





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 (%) =

(Total surface of open public space + Total surface of land allocated to streets)

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



Limburg province,
the Netherlands



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



Great Barrier Reef

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



- 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



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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>

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/user-guidance/natural-capital/index.html>

