

# Policy applications of accounts for broad habitats and ecosystem accounts for urban areas

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## The policy interest in natural capital



National Ecosystem Assessment May 2011

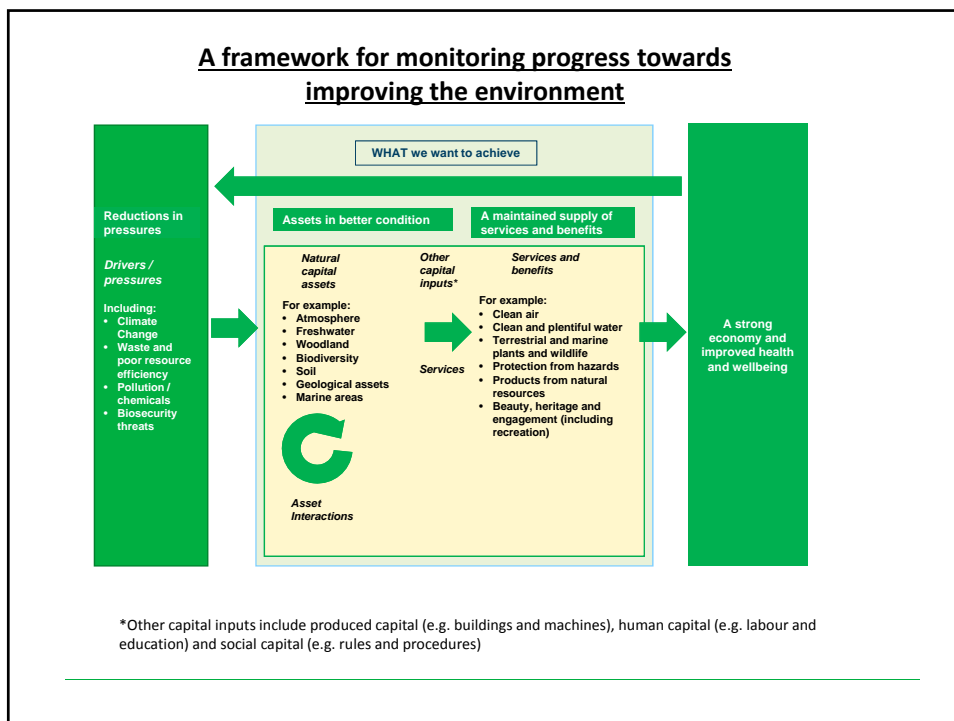
National Capital Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> Report January 2015

25 Year Environment Plan January 2018








Natural Environment White Paper June 2011

Conservative Party election commitment May 2015

25 Year Environment Plan Evidence Annex Jan 2018



## UK national level accounts support this framework

 Woodland  Farmland  Freshwater	<p>Well established</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core accounts, based on UK Broad Habitats (Mountains/moorlands; grassland; farmland; woodland; freshwaters; urban; coastal and marine)</li> </ul>
 Urban	<p>Initial account completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Together they provide a complete overview of UK ecosystems</li> </ul>
 Mountains/moorlands  Coastal margins	<p>Scoping study completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spatially detailed accounts where possible and separate accounts for specific habitats such as peatland</li> </ul>
 Semi-natural grassland	<p>To be completed by 2020</p>	

## Accounting highlights the importance of natural capital in urban areas

### Significant policy relevance

- 80% of population
- Concern over greenspace, loss of parks etc
- Links to health and well-being
- Cities interested e.g. London, Manchester, Sheffield

  
House of Commons  
Communities and Local  
Government Committee  
**Public parks**  
Seventh Report of Session 2016-17

### Key issues in scoping an urban account

- Where to draw the boundary around urban areas
- Accounting for overlaps with other habitats
- Key services: recreation, air filtration, noise, climate, amenity, public health



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## The countryside doesn't have all our natural capital



Ecosystem services £ million p.a. (2015)	UK woodland	UK urban greenspace
Timber	227	-
Food provisioning	-	114
Air pollutant removal	767	212
Carbon sequestration	1,046	31
Temperature regulation	-	70
Noise regulation	-	59 (Manchester only)
Outdoor recreation	291	tbd
Public health benefits	-	900

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## SDG green/open spaces indicator

### Sustainable Development Goal: Target 11.7

- By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces

- Indicator agreed by the UN Statistical Commission:

11.7.1 The average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all

#### Metric proposed by UN-Habitat:

Share of the built-up area of the city that is open space in public use (%) =

$(\text{Total surface of open public space} + \text{Total surface of land allocated to streets})$

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Total surface of built up area of the urban agglomeration

- Ecosystem accounts will provide information on visits and the quality of urban green space



## Strong international and domestic momentum



- **UN Experimental Ecosystem Accounts** (2012) – plans to revise and improve guidance by 2020



- **Aichi Target 2; Sustainable Development Goal 15.9** - By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning and accounts



Limburg province, the Netherlands



- **World Bank WAVES, United Nations ANCA, EU KIP INCA** projects; regions in other countries



Great Barrier Reef



- **Sub-national accounting e.g. Public Forest Estate in England, Nature reserve managers (RSPB), Greater London Authority, Water companies, a range of other corporate** accounts



## Key uses and benefits of natural capital accounts

- Provide a database and framework for high-level monitoring of the state of our natural capital and the benefits we receive
- Demonstrate the relative importance of different habitats and different ecosystem services, supporting the 'natural capital approach' embraced by the 25 Year Environment Plan
- Clarify the contribution of natural capital to individual economic sectors e.g. agriculture, forestry
- Help to focus government spending on priority areas
- National level work establishing accounting conventions has been used to inform and guide the development and use of accounts at sub-national levels
- Forest Enterprise England use the accounts to show the full value of the public forest estate and the costs of maintaining its natural assets; and are using them to monitor the effects of land management decisions
- Local municipalities aim to use them to support the case for investment in local green spaces

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## Thank you

**ONS Natural Capital Accounting web-page:**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/methodologies/naturalcapital>

