

Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee

Friday, 17 November 2017, Malvern - 10.00 am

Minutes

Present:

Mrs G Rees (Chairman), Mr W Barnes, Mr S Bosley, Prof R Bryant, Ms N Forde, Mr J Fryman, Ms D Griffiths, Mr M Hammond, Mr J Hervey- Bathurst, Mr P Houlebrooke, Mrs C O'Donnell and Mr P A Tuthill

Also attended:

Mr D Armitage, Mr D Bridges, Mr P Esrich and Mrs K Griffiths

630 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Tony Baker, James Bissett, Sarah Faulkner, Ken Pollock and Richard Williams.

Philip Houlbrooke attended to represent the NFU and Nicola Forde represented the CPRE.

631 Declaration of Interests

None

632 To elect a Chairman

Gwyneth Rees was nominated and seconded for the position of Chairman. There were no further nominations so she was duly elected to the position of Chairman.

633 To appoint a Vice Chairman

Ken Pollock was nominated and seconded for the position of Vice Chairman in his absence and as there were no other nominations he was duly appointed to the position of Vice Chairman.

634 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2017 were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

Paul Esrich reported that, as requested by members in April 2017, he had written to funding local authorities and to most Parish Councils in the AONB. Letters sent had highlighted the Partnership's achievements and requested that consideration be given to (enhanced) funding contributions to the Partnership's work.

635 Natural Capital Scoping Study

Oliver Hölzinger from the Consultancy for Environmental Economics and Policy gave a presentation on the scoping study he had completed on Natural Capital in the AONB.

Natural Capital can be defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. The study had looked at Natural Capital within the AONB and considered:

- Establishing a register of Natural Capital Assets
- Broadly grading the assets, in terms of which were most valuable
- Monitoring any change in them
- Quantifying them in monetary terms

Oliver explained that we should maintain Natural Capital both for its own sake and for the benefits it provides. Putting a monetary value on Natural Capital was felt to be important so that it was considered in decision making by policy makers who were not necessarily involved in nature.

Results from this study revealed that certain habitats in the AONB offered a greater range of ecosystem services to humans than others.

The recommendations for further actions following the study included:

- workshops - to strengthen the evidence base and carry out monetary evaluation; a business case should be produced to develop ways to protect Natural Capital,
- Land ranger maps could be updated to record natural capital,
- A visitor survey - carried out to assess people's use of natural capital in the AONB,
- Looking at how natural capital has been affected by development and how development control could help protect it,
- Low intensity farming and food markets for local produce could be promoted,
- Bringing more traditional orchards into management, restoring traditional woodlands and planting more shelter trees.

In the following discussion the following points were made:

- Natural Capital was taken for granted but it had an important impact on well-being, by providing areas for exercise and improving mental health,
- Natural Capital should be considered as part of the forthcoming review of the AONB Management Plan,

- Consideration could be given to the desirability of creating new areas of woodland but a full assessment would be needed to consider what might be lost in the process,
- It would be better to concentrate on taking short-term sustainable steps rather than trying to second-guess longer term political outcomes,
- Natural Capital needs to be publicised and explained so that the public understand what it means. It can be better understood if a monetary value is put on it,
- Population increase is likely to put pressure on Natural Capital,
- Cross boundary and partnership working is likely to be important in considering Natural Capital and the benefits it provides,
- Natural England was thanked for part funding the project.

Presentation attached.

**636 Three Counties
Traditional
Orchard Project**

Karen Humphries – Project Officer for the Three Counties Traditional Orchard Project gave an update on the project. The project had been funded by the National Lottery who had provided £322,000 over 3 years. An extension had been granted and the project was now due to end in March 2018. Most of the aims of the project have been exceeded and all but one achieved.

A traditional orchard was described as 5 or more large trees, with permanent grass beneath. The three counties has approximately one third of the total hectares of traditional orchards in the UK but many orchards are vanishing due to neglect and lack of knowledge about how they should be managed.

The project had set out to train local people who would then go on to share their knowledge with others and over 100 volunteers had learnt how to prune and plant. The project had restored 40 orchards including planting 500 new rare variety trees grown from graft wood from the local area. The project had also been involved with archaeological digs, looking at the history of orchards, exhibitions and walk and talks.

The project had additionally given advice to non-project landowners, discovered heritage varieties and started looking at ways of working with commercial firms to use their excess fruit. The establishment of mother orchards to supply grafts has also been considered.

For the future the Heritage Lottery have been asked for support with a trial of creating Orchard Wardens and advanced training was required for people who have already received the initial training.

Sven Bosley commented that regrettably the fees involved in being registered as organic exceeded the premium paid for organic fruit.

The Project had been considered to be very successful and Karen was thanked for her update.

637 Speed reduction on the B4208 at Castlemorton Common

Paul Esrich explained that the Castlemorton Parish Council had wished to reduce the speed limit from 60 to 50 along the B4208 in the parish. He summarized the consultation process undertaken by Worcestershire Highways and the AONB Unit's involvement in trying to achieve a landscape-sensitive solution (as set out in the paper).

Jerry Fryman reported that the Parish Council did not consider the new signs to be obtrusive.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The report be noted and**
- b) **The issues were discussed and it was hoped that in future traffic management schemes in the AONB would be delivered by Highways Authorities in a landscape sensitive way.**

638 Sustainable Development Fund

David Armitage highlighted various projects which had benefitted from the Sustainable Development Fund including:

- The National Childbirth Trust (NCT) tent for baby feeding and changing at events
- Orchard mental health exercises
- Homeopathic Gardening and
- Crayfish extermination

The scheme had almost £8,000 still to spend this year.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- a) **Noted and commented on the report,**
- b) **Should contact David Armitage with any projects that might be suitable for this fund, and**

c) Should consider whether Local Authorities should make more enquiries of this fund.

639 Information Items

Paul Esrich highlighted various information items;

- Finding rare species in the Malverns – a part time Project Officer (Lucy Grove) had been appointed as part of this new two year project,
- Highways verges management pilot project – this had now commenced,
- Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund – a bid was being compiled for government funding to help bring farmers and other land managers together to share experience and progress landscape scale work in the area west of the Malvern Hills,
- Development management – Severn Trent wanted to discontinue the British Camp reservoir. Following consultation Malvern Hills District Council have determined that this will require an Environmental Impact Assessment,
- Leaflet for new owners – A leaflet will be given to prospective new purchasers of land or property in the AONB to introduce the AONB and signpost them to the AONB Partnership if they are considering any changes.

RESOLVED that the Committee note these updates and contact the AONB Unit if they wish to be involved in any consultations or to receive further information on any of these items.

640 Verbal Reports from Partners

Paul Esrich, AONB Unit - a new report from the CPRE and the NAAONB reviewing housing and development pressures in the nations's AONBs had just been released. It showed that there has been a very significant increase in the number of planning applications and approvals for housing within AONBs over the last five years. The report can be viewed at:

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/landscapes/item/4707-beauty-betrayed>

James Hervey-Bathurst, Eastnor Estate - a report had been completed with the help of Natural England about Acute Oak Decline on the Estate. This is available to members of the Partnership on request (please contact Paul Esrich). Money had been allocated from the Sustainable Development Fund for interpretation panels at the proposed new visitor centre. Larger landowners were likely to see a decrease in income following Brexit and so were likely to look at ways of intensifying

production on their land.

Duncan Bridges, Malvern Hills Trust –There was concern about the future of grazing on the Hills and Commons if grant schemes were to stop/change. Winter works were underway with scrub management and tree removal at Thirds Wood on Jubilee Drive. The Board of the Malvern Hills Trust had agreed to take to Parliament proposed changes to its duties and structure of the Board. The proposed changes would be sent around all stakeholders.

Nicola Forde, CPRE – The CPRE have commented on development proposals such as housing in Ledbury which affects the setting of the AONB and also a static Caravan Park. A Conference was held last month to discuss concerns about Brexit.

Wayne Barnes, Forestry Commission – the Commission is promoting an expansion of woodland in England. Money is available, for example through the Woodland Carbon Fund.

Dick Bryant, Earth Heritage Trust – Natural England had given money to enhance geodiversity in the AONB to help pay for work which volunteers could not manage.

Jerry Fryman, Worcestershire Association of Local Councils – Castlemorton had plans to improve its hall.

641 Dates of Future Meetings

Meeting Dates for 2018 were
20 April 2018 and
9 November 2018.

The meeting ended at 12.20pm

Chairman

Malvern Hills AONB Natural Capital Scoping Study

by

Oliver Hölzinger

Owner

Consultancy for Environmental Economics & Policy (CEEP)

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Project Aim & Objectives

The aim of the Malvern Hills AONB Natural Capital Scoping Study project was to generate a better understanding of the Natural Capital of the AONB to inform decision making within and between those organisations which influence the character and use of the AONB. The specific objectives were:

- 1.To establish a broad AONB Natural Capital asset register,
- 2.To list and describe the different ecosystem and services which are provided by these key Natural Capital asset types,
- 3.To broadly grade these elements according to which are likely to be the most and least valuable to people,
- 4.To identify the forces for change, probability of change and indicators of change affecting them, and
- 5.To assess the potential for valuing/monetising the Natural Capital assets in the AONB based on the data/valuation evidence available.

Part A

Introduction to the Natural Capital Concept

Introduction

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What has nature ever done for us?

Ecosystem Services

*“ecosystem services are the benefits
people obtain from ecosystems”*

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005

Ecosystem Services Framework

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**Provisioning
Services**



**Regulating
Services**



**Cultural
Services**



**Supporting
Services**

What is Natural Capital?



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Natural Capital

Natural Capital can be defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this Natural Capital that humans derive a wide range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible.

(World Forum on Natural Capital, Edinburgh 2015)

What is Natural Capital?



Natural Capital

Ecosystems
Green/Blue Infrastructure
Living Landscapes



Human Wellbeing

What is Natural Capital?

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Natural
Capital

Stock

Ecosystem
Services

Flow of benefits

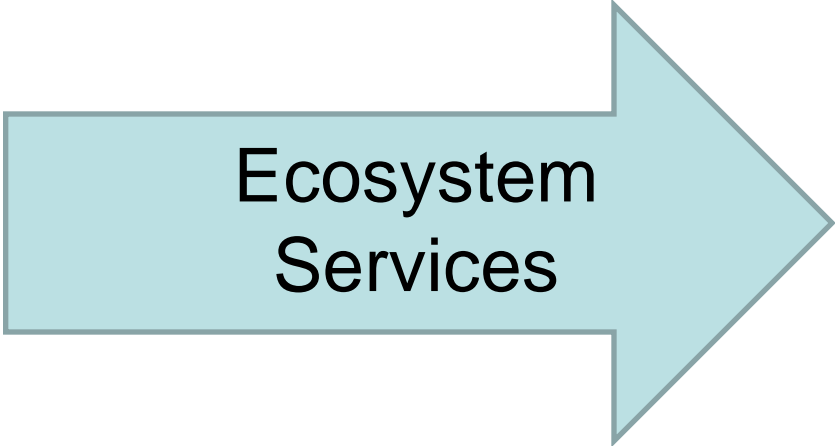
Human
Wellbeing

Beneficiaries

What is Natural Capital?



Natural
Capital

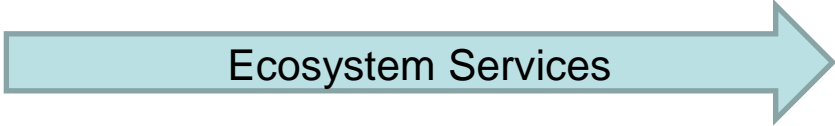


Human
Wellbeing

What is Natural Capital?



Natural
Capital

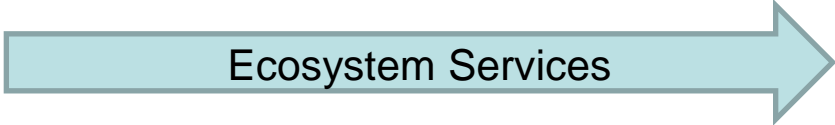


Human
Wellbeing

What is Natural Capital?



Natural
Capital



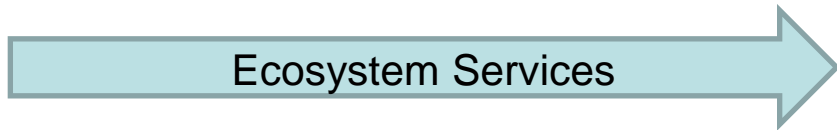
Human Wellbeing

What is Natural Capital?

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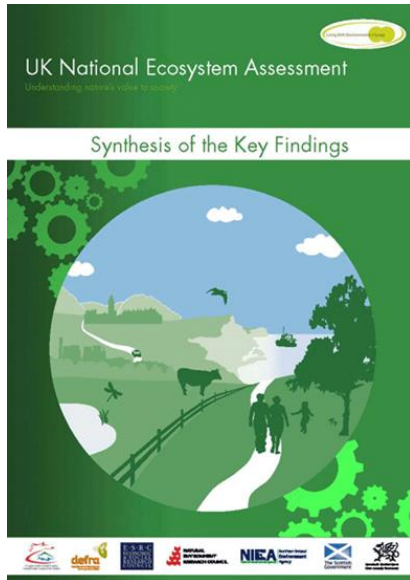


Natural
Capital



Human Wellbeing

Research

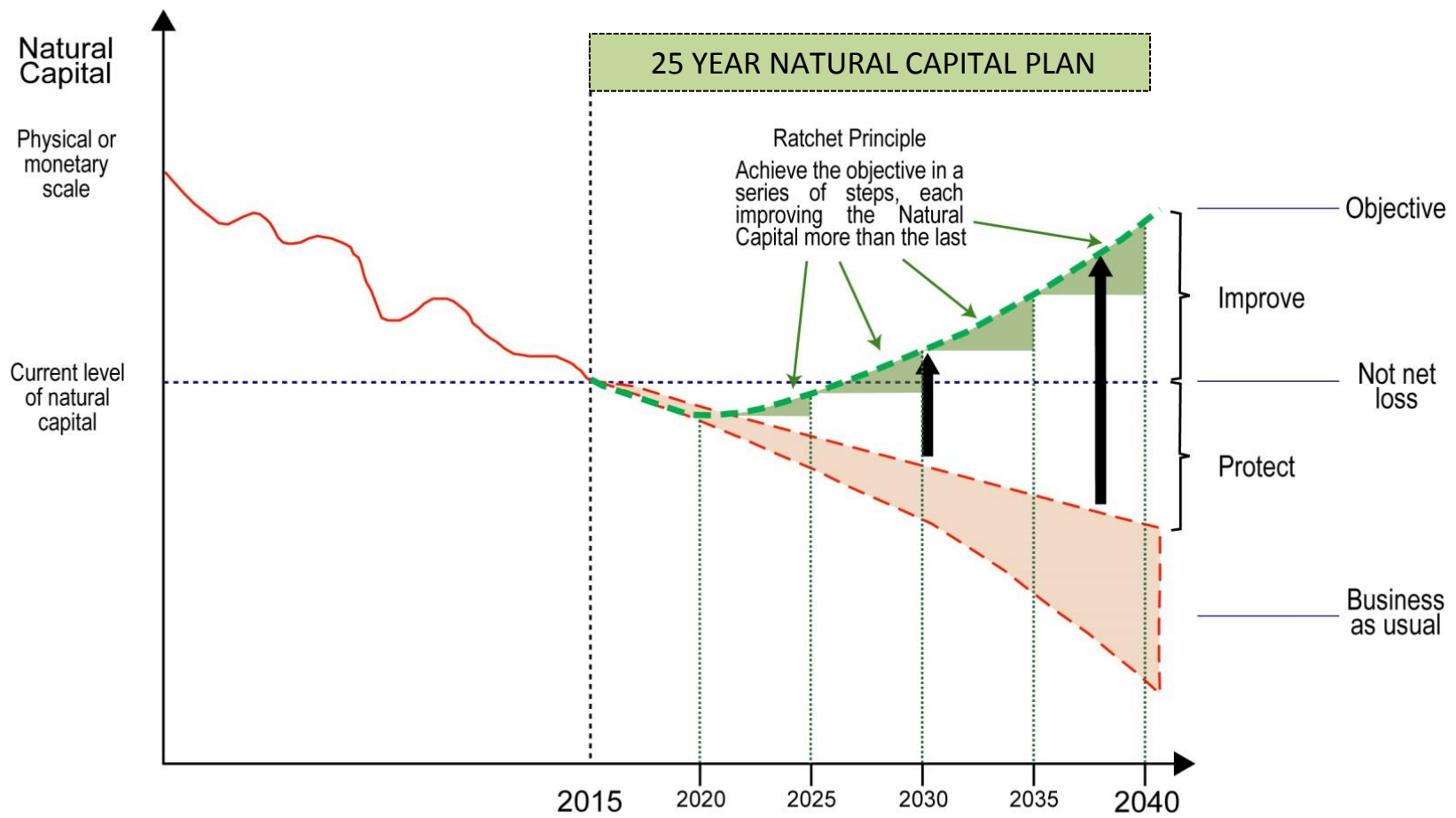


UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA) 2011

- Ecosystems are critically important to our wellbeing and economic prosperity, but are consistently undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision making.
- Approximately 30% of UK ecosystem services are currently declining, with some services already in a degraded state.
- Drivers of change such as population growth and climate change are likely to increase pressure on ecosystem services in the future.
- A continuing decline of ecosystem services will have a negative impact on human wellbeing; but also on economic success.

25 Year Natural Capital Plan - a Stylised Interpretation

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(The State of Natural Capital. Third Report of the Natural Capital Committee, 2015)

Part B

Natural Capital Asset Check

Natural Capital Asset Register

The first step towards valuing ecosystem services is to establish a robust baseline of Natural Capital assets – what is there?

Assessment scope:

- Focus is on renewable Natural Capital assets that perform ecosystem services as opposed to non-renewable assets such as for example gas and gravel.
- Ecosystem services produced by Natural Capital within the AONB boundary.

Natural Capital Asset Register

Datasets informing the Natural Capital Asset Register:

Order of data	Dataset	Source of data	Spatial Coverage of the Malvern Hills AONB	Year of data
1	Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Inventory	Natural England	Full	2015
2	Ancient Woodland Inventory	Natural England	Full	2015/16
3	National Forest Inventory (NFI)	Forestry Commission	Full	2015/16
4	Malvern Hills Trust Land Phase 1 Habitat Assessment	Malvern Hills Trust	Partial (Trust Land Only)	2013
5	Malvern Hills District Landcover Assessment ¹	Malvern Hills District Council	Partial (Malvern Hills District Only)	2005-2009
6	Land Cover Map 2007 ²	CEH	Full	2007

By combining these datasets an excellent spatial coverage of 98% of the Malvern Hills AONB was achieved!

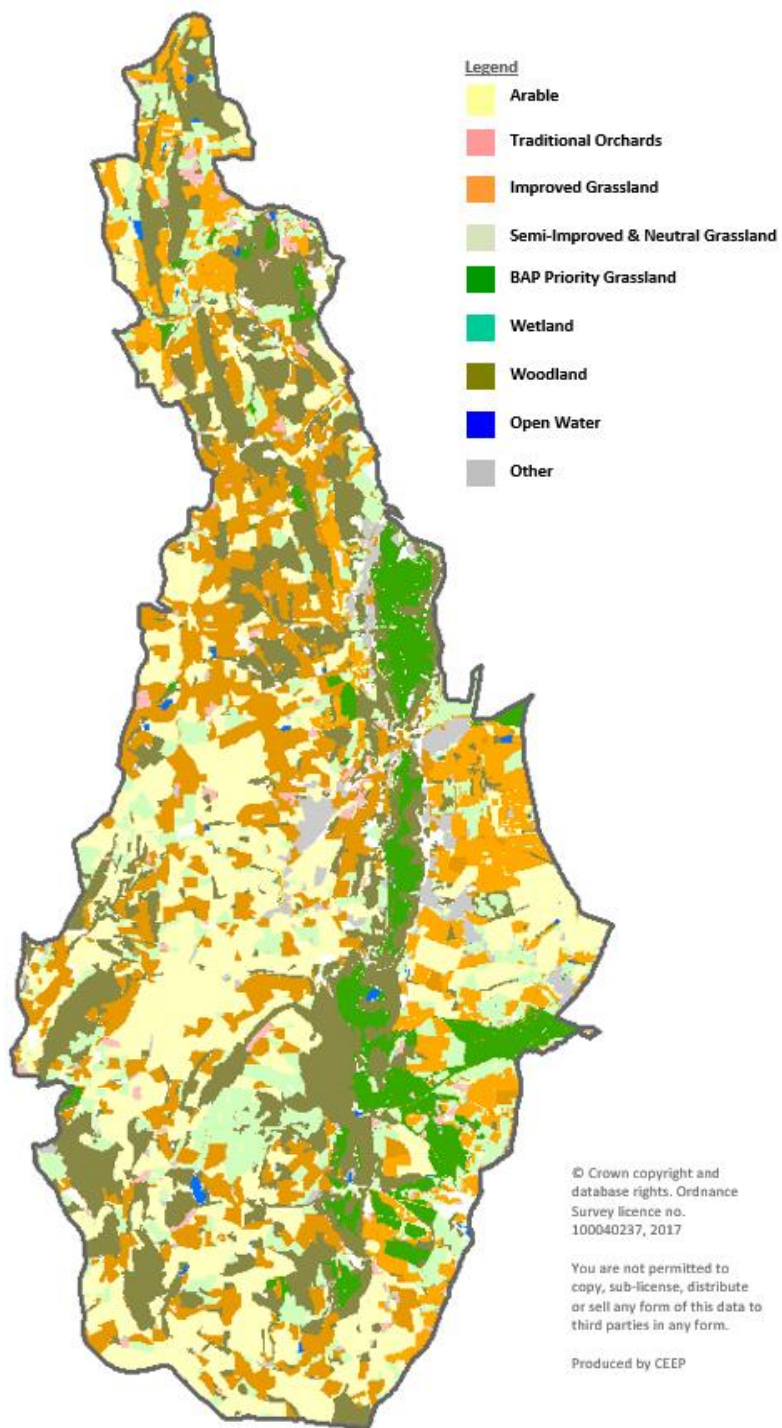
Natural Capital Asset Register

Malvern Hills AONB Natural Capital Asset Register:

Natural Capital Asset Category	Area in ha	Coverage in % of AONB
Arable	2,825.9 ha	27%
Traditional Orchards	140.8 ha	1.3%
Improved Grassland	2,746.1 ha	26%
Semi-Improved & Neutral Grassland	1,310.6 ha	12%
BAP Priority Grasslands	711.3 ha	7%
Wetland	3.6 ha	0.03%
Woodland	2,364.6 ha	22%
Open Water	28.1 ha	0.3%
Other (e.g. build-up areas and gardens)	277.2 ha	3%
Total coverage	10,437.9 ha	98%

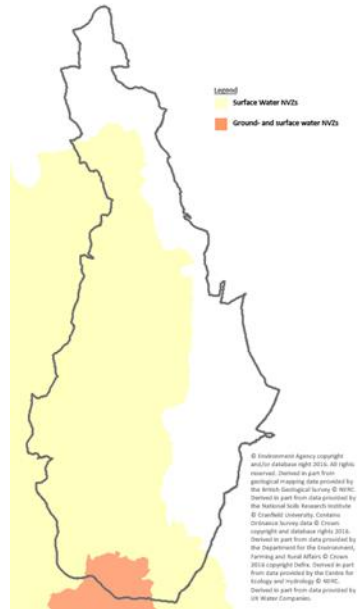
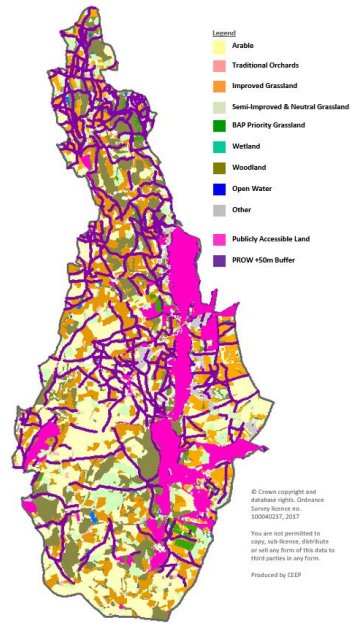
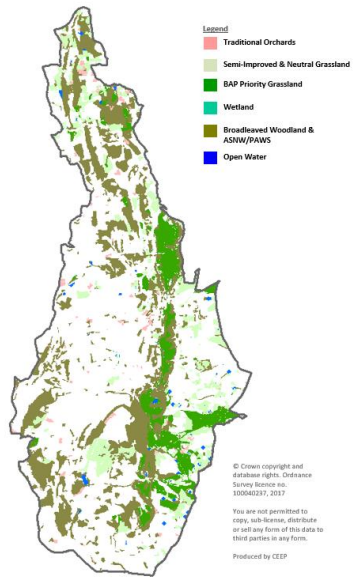
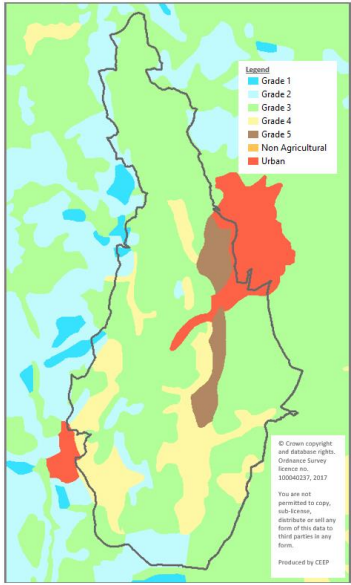
Asset Categories & Layers	Area in ha
Total Malvern Hills AONB Area	10,663.8
Coverage	10,437.9
Semi-natural	4,491.8
Arable	
AH_Arable_LCM	2,825.9
Traditional Orchards	
AH_TraditionalOrchards_PHI	140.8
Improved Grassland	
GL_Improved_MHD	144.0
GL_Improved_MHT	40.0
GL_Improved_Probably_MHD	736.9
GL_Improved_LCM	1,825.2
Total	2,746.1
Semi-Improved & Neutral Grassland	
GL_SemiImproved_PHI (good quality)	321.6
GL_Neutral_MHD	31.6
GL_Neutral_MHT	0.8
GL_Neutral_Possibly_MHD	486.9
GL_Neutral_LCM	29.6
GL_RoughLowProductivity_LCM	440.1
Total	1,310.6

Asset Categories & Layers	Area in ha
BAP Grassland	
GL_LowlandDryAcid_PHI	590.0
GL_LowlandCalcareous_PHI	11.7
GL_LowlandMeadows_PHI	109.7
Total	711.3
Wetlands (Basic assessment only as very low area)	
WE_InlandMarsh_PurpleMoorRushPasture_MHT	0.3
WE_InlandMarsh_Swamp_MHD	0.1
WE_InlandMarsh_Unspecified_MHT	3.2
Total	3.6
Woodland	
WO_ASNW_AWI	799.7
WO_Broadleaved_NFI	866.2
WO_Coniferous_NFI	67.2
WO_Felled_NFI	0.2
WO_Mixed_NFI	94.1
WO_PAWS_AWI	439.9
WO_Shrub_NFI	16.1
WO_UnspecifiedAssumedWoodland_NFI	4.5
WO_UnspecifiedYoungTrees_NFI	76.7
Total	2,364.6
Water (Basic assessment only as very low area and not suitable for economic valuation)	
WA_StandingOpenWaterAndCanals_MHD	14.2
WA_Rivers_LCM	3.6
WA_StandingOpenWaterLakes_LCM	10.3
WA_Ponds_MHD	Count: 37
Total	28.1



Indicative Natural Capital Assessment

Based on the Natural Capital Asset Register, ecosystem services provided by different Natural Capital assets within the Malvern Hills AONB were systematically assessed and graded (high, medium, low) in terms of their importance to people and society.



Indicative Natural Capital Assessment



Threats to Natural Capital in the AONB

- Overcrowding which can have negative effects on aesthetic values, recreation and biodiversity,
- Development pressures, especially around the AONB which could impact on its tranquillity and landscape views,
- Climate change which leads to higher summer temperatures and can impact on water availability and biodiversity, and
- Agricultural intensification which can have negative effects on biodiversity, water quality, and potentially aesthetic values (e.g. polytunnels).

Part C

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Towards a Monetary Natural Capital Assessment

Monetary Natural Capital Assessment

Why is economic valuation of value?

- People (including decision makers and planners) are often not aware of all links between ecosystems and human well-being.
- Ecosystems are not adequately considered and assessed in planning and policy yet.
- (Monetary) valuation can make environmental values more tangible for non-specialists and also reveals trade-offs.

→ ***One main advantage of ecosystem valuation is that such evidence is tangible for non-specialists which can enhance implementing such values in decision-making.***

Monetary Natural Capital Assessment

What is the value of ecosystem services?

- € 1.35 trillion per year: minimum estimate of global natural capital loss, just from deforestation (Approx. total GDP of UK in 2010) The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity TEEB for Business 2010
- The value of the carbon stock in Natural Capital (vegetation and topsoils) in the Malvern Hills AONB is in the region of £59 million.

Monetary Natural Capital Assessment

Natural Capital Asset		Arable	Improved Grassland	Semi-Improved & Neutral Grassland	BAP Priority Grassland	Woodland	Traditional Orchards
Ecosystem service and group		2,826 ha	2,746 ha	1,311 ha	711 ha	2,365 ha	141 ha
Provisioning	Harvested Products	D	D	D		D	D
	Biodiversity						
Cultural	Recreation & Physical Health						
	Aesthetic Values & Sense of Place					D	
Regulating	Flood Regulation						
	Water Quality Regulation						
	Air Quality Regulation					D	D
	Local Climate Regulation						
	Global Climate Regulation	£	£	£	£	£	£

- Can (almost) be fully quantified
- Can be partially quantified
- Unclear
- Cannot be quantified

Conclusions

- Natural Capital in the AONB provides us humans with many products and services; way beyond food, timber and biodiversity. This is why it is important to protect and enhance these resources – for wildlife and our own sake (including the economy and public health).
- NC in the AONB including its ‘outstanding natural beauty’ cannot be taken for granted as it faces many pressures and threats. Additional efforts will be required to maintain and enhance a sustainable flow of ecosystem services in the future.
- More information is required about Natural Capital in the AONB to enable effective Natural Capital management.

Recommendations

Short term:

- A workshop (series) could help to strengthen the evidence base by making better use of local knowledge.
- A monetary valuation study to communicate the value of the Natural Capital in the AONB to new audiences and to make the business case for protecting/enhancing these valuable assets.

Recommendations

Medium/long term:

- Update of land-use maps (e.g. Phase 1 assessment) incl. hedgerows
- A new visitor survey designed to assess Natural Capital demands, preferences and use.
- Strong cross-boundary development control.
- The promotion and branding of local food markets and low intensity farming.
- Bringing more traditional orchards and woodland (woodfuel) into management.
- Restoration of PAWS.
- Introduction of more shelter trees.
- Provision of additional water storage capacities and selecting more resilient species to adopt to climate change.

Many thanks for your attention!

Oliver Hölzinger

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Indicative Natural Capital Assessment



Monetary Natural Capital Assessment

Natural Capital Asset		Arable	Improved Grassland	Semi-Improved & Neutral Grassland	BAP Priority Grassland	Woodland	Traditional Orchards
Ecosystem service and group		2,826 ha	2,746 ha	1,311 ha	711 ha	2,365 ha	141 ha
Provisioning	Harvested Products	D	D	D		D	D
	Biodiversity						
Cultural	Recreation & Physical Health						
	Aesthetic Values & Sense of Place					D	
	Flood Regulation						
Regulating	Water Quality Regulation						
	Air Quality Regulation					D	D
	Local Climate Regulation						
	Global Climate Regulation	£	£	£	£	£	£

- Can (almost) be fully quantified
- Can be partially quantified
- Unclear
- Cannot be quantified

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