

NERR092 Appendix 9 North Devon Landscape Pioneer

Natural England's Natural Capital Evidence Handbook helps you come to a strategic understanding about the natural environment in your place using natural capital evidence. This Evidence Information Note helps you access resources related to the North Devon Landscape Pioneer.

Background

The North Devon Landscape pioneer was one of four pioneers set up as test beds for the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. Its aims were to:

1. test new tools and methods as part of applying a natural capital approach in practice;
2. demonstrate a joined-up, integrated approach to planning and delivery;
3. pioneer and 'scale-up' the use of new funding opportunities; and
4. grow our understanding of 'what works', sharing lessons and best practice.

This summary will focus on the Pioneer's trial of a natural capital approach in creating an integrated delivery strategy and exploring innovative finance.

What did we do?

- We explored whether gathering economic evidence about the environment and embedding it within a participatory and deliberative decision-making process could inform ways to strategically improve natural capital in North Devon.
- We started working with the North Devon Biosphere core partnership. More partners from wider organisations and businesses in North Devon became involved as the work progressed.
- A shared evidence base was created, gathering evidence on the state of natural capital and the way partners currently invest in it.
- Information from the evidence base was used to prioritise assets and ecosystem services on which to focus.
- Root Cause Analysis was used to understand the problems affecting the assets and ecosystem services they provide.
- Strategic solutions were explored and agreed. Solutions needed to be innovative, investible, treat problems close to their root causes, support the enhancement of a range of ecosystem services and be good for biodiversity.
- We created a natural capital strategy for the North Devon Landscape Pioneer bringing together the priorities, problems and potential solutions.
- We explored innovative funding solutions with partners and identified four potential investment opportunities for private sector funding.
- We developed lessons learned to inform future best practice.

Outputs: What is available to use?

- The problems, solutions and experimental process have been written up in [A Natural Capital Strategy for North Devon \(NERR083\)](#).
- We have published eftec's report on the Root Cause Analysis: [Root Cause Analysis for the North Devon Landscape Pioneer \(NECR291\)](#).
- We have published Eunomia's report that presents the investment opportunities developed by the partnership: [Natural Capital Investment Opportunities for North Devon \(NECR292\)](#).
- We have published a lessons learnt report that is useful for anyone interested in applying a natural capital approach to plan for recovering nature in their place: [Applying a Natural Capital Approach in Practice: Lessons Learned from the North Devon Landscape Pioneer \(NERR089\)](#).

Lessons Learned

- Using a natural capital approach helped us to think differently about the environment. It facilitated the development of innovative and ambitious ideas and products to aid nature's recovery and provide wider benefits to people.
- The changes needed are not just what we do to manage the environment, but how well effort and investment is planned, coordinated, incentivised and governed.
- Developing strategic interventions which improve the environment and which could be funded by private sector investment was challenging. We found that some private finance opportunities may exist, particularly around corporate responsibility and carbon offsetting.
- The trial of a new approach provided an opportunity to engage new partners. The Pioneer expanded on the Biosphere partnership to include stakeholders from economic planning, development, business and tourism.
- The participatory and deliberative process was key to the success of the trial and resulted in a high level of buy-in. Partners have adopted the Natural Capital strategy and are building on it with the [Marine Pioneer](#) to create an action plan for North Devon.