestock enterprises, in the Lake District

Maximising the public benefits of farming in the Lake District and securing a greater return for farmers for maintain and enhancing these benefits.

The bottom line is that there are currently insufficient market return for the goods produced in this landscape to reflect their unique provenance, the higher costs of production in this landscape, and the wider eco-system services produced by the farming system (including sustaining the cultural landscape). The Intention Statement is clear about the importance of agriculture to the National Park:

“Farming is the most critical economic, social, environmental and cultural activity in the Lake District. It is the key human activity that gives the Lake District its sense of place and its distinctive and iconic landscape character, and it is central to the identity of many Lake District communities. Its plays a critical underpinning role for both tourism and the food and drink sector.

The Partnership is committed to finding ways to help farming to be profitable and productive, and at the same time sustain and enhance the special qualities of the National Park and the ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ of the proposed World Heritage Site.”

Wider-economic priorities (Lake District and Cumbria)

The Lake District National Park Partnership Plan sets out on behalf of a wide range of partners the key strategic focus for the future of the National Park, based on the best available evidence. Amongst the key priorities are, Supporting and developing profitable farming and forestry businesses while delivering sustainable land management, achieving world class visitor experiences, and helping to maintain spectacular landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage. The Partnership Vision is that it will be:

“An inspirational example of sustainable development in action: It will be a place where a prosperous economy, world class visitor experiences and vibrant communities all come together to sustain the spectacular landscape, its wildlife and cultural heritage. Local people, visitors and the many organisations working in the National Park or have a contribution to make to it, must be united in achieving this.”

The EU Growth Strategy for Cumbria is currently in development by the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), but their Key Priorities were set out in March 2013. The priority sectors are Energy, Manufacturing, Food and drink and the Visitor Economy. The

LEP acknowledges that ‘the visitor economy permeates virtually every sector of Cumbria’s wider economy’. One of the key challenges is to reduce the Cumbrian dependence on the public sector for employment. One of the LEP key priorities is **‘Environment: using Cumbria’s environment as a key economic asset’**.

It states that **‘Cumbria’s environment offers significant potential for growth across a range of sectors – and protecting that environment is vital to the success of many of our businesses.’** Key actions in delivering this include:

Working with partners, utilising the very strong Cumbria and Lake District brands even more effectively in selling products and services such as higher added value agri-products, leisure and hospitality, and food and drink, and supporting businesses to do so

Through partners, exploiting the significant opportunities offered by expanding the appeal of Cumbria as a tourism and leisure destination and place to live and work, nationally and internationally, developing outside the tourist hot spots and into less traditional markets and enhancing the attraction of Cumbria for recruitment to support industry

Lobbying for continued investment in the improvement of the quality of Cumbria’s public realm and visitor infrastructure, particularly in key retail and visitor destinations

Encouraging collaboration between the private and public sector to fund promotion of the county to businesses, visitors and potential employees, and promoting the quality of life that is on offer to new and relocating businesses, as part of this developing a Cumbria Opportunities website promoting, for example, jobs, investment and supply chain opportunities

Strategic focus

There is a great deal of commonality in the key strategies, and widespread agreement on what our biggest challenges are. We have to answer the following questions...

What have we got that can engage the World’s attention about this place?

What endorses our quality on the global stage?

How do we maintain/raise our profile in developing markets?

How do we beat competitors to increasingly rare investment and funding opportunities to improve our products and experiences?

We think this was best answered by a tourism stakeholder at the Cumbria Tourism AGM who approached us after the opportunity of WH was explained and said...

‘This World Heritage thing is a no-brainer, it’s the only big idea in town... we need to do this and do it right’.

Conclusion

Lets keep it simple, because its obvious from what you have already read above. There is a powerful potential match between what World Heritage can do, what stakeholders know is needed, and what the Lake District (and Cumbria) most needs.

World Heritage offers a significant boost and focus to our efforts to deliver our existing strategic priorities – it is not about inventing new goals, or distracting us from the job in hand, quite the opposite its about putting more thrust into what is most needed.

Since our initial analysis in 2009-2010 the potential value of being a World Heritage for the Lake District has, we believe, increased.

The bottom line is that this is a significant opportunity that we can't afford to miss.

To really understand the value of this opportunity you need to consider a counter-factual scenario: Would we lose out if a competitor destination secured World Heritage Status?

The answer we believe is a clear YES: their profile would be raised relative to ours, they would have an advantage over us at attracting cultural visitors, international visitors, and visitors from the developing world, they would have a boost to their ability to attract and retain investment, funding and talent, and they would have the endorsement of 190 states around the world as being a place of global importance, something they would remind us of on a daily basis with the clear implication that their heritage is of a higher order of designation than ours.

It is hard to imagine anyone in the Lake District seeking to pass up the opportunity to secure these competitive advantages, and risk a competitor in the global marketplace securing them instead.

This does not mean that anything will happen automatically, or that there is a free lunch but instead, simply, that we have an opportunity to secure an advantage and the onus is on us to secure it and make it meaningful.

There is a school of thought that states 'We'll never do this properly here, so we may as well not even try'. This is an argument for doing nothing and accepting a slow and steady decline of the Lake District and Cumbria relative to other places in the UK and abroad. We think it is a poor argument, unbecfitting the Lake District, and best ignored.

Can we flunk it and mess it up? Yes, almost certainly. But that's a reason to step up and raise our game, and do it right, not step back and give up.

Action Plan: What we need to do to take the opportunity...

We believe that if the Lake District, and Cumbria, is to take advantage of this opportunity then there needs to be a fairly simple and straightforward strategy for securing benefit. This isn't rocket science. It is simply about taking the necessary steps to be ready to translate the World Heritage process into economic activity on the ground to benefit Cumbrian people and businesses.

Some of these steps are relatively short-term and low cost, other are structural and will take much longer and much more investment – the action plan that follows tries to be honest about this and does not try to quantify the unquantifiable.

Our assumption for the timescales involved is as follows:

October 2013 – New technical evaluation submitted to Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), UK Government

January 2014 – Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), UK Government, makes decision about readiness of Lake District to proceed with nomination.

December 2014 – World Heritage Site application (Nomination document and Management Plan) submitted to Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), UK Government

January 2015 - Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), UK Government, submits nomination documents to UNESCO

July 2016 – UNESCO World Heritage Committee makes decision on nomination.

Because the Lake District is a more complicated nomination than many potential World Heritage Sites this timescale may change – and the timescales given below would change to reflect this.

The key thing to note is that the global media would pick this up as a story in January 2014 and would intensify their interest through 2015 and 2016.

Step 1 – Collectively commit to a progressive vision of World Heritage = World Heritage+

It may seem obvious, but the first step in this journey is for the key partners to make a very public commitment to developing a World Heritage nomination that is about securing socio-economic benefit. Previous research has shown that a wide range of potential benefits can be secured from becoming a World Heritage Site if local stakeholders are committed to making that happen – because it is merely a catalyst or stimulus to a range of different aspirations. So key to success is being clear about the socio-economic outcomes that are desired by the Lake District. We call this World Heritage+, making the designation about more than conservation.

Stakeholders should make a strong commitment to creating a socio-economic benefit creating World Heritage Site, a statement of intent, and should be seen publicly to sign up to this statement of intent for the potential site.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME- BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
<p>Meet and adopt this approach formally in a statement or memorandum of understanding.</p> <p>PR to communicate this focus to the communities of Cumbria.</p>	<p>Stakeholders understand better the focus of the bid and the progressive approach being pursued.</p>	<p>Most stakeholders consulted by us support the approach we have outlined in this paper.</p>	<p>By October 2013.</p>	<p>None.</p> <p>Use existing PR support for partners.</p>	<p>Lake District National Park Partnership +</p> <p>TAG 1 World Heritage Partnership</p>

Step 2 - Build into the site's DNA (founding documents) a flexible, evolving and progressive approach to supporting this landscape and its key OUV-underpinning sectors

A key lesson from other sites around the world is that the tone of a World Heritage Site is often set by its founding documents, and by the motivation that local stakeholders have for pursuing the UNESCO inscription. It is critical that that the Lake District World Heritage Site's founding documents reflect this socio-economic focus and aspiration. The good news is that the partners who have worked on the nomination process for the past few years are united in their shared aspiration for this to be an economically progressive World Heritage Site. There is a second reason why this is essential, namely that to convince UNESCO that the OUV of the site can be sustained, it will be necessary for their to be a strong commitment to sustaining the underpinning socio-economic activities of the landscape – particularly its traditional farming system.

The technical advisory groups working on the nomination should, with the support of the business community, write into the nomination documents this focus. This has the added value of providing evidence to UNESCO and UK government of the strength of the local commitment to sustaining the OUV attributes and the underpinning socio-economic system.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME- BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
Ensure that a socio-economically progressive approach is developed in the nomination documents and later in the management plan	The nomination documents would contain commitments to sustaining the socio-cultural landscape of the Lakes and taking a proactive approach to sustaining this cultural landscape.	Our consultation suggests that this is already deeply embedded in the technical approach of the bid and a core motivation of core partners.	To coincide with the submission of those documents to UK Government and expert advisory groups (ICOMOS et al)	No additional cost.	Technical Advisory Group 1 of the World Heritage Partnership

Step 3 - Commit to resourcing the action plan to sustain the important living heritage of the Lake District

This will range from relatively low-cost items like developing a media pack and World Heritage website to take advantage of the nomination period, through to medium-term investments in better interpretation and storytelling of this cultural landscape, through to longer-term and more challenging solutions that require investment like sustaining the underpinning economic system by addressing issues like farm succession and quality of the hotel infrastructure.

Stakeholders should develop a simple investment strategy for coordinating future investment to sustain the OUV of the Lake District, and to transform the World Heritage potential advantage into reality.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME-BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
Develop simple investment strategy explaining how the areas of focus in Step 6 – see below – will be delivered.	Creation of investment strategy	This is not about new investment, but better purposing of existing investment	By early 2014	C. £10K	Lake District National Park Partnership + TAG 1 Potentially requiring specialist external support.

Step 4 - Embed a progressive World Heritage Site in the wider strategic approach

A progressive World Heritage site would have to be delivered and implemented largely through existing resources and structures, so it is critical that this initiative is embedded as a strategic priority for stakeholders. This needs to be a high priority for the Local Economic Partnership, for future EU investment, for targeting of agricultural and agri-environment investment, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and for a range of other strategic initiatives. The concept of sustaining a ‘cultural landscape’ needs to have primacy in the strategic approach to the Lake District. This is critical to focus stakeholder’s and their future investment on sustaining and securing benefit from the site’s OUV (see below).

Stakeholders should ensure that the World Heritage economic opportunity is properly understood and that this understanding is reflected in wider strategic priorities.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME-BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
Make this a	Is this a key	Our	By	No additional	Lake District

key priority in the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan	priority from 2013 going forwards? Yes/No.	consultation suggests that the will and support exists to make this a reality.	November 2013	cost	National Park Partnership Cumbria LEP (key initial step is support of Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park Authority, and TAG 1 of the World Heritage Partnership)
Embed this in the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership strategy and EU Growth Strategy					
Influence investment of other partners like DEFRA family and future of RDPE					

Step 5 - Use the nomination process, and later on the designation, as a major PR boost for the Lake District

Securing benefit will need a professional, creative and passionate form of championing. The Lake District needs to be ready to turn the attention that comes with being part of the nomination process into secured economic benefits. This has four core actions:

Champions

Having passionate and credible **champions** or **ambassadors** (preferably at least some of whom are from the private sector) of this agenda who can speak to the world's press and get across key positive messages about the Lake District and Cumbria. This would require an agreed script to be developed, and a shared understanding of the key strategic messages.

Press pack

Having professional materials ready for journalists in a range of key languages in the form of a **Lake District World Heritage press pack**. Getting across the key messages to a global audience through the world's media. It is crucial that marketing and heritage professionals work together to ensure that the marketing sells the OUV of the site. Interestingly, the emerging OUC case contains some powerful marketing messages – namely that the Lake District is the seminal cultural landscape that changed how people around the world view landscape. That would be a globally endorsed message that could

sell this destination. This global re-profiling for the Lake District (allied to the existing World Heritage Site at Hadrian’s Wall) should be also embedded in efforts to promote Cumbria to inward investors based on the fusion of economic and lifestyle opportunities that the county offers.

Website

Having mechanisms for translating interest in the WHS into economic outcomes – at its simplest having a **Lake District World Heritage website that turns interest into bookings** – potentially selling itineraries and of packages of OUV-based experiences. It will be critical to focus on quality of the products and experiences. It should be noted that whilst the Lake District is skilled experienced and equipped to sell the destination to tourists already, this is about being ready to sell to people who approach the destination often for the first time through the prism of World Heritage – the selling of the World Heritage Site needs to reflect this, and be search optimized accordingly. It should also seek the added value of having two World Heritage Sites in Cumbria in close proximity to each other, and seek to link them for wider Cumbrian benefit.

This will also require the product to meet the expectations, see below:

ACTIONS	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME- BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
Identify, train and prepare champions Develop multi-lingual press pack and key messages script Develop online presence for translation of interest into bookings and commerce	By autumn 2013 do we have champions in place ready to respond to media attention? Do we have a multi-lingual press pack in place with key messages? Can an international World Heritage audience quickly and simply learn about our place, its OUV and	The basic product already exists, this is about linking the opportunity to the potential demand to make securing benefit a reality.	By early 2014	Champions – no additional cost Press-pack - £10-£20k plus in-kind support from Cumbria Tourism and others Website - £10-30k depending on the functions required	We would suggest that the expertise to do this lies in the following partners: Champions – briefed and prepared by TAG 1 Press-pack – Cumbria Tourism, Invest in Cumbria and TAG1 Website – Cumbria Tourism and TAG1

	book a room and transport etc?				
--	--------------------------------	--	--	--	--

Step 6 - Invest in quality and in product development, and support the private sector to invest in meeting the expectations of World Heritage visitors

The Lake District tourism is good, but in some regards is not 'great'. World Heritage needs to be a catalyst for making key elements better. There are two core reasons why focusing on the product itself is important; 1) The quality of the product is key to securing greater value from tourism, and 2) adding value to the farming and tourism products is a key way to return value to the producers and sustainers of the landscape to sustain its sense of place and its OUV. Here are 5 simple actions to make this happen:

Storytelling Masterplan

The Lake District will need to be better at telling the story of its landscape to new and existing audiences if it is to be experienced and understood as a cultural tourism destination of the highest order. There may well be a need to think carefully about how to tell the story of the different 13 World Heritage valleys (the primary valleys of the Lake District as described by Wordsworth). This is, regardless of World Heritage, a core challenge for the Lake District – how to make its key narratives easily accessible to people who visit this destination. One of the toughest challenges will be to bring to life and animate the underpinning farming culture of the Lake District (this might be piloted in one valley initially). Ultimately, this will require innovative forms of storytelling and a coherent approach to explaining the OUV to best effect in different places. A model for this is the Interpretation master plan for Hadrian's Wall that has guided how different sites and attractions avoid duplication and create a more enticing destination.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME-BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
Storytelling Masterplan	Can a World Heritage visitor arrive in the Lake District and get a coherent and inspiring story of what its OUV is, and why it	More than achievable, this is critical to the aspiration to be a cultural tourism destination.	We would suggest piloting this in one valley in 2013-2014. Developing interpretation plan for 13 valleys in 2014-2015.	c. £30-50k (Not cheap, but high value for money as it can better inform the investment of millions of pounds per annum in the Lake District)	Requires specialist external skills (a company like Metaphor or one of their competitors)... We would suggest that key partners might be the National Trust, perhaps to pilot this in Wasdale...

	matters?				And TAG1 partners to develop full interpretation plan.
--	----------	--	--	--	--

Support entrepreneurs to translate OUV into products/experiences

The lesson from other sites is that businesses can often translate the OUV into products and experiences, but they need the support of heritage professionals to do so. It may be necessary to offer training or an ‘OUV translated for Businesses’ pack for businesses in what the OUV is, where it exists, how they can explain it customers, and how it might be translated into products and experiences. World Heritage visitors will want a range of products and services, many of which, thanks to the maturity of the Lake District tourism market, will already exist, but some new opportunities will exist in terms of transport, accommodation, food and drink, retail or leisure activities – or indeed in the packaging of these elements into a holiday itinerary that takes in key sites or valleys of the proposed World Heritage Site. There will be opportunities for farming businesses to offer access and interpretation of the farming traditions and practices.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME-BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
OUV (sense of place) training and support for businesses	Is the private businesses empowered through understanding OUV to translate it into products/experiences/sales?	Already part of what many businesses do, this would be about understanding OUV so very possible – should include transport, accommodation, food and drink, retail and leisure offer.	Ideally starting once OUV has been agreed with UK government – but critical that this is in place for nomination year.	Approx. £5k. Series of training events for businesses.	May need specialist external support – similar training has taken place at Hadrian’s Wall undertaken by the author.

Adding value to OUV-sustaining products

Sustaining the OUV of the Lake District depends in part on sustaining its traditional farming businesses because they play a critical role in sustaining the cultural landscape. A key economic challenge is to ensure that these businesses remain viable. So this is about linking opportunity and need: the opportunity of an increased interest in the cultural landscape that comes with being a World Heritage site, with the need to add value to farming products. A recent study by Newcastle University shows the farm businesses making, on average, an £8,000 loss per year – so finding ways to secure revenue for farmers for their marketable goods (meat, wool and breeding stock) and their non-

market eco-system services has to be a priority. This isn't easy, and people have tried various initiatives over the years. But in telling the story of this place, and marketing the destination to visitors, it is imperative that part of the experience is to enjoy high quality Herdwick hogget or mutton, or to buy locally crafted woolen goods etc. This should be considered a key part of the Lake District World Heritage experience – and it will require coordinated efforts by a range of stakeholders to make it happen.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME-BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
Identify which products directly return revenue to OUV sustainers and work with partners to add value to these products. (i.e. Herdwick meat, wool and ecosystem services)	Are the sustainers of this landscape financially viable? And receiving a premium on their products that reflects their public goods value?	Already part of what many businesses do, this would be about understanding OUV so very possible.	Already underway through many initiatives – Perhaps needs new focus on OUV attributes once these are agreed.	Approx. £? This is not about new costs, but about better focus of the £10 million + a year spent on agriculture in the Lake District and from other sources Cumbria Tourism have secured £50,000 from the Prince's Countryside Fund for a project promoting Herdwick meat.	Everyone in the Lake District National Park Partnership – particularly the Farming and Forestry Task Force Group. It is already core business and critical for future of place whether WHS happens or not.

Support and reward quality focus

World Heritage tourists are likely to have higher expectations in terms of quality of the tourism product – the transport, accommodation, food and drink, retail and leisure. Pursuing World Heritage status should be a catalyst for increased efforts to raise the quality of the offer, and to package, celebrate and reward those operators that offer

quality that meets the standards required. As focusing on quality is also the most effective way to add value to tourism as an economic sector for the Cumbrian economy; through raising spend per visitor, and through the knock on effects of creating better trained and better rewarded employment opportunities, this is a matter of some strategic importance to Cumbria.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME- BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
<p>Private and public sector to invest in quality improvements to tourism infrastructure, and the welcome that World Heritage Visitors will expect...</p> <p>Celebrate and reward those that invest in quality through greater exposure to the World Heritage marketplace.</p>	<p>Does the product we offer potential World Heritage visitors meet their expectations of quality?</p>	<p>Raising all of product to this level is perhaps too ambitious in current financial climate – but there is a lot of high quality product in the Lake District and Cumbria and packing this together into an experience worthy of a WHS is achievable.</p>	<p>Package those elements that are of an appropriate quality for WH market in 2013-14... And widen exposure as demand grows and as other businesses meet the quality standard required.</p>	<p>Approx. £?</p> <p>To promote. Celebrate and reward existing pool of quality has minimal cost.</p> <p>To raise performance of others requires more significant investment in line with the Tourism Connect programme run previously by Cumbria Tourism (c.£3-£5m)</p>	<p>Cumbria Tourism and other DMO partners –with support of others to attract investment.</p>

Cultural and creative vibrancy

The suggested OUV focus of the Lake District World Heritage site is a combination of its underpinning farming landscape and culture and the ways that this landscape has inspired other ideas about conservation and landscape. This isn't a dead historic process, but something that is ongoing to the present day. There is a need to use the World Heritage process to showcase the best of Cumbrian culture and creativity, and to show that this tradition of globally important culture and creativity emerging from this landscape and these communities continues, evolving and shaping new ideas and practices. To this end there is a need to do two things: 1) better package the existing cultural offer of the Lake District (particularly those elements relevant to the OUV) into something coherent that can be consumed and experienced by visitors and by local people, and 2) invest in and support efforts to continue this creative tradition by

supporting organisations and initiatives that re-invent, challenge and animate this cultural landscape.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE/ REALISTIC	TIME- BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
Invest in programme of cultural and creative activities to offer contemporary take on this landscape and its OUV.	Does the OUV and the values of the site resonate with, and engage with contemporary audiences and relate to contemporary issues?	Tough in current public funding climate – but possible given the excellent arts organisations and venues which exist, several of which have evolved the OUV and working on related issues already.	We would suggest that this is critical to the nomination year – showcasing not just the past, but also Cumbria as culturally vibrant in the here and now.	Approx. £? Partly deliverable by refocusing of existing programmes, but also requiring new investment from other sources like the Arts Council and Lottery.	The Cultural Tourism working group – secretariat provided by Cumbria Tourism would seem a natural starting point for this initiative.

Step 7 - Sustain what's special about the Lake District with joined up investment, recognizing the critical importance of the OUV as the Lake District's USP.

If World Heritage inscription were pursued as a short-term PR gimmick with no long-term coordinated plan to managing the landscape and securing benefit from the designation then the effect would be relatively short-lived. It would also carry a risk of inflated expectations coming crashing down to earth soon after the initial efforts faded away. The bottom line all depends on the commitment and self-belief we have in this landscape, whether we really believe that it is so important that we will, can, and want to sustain its important attributes, and that we have the energy and wit to make this happen. The greatest potential benefit from the inscription would be if it becomes the catalyst for coordinated and ongoing efforts to add value to key Lake District products, experiences and businesses. It also needs to be about creating an economic model that genuinely sustains the cultural landscape and pays for the OUV public goods that it values. How do we do this? With very great difficulty, because we know that many initiatives have been undertaken to try and achieve this in recent decades.

The point is not that becoming a World heritage Site will magically make this easy, but that it can, and should, focus all stakeholder's minds on the task in hand and put international and national focus on their effectiveness. Future strategic documents for the Lake District should focus on both sustaining the OUV and on securing the potential benefits of the World Heritage brand. The enhanced heritage significance of Lake

District should be used effectively to secure investment from a range of heritage and non-heritage funders and investors.

ACTION	SUCCESS CRITERIA	ACHIEVABLE / REALISTIC	TIME-BOUND	COST	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THIS?
<p>Make the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan the strategy for sustaining the OUV of the World Heritage Site – targeting investment at those elements that sustain its unique sense of place.</p> <p>Create new models for returning tourism revenue to land management and OUV sustaining activities.</p>	<p>Is the OUV and the sense of place of the Lake District sustained?</p>	<p>Its going to be tough to sustain all is special about the Lake District – but everyone is clear that we have to find ways to do so – because its OUV/sense of place is its core asset.</p>	<p>This isn't time-bound – its going to be core work every year from now into the distant future...</p>	<p>Approx. £?</p>	<p>Everyone in the Lake District National Park Partnership – particularly the Farming and Forestry Task Force Group.</p> <p>It is already core business and critical for future of place whether WHS happens or not</p>

THE DIAGRAM BELOW ILLUSTRATES THESE 7 KEY STEPS.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT...

STEPS 1-4

NEED NOT BE EXPENSIVE TO DELIVER. THEY ARE ABOUT BECOMING ORGANIZED, HAVING A CLEAR STRATEGY AND BEING FOCUSED.

STEP 5

WOULD HAVE A MODEST COST BUT PROBABLY UTILISES EXISTING PR AND MEDIA SKILLS HELD IN EXISTING ORGANISATIONS LIKE LDNPA AND CUMBRIA TOURISM – WITH SOME ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT NEEDED TO HAVE AN ONLINE MULTI-LANGUAGE WORLD HERITAGE WEBSITE AND PRESS PACK THAT CAN TRANSLATE INTEREST INTO BOOKINGS.

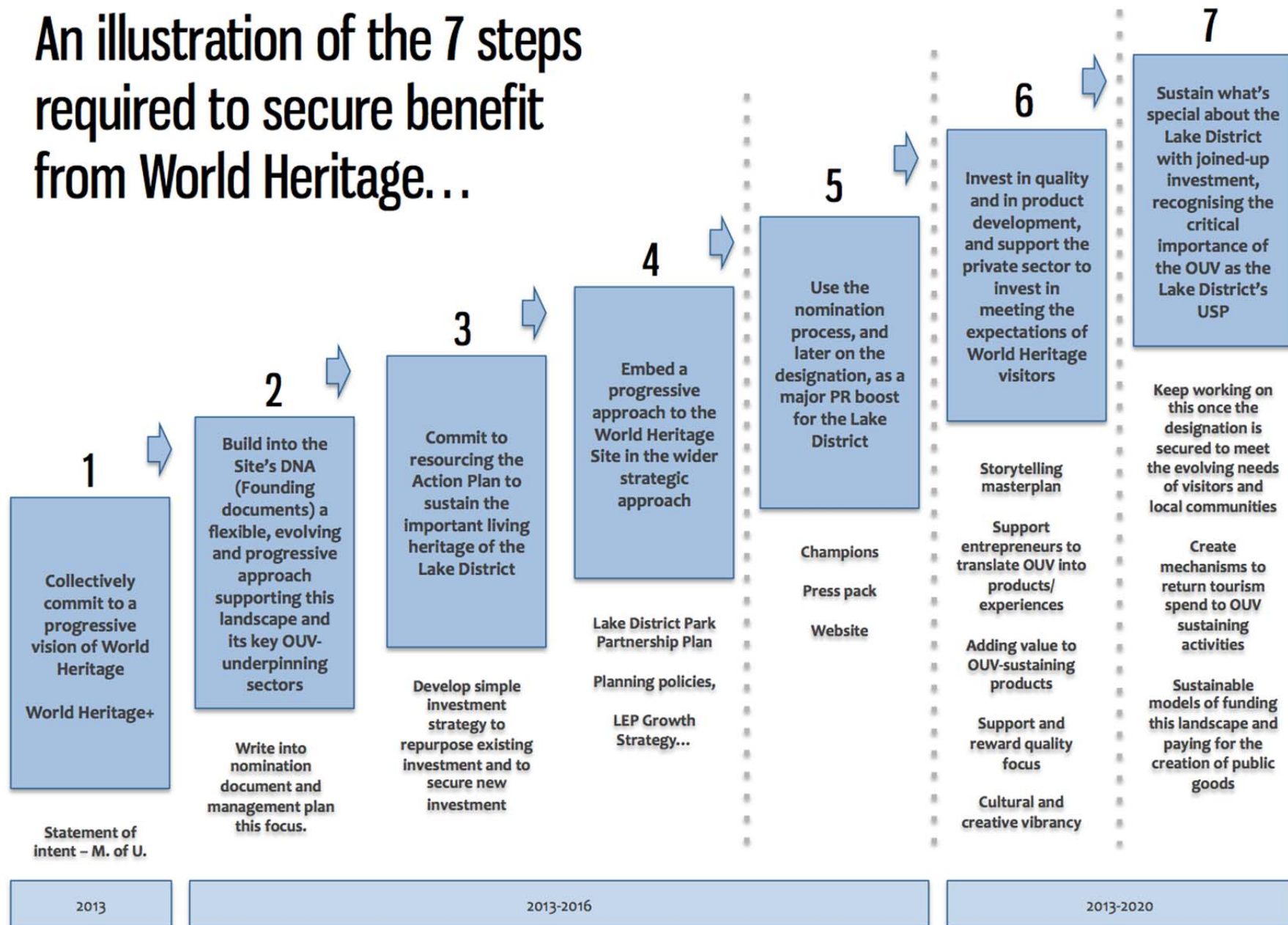
STEP 6

REQUIRES MORE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT AND WILL TAKE MORE TIME. BUT CAN ALSO, PERHAPS BE DELIVERED BY A REPURPOSING AND FOCUSING OF EXISTIN AND PLANNED RESOURCES LIKE FUTURE EU INVESTMENT.

STEP 7

IS ABOUT CREATING A LANDSCAPE THAT IS GENUINELY SUSTAINABLE FROM A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE WITH AN ECONOMY THAT HAS MECHANISMS FOR PAYING FOR THE PUBLIC GOODS THAT IT VALUES.

An illustration of the 7 steps required to secure benefit from World Heritage...



Some sensible rules to proceeding...

1 - World Heritage+ is more than conservation of OUV

We all agree that the cultural landscape of the Lake District is our key asset. There is still a rationale for the Lake District becoming a World Heritage Site even if it achieved no socio-economic impacts; it has a £2billion+ tourism economy that is overwhelmingly based on its spectacular cultural landscape. If becoming a World Heritage Site simply strengthened the conservation of that cultural landscape many people would see that as a worthwhile undertaking. But we sense that stakeholders want more than simply conservation of the landscape (because through being a National Park it is already relatively well protected).

2 - We should proceed with these goals because they make sense regardless of whether we become a World Heritage Site...

A number of stakeholders, when faced with our analysis, have stressed that 'these things need to happen anyway, we don't necessarily need to be a World Heritage Site for them to happen'. There is a degree of truth in this, we should pursue these ends whether we are successful at becoming a World Heritage Site or not – this way we minimize the risk of failure and ensure our efforts are towards our existing strategic priorities.

3 - We can do these things without WHS, but it would be harder...

Being a World Heritage Site can only add weight to our efforts to achieve our strategic objectives, raising the heritage significance, focusing international and national attention on the need for solutions, and raising the profile of our initiatives with external partners. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that World Heritage Sites find it easier to secure investment for key activities than non-World Heritage Sites. Having a greater heritage significance, or pressure on your national government to be seen to sustain something by UNESCO can be powerful aids to persuading others to invest.

4 - Lets do this with our eyes wide open and a sense of economic realism...

With over 4,000 tourism businesses and at least 200 years of tourism experience the businesses of the Lake District are unlikely to have missed easy opportunities for translating this cultural landscape into economic opportunities – the benefit instead is likely to be incremental (though an incremental shift in a £2.2 billion tourism market is not to be underestimated), not radical, and to require intelligent and creative new product development.

5 - Lets be ready for when this kicks off...

The process leading up to becoming a WHS is a key time to secure benefits like international PR attention, there is a way of securing benefit even before inscription, and even for a site that is ultimately unsuccessful in securing the designation. This Win Win approach needs to be taken, play it as a zero-sum game.

Appendix A - Risks... (and how to manage them)

Emphasis on the 'dead past'

A small number of stakeholders worry that this would become another blocker of economic and social change, putting more emphasis and weight on the 'dead past' and making positive economic change more difficult. There is a misconception that being a WHS means nothing is allowed to change, that everything is preserved in aspic, whereas in reality many sites have new architecture, have economies that are evolving and changing. The issue is whether this change is compatible with the OUV of the site, and whether it negatively affects the OUV attributes – change that would negatively affect the sense of place of the Lake District is already prevented by its National park status (see below).

This is a consideration, but one that can be managed by an emphasis in the nomination documents, on the ongoing evolution of this landscape as a place to live, work and play. The emphasis on the working landscape and the farming socio-economic system suggests that this is about sustaining a living tradition not the 'dead past'.

Heritage is 'niche'

Some stakeholders are wary of the term 'heritage' and its associations, not least because the fear it can be a niche focus with limited value. Key to this is what the OUV focus of the WHS would be – and given that is likely to be the cultural landscape of the Lake District (the thing that is the primary reason given by visitors for coming to the Lakes) this is unlikely to be niche. The cultural landscape of the Lake District, as likely to be inscribed, is not niche, but global recognition of the core product/experience in a £2.2 billion tourism economy, and a multi-million pound farming system. Cultural tourism now accounts for 40% of the European tourism market, and is widely credited with being the most valuable tourism segment, predicted to grow in the years to come by many commentators.

Heritage isn't niche, it is mainstream – but to ensure it is not stuffy, and old-fashioned, the emphasis should be on excellent and vibrant storytelling, marketing and interpretation and on giving the heritage 'contemporary resonance' for visitors now and in the future.

Product not meeting expectations

There is a concern that some of the Lake District tourism product may not meet the quality expectations of the potential World Heritage visitors. That we might attract them, then have this backfire as the experience not match the expectation. Most commentators agree that investment and effort is required to ensure that the product evolves, and is of sufficient quality to meet expectations – this is true of the services that unlock the value of heritage including transport, accommodation, food and drink, retail, leisure and the underpinning heritage product itself. World Heritage visitors are likely to expect a world-class product/experience.

This is a risk, but one that can be addressed by applying a stringent quality filter to the tourism experience marketed to World Heritage visitors, and by investing in improving the product over time. Those businesses and attractions that invest in quality should be rewarded by greater exposure to this marketplace.

Lack of resource for making things happen

There is a concern that to make this a dynamic and progressive World Heritage Site there will be a need for resources and commitment – and that these resources do not exist in age of austerity with public finances likely to decline in the years to come. Projects like Tourism Connect that saw public investment in quality upgrades to the accommodation stock of the Lake District now look increasingly unlikely to be possible. In addition to this CAP reform is likely to result in challenges or at least changes to the funding of upland farming businesses and the outputs they are required to create. There is also a question raised about the management capacity behind the World Heritage bid to make it more than the delivery of the status quo.

There is a risk of product not meeting expectations if there is not ongoing investment, and also a risk of the underpinning socio-economic system that underpins the OUV not being sustainable without ongoing investment from the public, private and third sectors. However the reality is that there is approximately £30m³ of public investment in the Lake District landscape per year at present from the public purse, plus ongoing investment from a large number of private businesses, and third sector organizations. We would suggest that there is sufficient investment now, and in the future, to sustain this landscape if the will exists to make this happen, and if it creates its own returns from tourism, agriculture and other commercial activities. The key will be focusing investment to best effect, and this may require over time additional focused management capacity with the right skills to bring about wider impacts.

A voice for businesses in this process

One of the concerns about the nomination is that it needs to have a very prominent and active presence from the private sector to ensure that it is not dominated by a conservation ethic, to the exclusion of the economic perspective. Some businesses have ‘baggage’ with local planning authorities, and can have their perspective of this bid coloured by their perception of the Lake District National Park Authority.

It is important that the partnership nature of the Lake District World Heritage Project is communicated very clearly to the business community, and that there is ongoing dialogue with the farming, tourism and wider business community feel properly consulted with, understand the nature of the nomination and OUV focus, and are active participants in the development of the nomination.

Planning - played out on the global stage

Some stakeholders in the private sector have concerns that becoming a World Heritage Site will make planning more restrictive in the Lake District National Park area. There is an awareness of the issues that have emerged in other World Heritage Sites like that in Liverpool, and concern that there is a risk of future negative global PR if UNESCO becomes involved in complex and emotive planning cases in the Lake District. The first thing that needs to be said here is that being a National park is the highest form of planning control in UK law, and there is already a robust planning system that is superior to that which exists in many of the World Heritage sites around the world. No new planning controls are envisaged, or desired, as part of the nomination, and a paper has been published on this subject that the situation will remain unchanged by becoming a World Heritage Site – see - <http://www.lakeswhs.co.uk/pdfs/planningstatement.pdf> . The

³ Figure taken from presentation by Richard Leith, Chief Executive, Lake District National Park Authority in All Part Parliamentary Group Meeting, House of Commons (July 2013)

conclusion of previous investigation on this subject as that 'The Lake District National Park Authority does not believe World Heritage Inscription will introduce any additional planning policy restraint within the Lake District National Park'. What should be acknowledged is that the designation would probably be something that objectors or promoters might try to exploit by people animated by specific developments. But the idea that World Heritage stops new buildings being constructed is a myth not bourn out by the facts – many sites have found that the designation is actually a catalyst for better quality developments that are respectful of the cultural landscape. To be an issue a development would have to materially affect the OUV attributes (something already extremely unlikely under current planning regulation which protects the 'sense of place' of the Lake District) and the primary actor in the conservation of World Heritage Sites is the nation state, not UNESCO.

This risk is best managed by clarity in the nomination documents about the economy of the Lake District, its evolving nature, its extensive built infrastructure, the need for an evolution of the building stock to accommodate an effective tourism and agricultural sector to sustain the OUV and deliver an effective economy. Some of the issues in other sites have occurred when a site that has not been used to deliver socio-economic benefits is challenged by major new infrastructure project that threatens the OUV attributes and setting of the WHS. Like it, or not, current planning restrictions prevent such developments in the overwhelming majority of cases. Being a UK national park is the main source of restrictive development control, not World Heritage.

Subjecting ourselves to external control

As per above, the nation state remains the primary body responsible for the conservation of the site's OUV. UNESCO intervenes only in cases where the special qualities of the site are threatened, and then exerts influence on the nation state to remedy the situation. If the Lake District becomes a World Heritage Site it would be 'controlled' or 'managed' the same way it is as a UK national park.

This is a misunderstanding of the World Heritage Convention, and a misconception of the reach and capacity of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. In fact UNESCO is more often criticized for being toothless to protect sites, insufficiently resourced to police negative impacts, and overly reliant on state parties and local stakeholders.

Risk of not securing the designation

There is a risk of raising expectations and over-hyping the Lake District's World Heritage credentials in advance of securing the designation – for the simple reason that it may ultimately fail to secure the status. There is inevitably a political element to the World Heritage Committee's decision making, and meeting the tests required of a World Heritage Site is a challenging technical undertaking.

Stakeholders can manage this risk by developing the case for inscription as professionally as possible, resourcing that process to a successful conclusion. Pursuing the Action Plan's objectives as an end in their own right because we are committed to them and they are necessary for the future of this place can also mitigate this risk. And lastly the communications associated with the nomination process should be sensible and realistic – we need to be ready to benefit from the PR whether we win or lose the end game.

Inability to sustain the important cultural heritage

Some stakeholders are concerned that it may be impossible to genuinely sustain the cultural landscape, particularly its traditional farming system, and by designating it we perhaps create future problems with UNESCO, leading to negative PR, when it needs to change. This is certainly a challenge given the findings of the Newcastle University recent study that shows that Lake District farms make, on average, an £8000+ loss per annum. There is also a challenge to sustain the cultural vibrancy and creative traditions of the Lake District given the decline, and ongoing projected decline, of public investment in the arts and cultural sector.

This is our biggest challenge, but not one we give ourselves by trying to become a World Heritage Site, it is already the core issue emerging from almost every existing strategic document regarding the Lake District. This issue is not whether being a World Heritage Site makes that issue worse, it probably doesn't, but whether it might add power, urgency and focus to our efforts to address these issues. The conclusion of this report is that pursuing the WHS designation can help us meet this tough challenge – helping efforts to raise the profile of this landscape for government investment in its heritage, culture and farming systems, and in attracting other investment like that potentially available through the Heritage Lottery Fund.