



**Application of natural capital
approaches:
insights from the Ox Cam Arc**

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December 2020



Overarching context

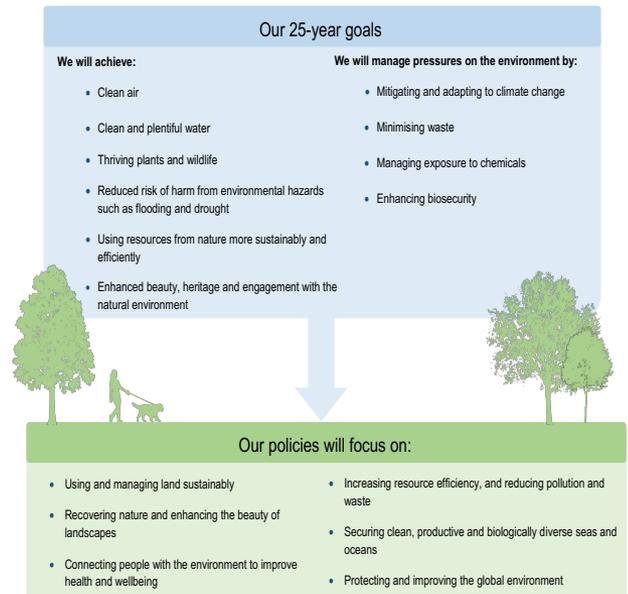
The first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than that in which we found it

Goals and policy intents:

- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Public goods for public money
- Net biodiversity gain
- Net environment gain
- Nature recovery strategies
- Local natural capital plans
- Net zero

How this translates into practice all depends on:

- the Environment Bill and Agriculture Act
- the planning reforms





Ox Cam Arc Local Nature Partnerships asks

Connecting people and the environment

- A bold strategic plan to protect and improve the environment, natural capital and biodiversity
 - with same status as the productivity, connectivity and place strategies
 - effective environmental governance at all levels within the Arc
 - building on the ambitions of the 25 year plan for the environment
- Clear and measurable net gain targets for natural capital and biodiversity both Arc wide and within housing and infrastructure projects
- Environmental, natural capital and biodiversity considerations to inform site and route selection and the design of developments
- Protect and improve the resilience and connectivity of habitats
- Local authorities to cooperate effectively across boundaries
- Local spatial plans to be informed by net zero, net biodiversity and net environmental gain
- Doubling the area of land actively managed for nature



The Oxford-Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus

The Ox Cam Arc: an opportunity to put the 25 year environment plan into action and embed natural capital in growth plans?

Aims

- Protected and improved environment
- Doubling land actively managed for nature
- Net biodiversity gain
- Net environmental gain
- Net zero
- Outputs from expert siloes combining into well informed systems based approaches

How to make this a reality?

- Governance and buy in
- Agreed methodologies





Ox Cam Arc: developing policy and governance picture

- Spatial Framework
 - Material planning consideration?
- New spatial planning proposals
- What decisions to make at Arc, County, Council and Village / Parish level
- Who pulls everything together at what scale: systems operator?
- Interfaces with and common data for:
 - Local nature recovery strategies
 - Nature recovery networks
 - ELMs
- Internationally / nationally / locally important assets





Natural capital principles

- Place and area based
- Many natural capital assets
 - are spatially and context specific
 - operate at a number of scales including river-catchment, coastal-sea and landscape
 - are often not linked to biodiversity 'habitat' types
- Need to understand:
 - assets and their ownership
 - whether renewable or non-renewable
 - the extent and condition
 - if stock is increasing or decreasing
 - if at risk and from what
 - proximity to any tipping points
 - the cost of enhancement and maintenance
- Manage natural capital so it can continue to meet the needs of people and the economy, despite mounting pressures
- And don't forget the biodiversity





Pressures and risks

- Population growth
- Development land take
- Climate change

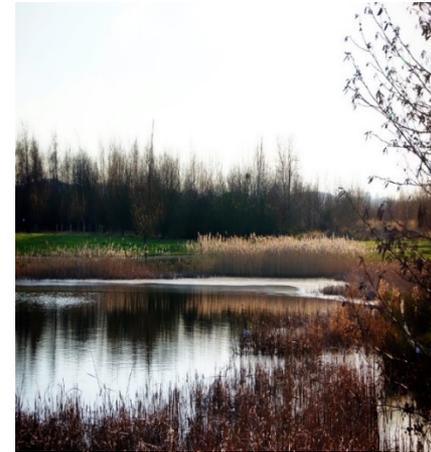
- Soils
- Flood risk
- Water resources
- Water quality
- Air quality
- Sense of place and enjoyment
- Habitat fragmentation





Thoughts on net gain

- Decision support tool
- Include so called insignificant impacts
- A demonstrable increase in natural capital assets - beware of non natural capital trade offs
- Should apply to local and national planning regimes
- Net environmental gain = net biodiversity gain plus
- Consider the spatial and context factors and how they affect the consequent benefits
- Restore and maintain existing natural capital
- Incorporate avoid, minimise, remediate, compensate, invest and maintain aspects
- Use costs and benefits approach
- Don't net off benefits and dis-benefits
- Consider location including proximity to beneficiaries
- Net environmental gain of 20%?
- Take account of time taken to establish new assets





Where does the funding come from?

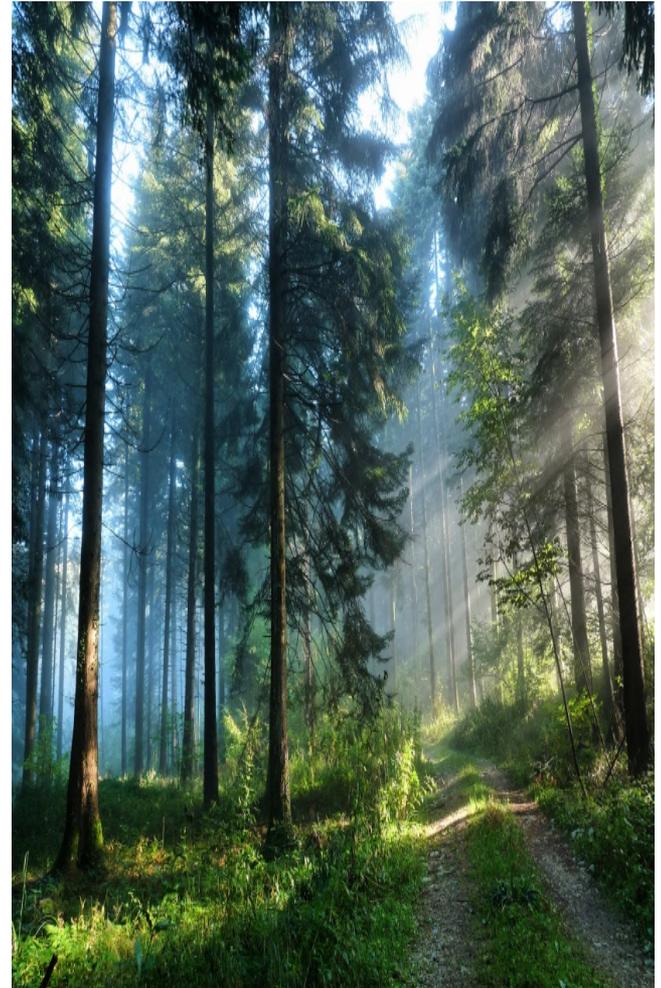
Public or regulatory driven

- Net gain requirements
- Developer contributions
- Water company investments
- ELMs
- Flood risk management investment
- Defra £

Private

- Philanthropic, Trusts and other NGOs
- Is there an investable proposition beyond carbon?
- Market: based on scale efficiencies for: habitat and asset creation; maintenance; verification

Pooling not handing budgets over





What is needed?



- Shareable and agreed baseline data (maps) based on common standards
 - natural capital assets
 - ecosystem services
 - constraints and risks
 - opportunities
- Agreed methodologies and approaches for:
 - baseline and year
 - net biodiversity gain methodology
 - net environmental gain methodology
- Publicly accessible data hub
- Governance to test baseline and net gain propositions
 - nature of interventions, locations and context
- Comprehensive environmental census every 5 years

