

The Natural Choice:
securing the value
of nature



Ecosystem services and the Natural Environment White Paper

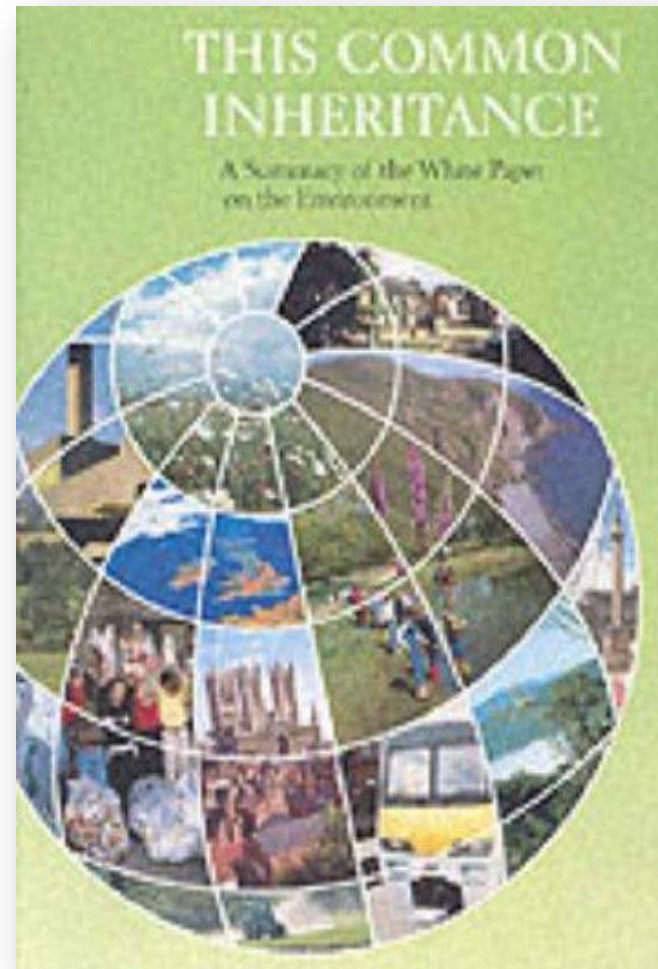
Dr Rob Fish
**University of
Exeter**

Context

Published June 2011. First White Paper on the Natural Environment in quite some time.....



Languages change.....



....underpinning concerns endure

- How do we make the case for the environment within decision making? *Individuals, institutions, business.*
- Environment often seen as:
 - Nice to have/luxury-money going into protecting species, habitat restoration
 - Environmental regulation-expensive /is it necessary?
 - Seen as barrier to development-roads and new towns
 - Holding back change
 - Stopping us produce more food

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Context

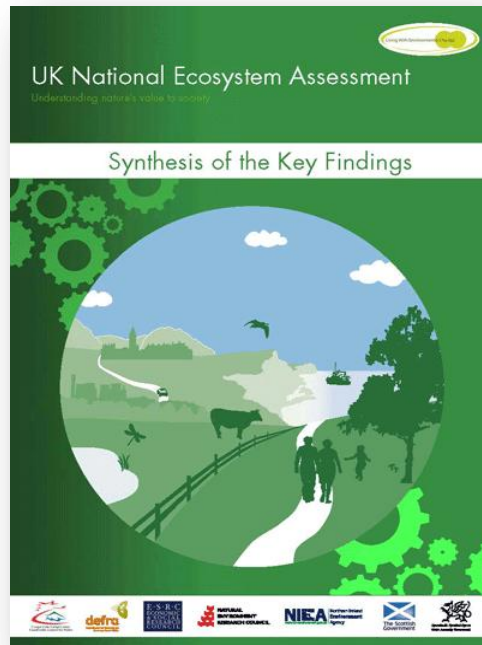
Salient issues defining NEWP are austerity and economic down turn.

The way in which agendas for the natural environment 'speak to' issues of prosperity and national wealth is therefore key.

Natural Environment White Paper

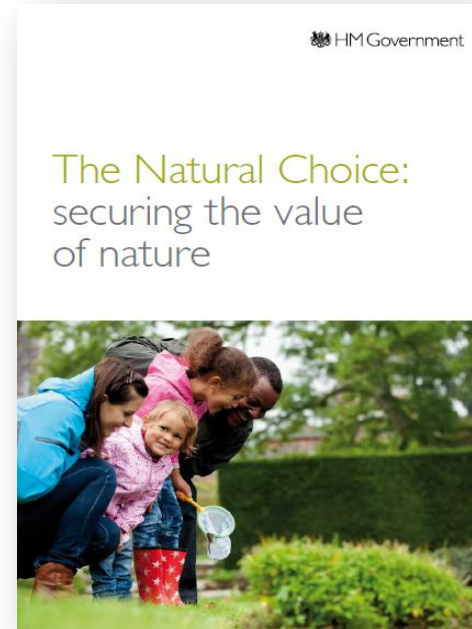
- General argument: it pays to invest in nature.
 1. Contributions to economic activity and growth - money, jobs, livelihoods
 2. Hedging against future risks to the public purse – environmental and human health

UK NEA – 2nd June 2011



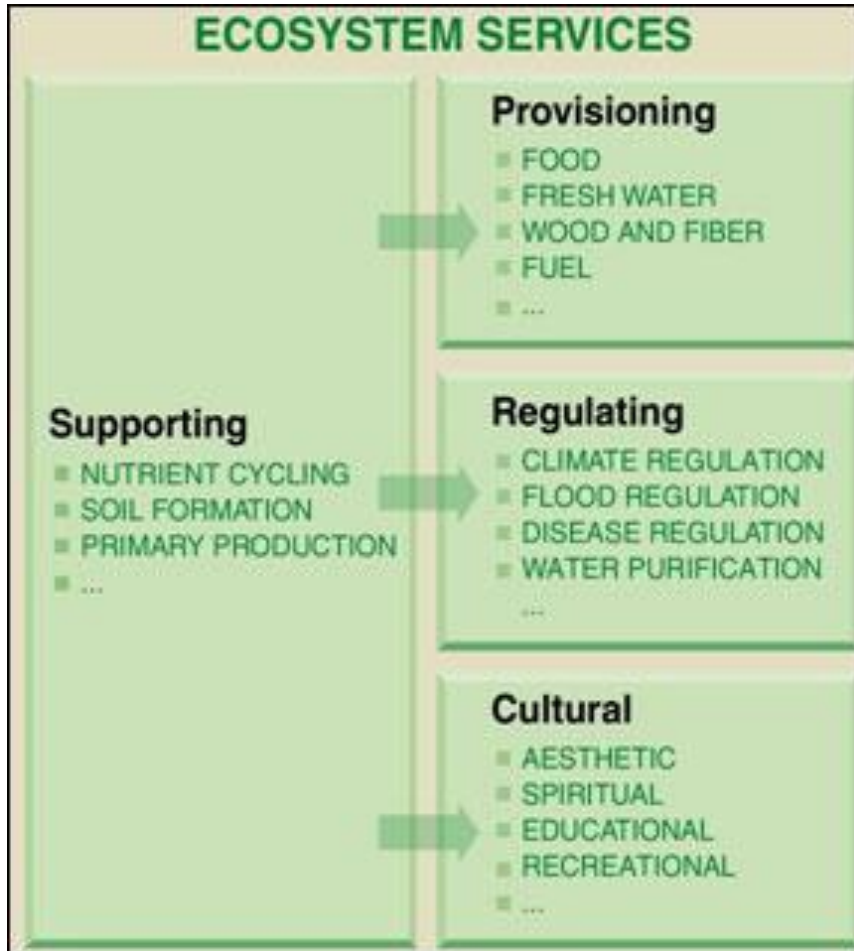
“The first analysis of the UK’s natural environment in terms of the benefits it provides to society and continuing economic prosperity”

NEWP – 7th June 2011



“The results of the NEA deserve to be widely known; they are the reason for many of the actions proposed”

UK National Ecosystem Assessment



- Key NEA concept: **Ecosystem Services**. In a nutshell:
- *“The many and varied benefits humans derive from the environment for the well being”*

← **A new way of classifying natural resources**

- Three elements of distinctiveness:
 1. Nature provides a flow of ‘benefits’; not a ‘thing’
 2. Breadth of what ‘counts’ is extended – food; culture etc
 3. Common units of accounting.

UK National Ecosystem Assessment

NEA did two principal things:

1. Tracked the state and trends in these services

Service Group	Final Ecosystem Service	Mountains, Moorlands & Heaths	Semi-natural Grasslands	Enclosed Farmland	Woodlands	Freshwaters – Openwaters, Wetlands & Floodplains	Urban	Coastal Margins	Marine	
Provisioning	Crops		↔	↑		↓	↗	↓		
	Livestock/Aquaculture	↓	↗	↔	↔	↓	↔	↓	↗	
	Fish					↓	↔	↓	±	
	Trees, standing vegetation, peat	↓	↔	↗	↗	↓	↔	↓		
	Water supply	↔	↓	↓	↔	↓	↔	~		
	Wild species diversity	↔	↓	↓	↗	↓	↔	↓	↓	
Cultural	Environmental settings: Local places	↔	↔	~	↑	↗	↔	↔	~	
	Environmental settings: Landscapes/seascapes	↔	↔	↔	↗	↔	↔	↗	~	
Regulating	Climate	↔	↔	↗	↗	↔	↓	↗	↓	
	Hazard	↓	↔	↓	↗	↓	↓	↔	←	
	Disease and pests	↔	↔	±	↓	↓	~	±	↓	
	Pollination	↓	↓	↓	↔		↔	↔		
	Noise	↔	↔	~	↗	↔	←	↔		
	Detoxification & purification	Water quality	↔	↗	±	↔	±	±	~	↔
		Soil quality	↔	↓	↓	↔	↓	←	↓	
		Air quality	↔	↔	↗	↗	↔	↔	↔	~

It argues that while some ecosystems are getting better at delivering services, such as crop production from farmland and climate regulation by woodlands, over **30%** of services assessed were found to be in decline, and others degraded, such as marine fisheries, wild species diversity and soil quality.

UK National Ecosystem Assessment

General underpinning argument:

- Speculates that many of these benefits we derive from the environment are undervalued. We take them for granted because they do not have a market.
- We need to get better at making the economic case for the environment: how otherwise do we impact on public funding or speak to business?

An important second aspect of the NEA was about elaborating this economic case.

- The benefits that inland wetlands bring to water quality estimated as worth up to **£1.5 billion** per year to the UK.
- Pollinators - **£430 million** per year to British agriculture.
- The amenity benefits of living close to rivers, coasts and other wetlands estimated at up to **£1.3 billion** per year to the UK.
- The health benefits of living with a view of a green space are worth up to **£300 per person per year**.

It also valued the future....!

Green and Pleasant Land

A preservationist attitude arises because the UK can afford to look after its own backyard without diminishing the ever-increasing standards of living.

Nature@Work

The belief that the promotion of ecosystem services through the creation of multifunctional landscapes is essential for maintaining the quality of life in the UK is widely accepted.

Local Stewardship

This is a future where society is more concerned with the immediate surroundings and strives to maintain a sustainable focus on life within that area.

Go with the Flow

This scenario is essentially a projection based on current trends and results in a future UK that is roughly based on today's ideals and targets.

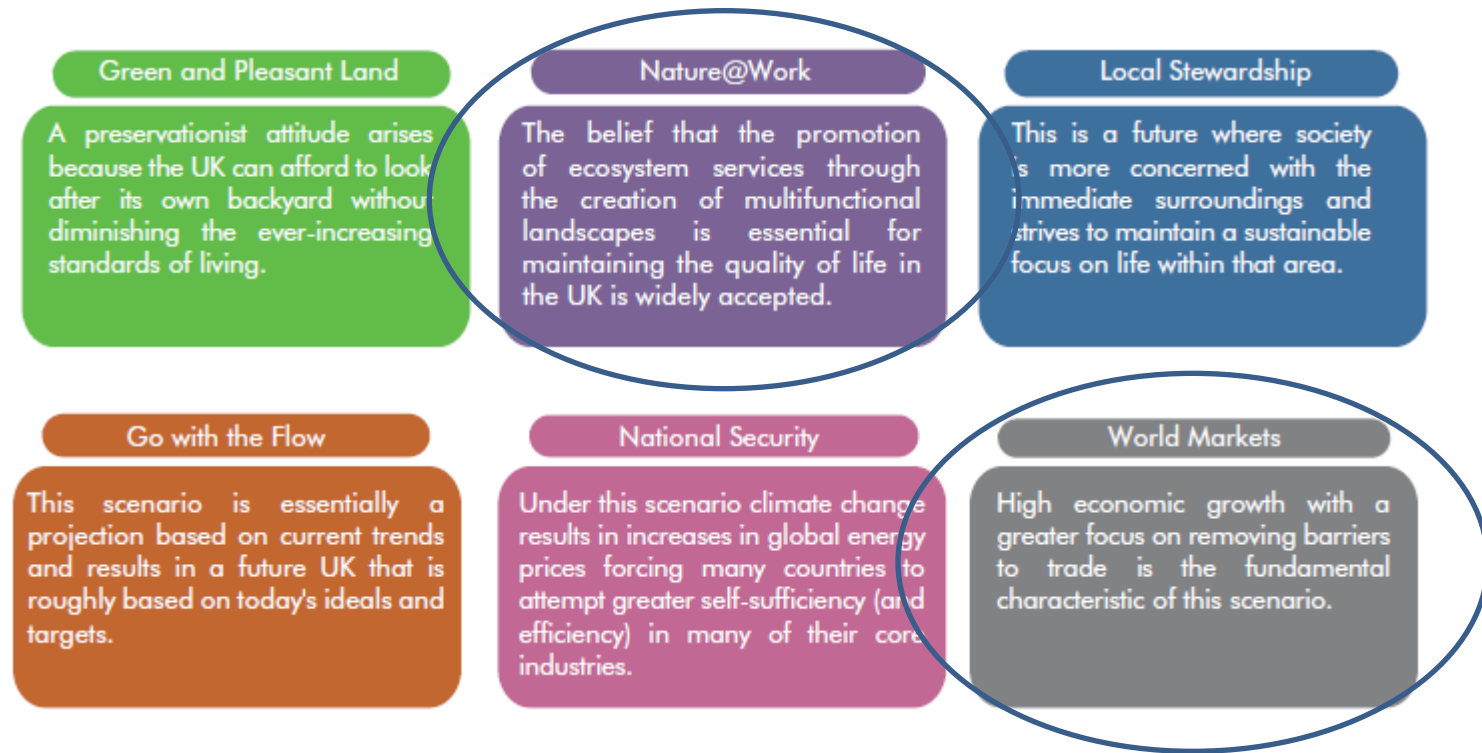
National Security

Under this scenario climate change results in increases in global energy prices forcing many countries to attempt greater self-sufficiency (and efficiency) in many of their core industries.

World Markets

High economic growth with a greater focus on removing barriers to trade is the fundamental characteristic of this scenario.

It also valued the future....!



Desirability of a possible future states often changes when non-market monetary valuation of environmental assets are incorporated into economic analysis.....

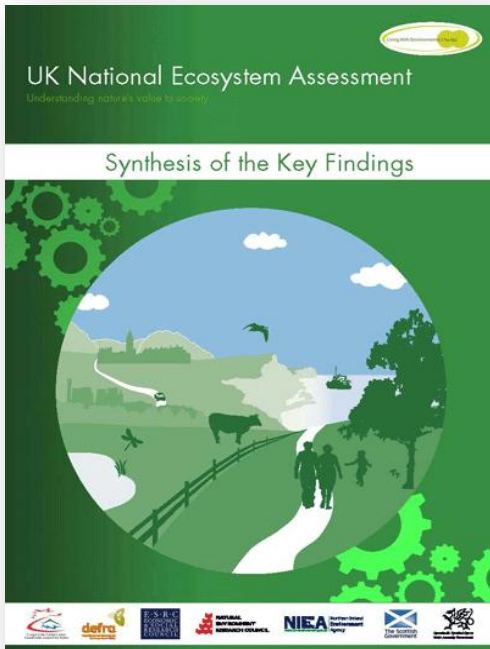
Critical reaction to the NEA



“The best thing done by the last government”
[I paraphrase]



“It's the definitive neoliberal triumph: the monetisation and marketisation of nature, its reduction to a tradeable asset”.



**Making Space for Nature:
A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological
Network**

Chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS

Submitted to the Secretary of State, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural
Affairs on 16 September 2010

HM Government

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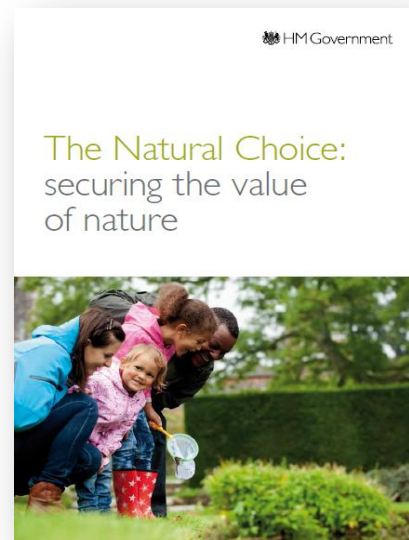
**'Nature is
undervalued'**

**'Nature is
fragmented'**

Aspects of delivery

NEWP undertakings:

1. “Protecting and Improving our natural environment”
2. “Growing a green economy”
3. “Reconnecting people and nature”



Localism is key

- The word 'local' mentioned over 260 times in the White Paper, not that far behind the word 'environment'!
 - NEWP writes of the need to shape a new institutional landscape that can variously:
 - respond to local needs and circumstances
 - strengthen local action and leadership;
 - enable local communities;
 - create networks of local people partners and stakeholders;
 - provide inspiration locally ;
 - build a practical evidence base
- and so on and so forth!

Protecting and improving our natural environment

Key ingredients are:

1. Formation of **'Local Nature Partnerships'**

Working at a strategic scale to improve the range of benefits and services we get from a healthy natural environment.

May cross administrative boundaries, so that they can reflect natural features, systems and landscapes, and work at a scale that has most impact.

Envisaged that there could be in the order of around 50 partnerships across the country. Announcement of first LNPs in summer 2012.

Local Nature Partnerships capacity-building fund - Devon County Council has one of these.

Protecting and improving our natural environment

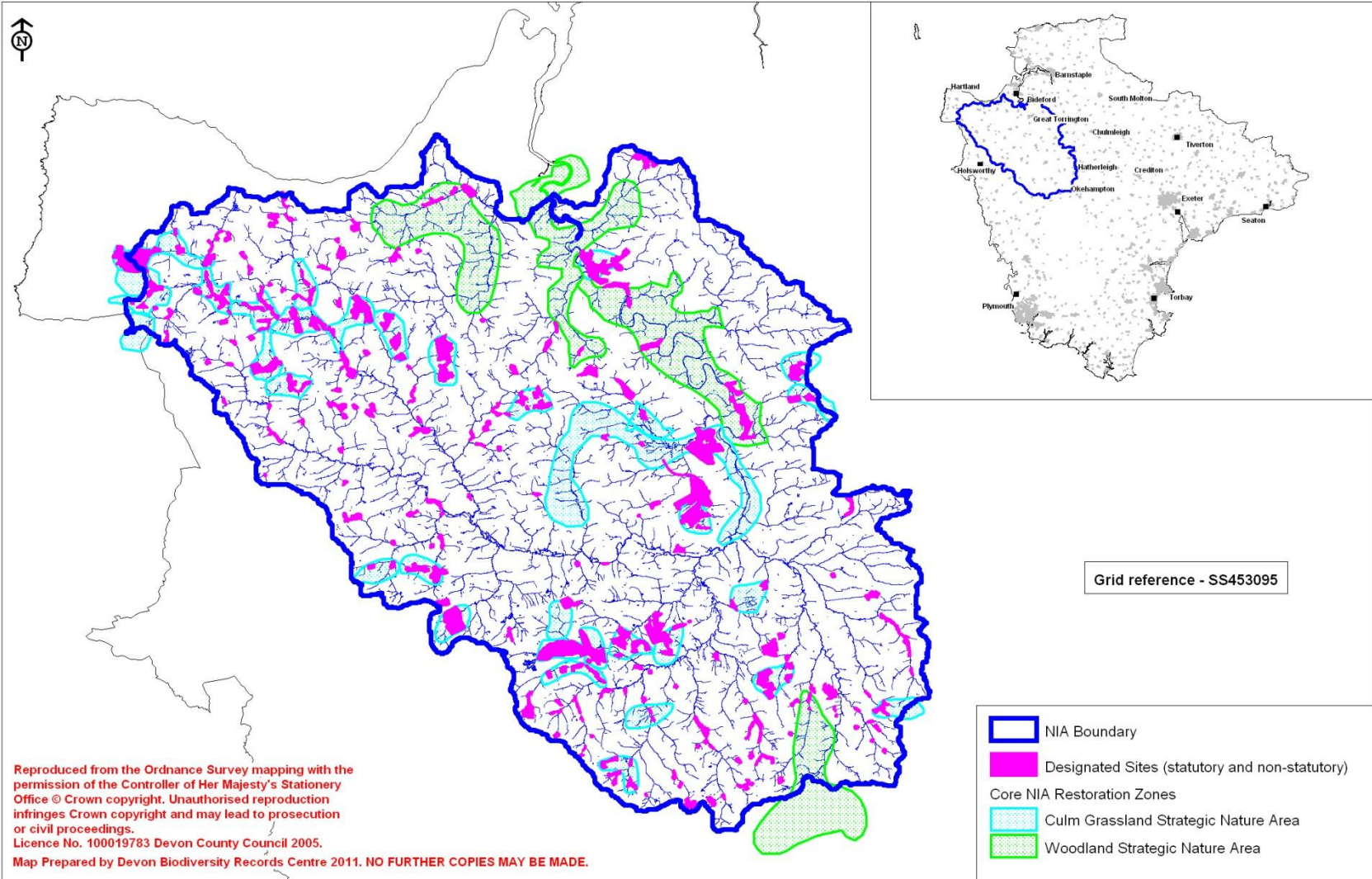
Key ingredients are:

2. Creation of **'Nature Improvement Areas'**

Aim is to restore and connect nature on a significant scale. Characterised by broad cross-sectoral partnerships. Focus on the delivery of ecosystem service 'gains'

Set up a competition to identify 12 initial areas. Provide £7.5 million over the current Spending Review period

Northern Devon Nature Improvement Area



Aim is to re-create, restore and connect important habitats such as culm grassland and woodland.

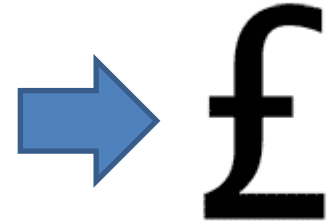
Growing a green economy

- “The Government is committed to putting the value of natural capital [*read ecosystem services*] at the heart of our economic thinking, and the way we measure economic progress nationally.
- Move away from *GDP to GDP+*. Establishment of **Natural capital committee** and the inclusion of “Natural capital” into national accounts

Growing a green economy

- “Economic losses and gains resulting from natural capital ought to be properly recorded. This includes changes to the value of physical environmental assets, such as fish stocks or forests, and also to the value of natural services provided by a healthy ecosystem, such as insect-borne pollination of crops. The Government will take action to capture the value of natural capital on the nation’s balance sheet. In doing so, we will end the situation where gains and losses in the value of natural capital go unrecorded and unnoticed “

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	Trees, standing vegetation, peat	↘	↔	↗	↗	↘	↔	↘		
	Water supply	↔	↘	↘	↔	↘	↔	?		
Cultural	Wild species diversity	↔	↓	↓	↗	↘	↔	↘	↘	
	Environmental settings: Local places	↔	↔	?	↗	↗	↔	↔	?	
Regulating	Environmental settings: Landscapes/seascapes	↔	↔	↔	↗	↔	↔	↗	?	
	Climate	↔	↔	↗	↗	↔	↘	↗	↘	
	Hazard	↘	↔	↘	↗	↘	↘	↔	←	
	Disease and pests	↔	↔	±	↘	↘	?	±	↘	
	Pollination	↘	↘	↘	↔		↔	↔		
	Noise	↔	↔	?	↗	↔	←	↔		
	Detoxification & purification	Water quality	↔	↗	±	↔	±	±	?	↔
		Soil quality	↔	↘	↘	↔	↘	←	↘	
Air quality		↔	↔	↗	↗	↔	↔	↔	?	



Growing a green economy

- Creation of new markets for ecosystem services
.... ie the fusion of public owned if privately traded
assets



Reconnecting people and nature

Three key narratives....

1. Strong environment and human **health** narrative - including a new “Green Area” designation, closer co-ordination between health authorities and nature business (LNPS)- Natural Health Service
 2. Strong environment and **learning** narrative – concern to unlock outdoor teaching mainly around removing barriers/red tape
 3. Strong environment and **volunteering** narrative - building capacity, new environmental volunteering initiative “Muck in 4 Life.
- Also very keen on visitor payback schemes and developing best practice in this area.

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The Coalition risks being seen as a 'bunch of accountants' warns David Cameron

David Cameron has warned that the Coalition risks being seen as a “bunch of accountants” unless it “focuses on what matters” in the wake of last week’s dismal local election results.



Prime Minister David Cameron Photo: REUTERS

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