Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes

NATURAL ENGLAND

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Project details

This report results from work to develop a framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes. Natural England has led the work in close partnership with Defra, the English National Park Authorities Association, English Heritage and the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A Project Board oversaw the work and a Delivery Group undertook various tasks; the members of each are listed in Appendix 2.

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Acknowledgements

Summary

The first National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) were designated in the 1950s and various reviews over the past 20 years have recommended improving evidence gathering and monitoring within these 'protected landscapes'.

The 'Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes' project has addressed this by developing a national framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in National Parks and AONBs. Natural England has led the work in close partnership with Defra, the English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA), English Heritage and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB).

This report explains the background to the work, the process followed to create the framework, its main outputs and potential next steps.

Drivers, aims and objectives

The Framework project was initiated to address the lack of a national monitoring framework and to meet a number of national and local drivers. These included the need to:

- Illustrate how, and to what extent, delivery of environmental outcomes by protected landscape bodies and others is supporting National Park and AONB statutory management plan objectives and policies.
- Gain a better understanding of the outcomes generated from national and local investment in these landscapes.
- Show how and to what extent delivery is meeting the Government's aspirations, such as contributing towards ecosystem goods and services and other aspects of the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper, and Biodiversity 2020.
- Provide evidence to inform future decision making, particularly at the local level to assist with the targeting of resources.

An additional driver, linked to the first, was to provide information to illustrate how, and to what extent, delivery by protected landscapes and others is supporting the achievement of protected landscapes' statutory purposes.

A stakeholder workshop held in May 2010 resulted in the project aim to "establish a coordinated and robust monitoring framework for England's protected landscapes" with the following objectives:

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of the conservation and enhancement of the outstanding natural beauty of England's protected landscapes.
- To provide an evidence base to assess the effective delivery of protected landscapes' management plan objectives and to inform their review.
- To provide an evidence base to inform the understanding of the benefits of protected landscape designation.
- To provide an evidence base to demonstrate that England's protected landscapes are exemplars of land management (including local character, cultural heritage, tranquillity, biodiversity in favourable condition, exemplary access management, resilience to climate change).

Process

The Framework project has been overseen by a 'Project Board' comprising Natural England, Defra, ENPAA, the NAAONB and English Heritage, and a 'Delivery Group' has undertaken various tasks. A number of stages have been followed to create the framework, including:

- A stakeholder workshop in 2010 which confirmed the need for a framework and generated key principles for developing it.
- Research into existing monitoring projects. This informed the decision to base the framework on the 'Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion' that forms part of the 'Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as a National Park or AONB'. The draft framework that emerged focused on natural beauty, but also included four other themes: recreation; ecosystem goods and services; sustainable communities and 'community engagement'. The latter theme was subsequently absorbed into other sections. Each theme was populated with suggested outcomes, outputs and existing datasets that could be used to measure them. This resulted in a large draft framework.
- Piloting the draft framework with four protected landscape bodies from July 2011 to March 2012, to help prioritise which outputs the project team should try to seek national and local data for. The pilot stage also identified and resolved, as far as possible, some issues with providing data tailored to protected landscapes.
- Holding two stakeholder workshops in March 2012 to discuss the pilot work and gather views on the type of data sourced.
- Providing initial statistics to protected landscape bodies during summer 2012 and running a questionnaire in November 2012 to gain feedback on how useful they had found the data.
- Refining the framework's outcomes and measures, informed by the questionnaire, a 'statistics audit' and an exercise on Environmental Stewardship (ES) information.

Outputs

The above process produced the following key outputs:

- A 'Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes' which presents the best available set of existing national statistics (or 'measures') to shed light on a range of environmental outcomes. The framework aims to:

    a) help guide protected landscape bodies as to how various statistics might relate to different outcomes; and
    b) provide a structure for national reporting of outcome-related statistics, whether for protected landscape bodies or agencies.

- National statistics for the identified environmental outcomes from a variety of organisations, including: ES uptake; heritage at risk; tranquillity; the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; the ecological status of water; woodland management; and publicly accessible land.
- Local statistics for the identified environmental outcomes, initially provided by National Park Authorities.
- Guidance notes on the individual datasets and on using the framework, including helping to monitor outcomes relating to natural beauty.

Next steps

The partnership has produced a framework that provides a national structure for monitoring the environmental outcomes that are delivered in protected landscapes, populated with an agreed set of statistics that should be provided by partners on an ongoing basis. This will allow protected landscape bodies and others to measure trends, identify management needs and focus delivery. The partnership anticipates that the framework will be reviewed and refined over time to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This will be in response to further information on how the data is being used; as new or updated data becomes available; and, potentially, to monitor additional environmental outcomes, particularly in response to government policy.

Other areas for possible development include incorporation of AONB local statistics and improvements in how protected landscape bodies and others can access the statistics in a simple and interactive way, with appropriate context and trends.

The cross-organisation approach led by Natural England has worked well. To ensure that the progress made to date and the strong engagement between the protected landscape bodies, Natural England and other agencies is maintained, it is important that the partnership approach continues.

The Project Board believes that the framework will provide a sustainable means of monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes, which will help to improve NPA and AONB planning and reporting. It will also contribute useful evidence for all those working or influencing activities in England's National Parks and AONBs to achieve the best environmental outcomes in these special places.

Contents

Appendices

1   Introduction

The 'Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes' project has developed a national framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

The project began in spring 2010. It is one of Natural England's Integrated Monitoring Programme projects and has been developed in close partnership with Defra, the English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA), English Heritage and the National Association for AONBs (NAAONB). The Environment Agency and Forestry Commission have also contributed.

This report explains the background to the work, the process followed to create the framework, its outputs and next steps.

1.1   Context

The first National Parks and AONBs - collectively referred to as our 'protected landscapes' - were designated in the 1950s[1]. There are nine National Parks and 34 AONBs in England which, together with the Broads, cover about 23% of the country (**Figure 1**). They are designated for their natural beauty and, in the case of National Parks, also for their recreational value. Their management bodies share the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing their area's natural beauty (and wildlife and cultural heritage too if a National Park). National Parks must also promote opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy their special qualities. Protected landscape management bodies set out their environmental objectives in statutory management plans that are reviewed at least every five years. Many agencies, organisations, communities and businesses also contribute to the delivery of the management plans.

There has never been a national framework to monitor the environmental outcomes delivered in protected landscapes by protected landscape management bodies and others. Over the past 20 years various reviews have pointed to these monitoring deficiencies and there have been attempts to develop a better evidence gathering and monitoring approach (**Appendix 1**). These have tended to be one-off pieces of work and no long-term sustainable framework has previously been put in place – largely due to technical difficulties and limited resources.

As Defra's **'National Park Authorities: Assessment of Benefits'** 2011 paper [**1**] acknowledges, there are three factors that can hinder the collation of data by individual protected landscape bodies:

1) It can often be time-consuming to collate data from national agencies.
2) Licensing issues can sometimes make it hard to access certain information.
3) Data provided for local authorities is not always available 'cut' in a way that conforms to protected landscape boundaries. This is a particular issue for AONBs that cross multiple local authority boundaries.

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[1] Many others have been designated since, the most recent being the South Downs National Park which came into being in 2010.

Figure 1 Protected landscapes in England

1.2 The drivers for the work

The Framework project was initiated to address the lack of a national monitoring framework and to meet a number of national and local drivers. These included the need to:

- Illustrate how, and to what extent, delivery of environmental outcomes by protected landscape bodies and others is supporting National Park and AONB management plan objectives and policies.
- Gain a better understanding of the outcomes generated from national and local investment in these landscapes.

- Show how and to what extent delivery is meeting the Government's aspirations, such as contributing towards ecosystem goods and services and other aspects of the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper, and Biodiversity 2020.
- Provide evidence to inform future decision making, particularly at the local level to assist with the targeting of resources.

An additional driver, linked to the first, was to provide information to illustrate how, and to what extent, delivery by protected landscapes and others is supporting the achievement of protected landscapes' statutory purposes.

1.3 Aim and objectives

A stakeholder workshop held in May 2010 (see 2.1) resulted in the following project aim and objectives:

Aim: To establish a coordinated and robust monitoring framework for England's protected landscapes.

Objectives:

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of the conservation and enhancement of the outstanding natural beauty of England's protected landscapes.
- To provide an evidence base to assess the effective delivery of protected landscapes' management plan objectives and to inform their review.
- To provide an evidence base to inform the understanding of the benefits of protected landscape designation.
- To provide an evidence base to demonstrate that England's protected landscapes are exemplars of land management (including: local character; cultural heritage; tranquillity; biodiversity in favourable condition; exemplary access management; and resilience to climate change).

1.4 Project governance and Natural England's Integrated Monitoring Programme

Natural England has a responsibility under the tripartite agreement with Defra and the NAAONB to "lead on development of proposals for strategic environmental outcome monitoring and reporting for protected landscapes". Similarly, the Natural England/ENPAA Shared Outcomes Agreement states that the organisations will work together to "develop an evidence-based framework for monitoring the environmental outcomes that protected landscapes deliver."

Reflecting these responsibilities, the Framework project has been overseen by a Steering Group (latterly 'Project Board') comprising Natural England, Defra, ENPAA and the NAAONB, plus English Heritage. This group has made decisions on the running of the project. For the purposes of this report, the term 'Project Board' refers both to the original Steering Group and its later incarnation.

A 'Delivery Group' has provided advice on the content of the framework and undertaken various tasks. This has mainly comprised Natural England officers but has also drawn upon expertise from ENPAA's Project Board representative.

The members of the Project Board and Delivery Group are listed in **Appendix 2**.

The term 'partnership' is used in this report to encompass both groups.

The Framework project is part of Natural England's Integrated Monitoring Programme (IMP) which aims to deliver the organisation's priority monitoring requirements in the most efficient and integrated way. The project forms part of the IMP's work on 'monitoring our special sites'. Further details of the

IMP can be found at:
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6278902?category=47018.

1.5 Summary

For many years, there has been a need to develop a consistent framework for monitoring the environmental outcomes delivered in protected landscapes. A partnership of protected landscape management bodies and statutory bodies has developed such a framework. This will provide evidence for a variety of purposes, including assessing how effectively the protected landscapes' statutory purposes and management plan objectives have been delivered, and better demonstration of the benefits of protected landscape designation. The partnership has also identified, and is making available, the existing national datasets that are relevant to the framework and can be applied meaningfully to protected landscapes.

2 Process

2.1 2010 workshop

Natural England held a stakeholder workshop in May 2010, attended by representatives from AONBs, National Park Authorities, Campaign for National Parks, Defra, English Heritage, ENPAA, NAAONB and other bodies. This stage, and others that have been followed to create the framework, are shown in (**Figure 2**).

At the workshop, there was a clear wish for a monitoring framework and participants' views clarified what the framework needed to provide. Attendees generated the project aim and objectives (see 1.3) plus the following key principles for the work:

- monitoring must be simple and nationally consistent;
- monitoring must be at a protected landscape scale (not components of the designation);
- data must be affordable to collect; and
- monitoring will measure the 'State of the Park' (ie. the state of the protected landscape), not the performance of the management body[2]. It should therefore include data from a range of organisations.

2.2 Research

At the workshop, some attendees aspired to monitor special qualities. Detailed investigations subsequently found that it would be impractical to do so within a nationally consistent framework. This is because there is, understandably, no consistency in special qualities across protected landscapes, and also no standard national approach for defining them.

The partnership also reviewed existing monitoring projects. It identified some indicators and datasets that should, ideally, be incorporated into the framework, notably the National Parks' 'State of the Park' indicators[3], plus the South West Protected Landscapes core dataset. Numerous other monitoring frameworks and projects were also identified after the workshop and the project considered how they could potentially inform the framework. These included the South East protected landscapes monitoring; Countryside Quality Counts; Devon, Cornwall, and Isles of Scilly landscape change monitoring; Countryside Survey; and research into the impact of Environmental Stewardship (ES) on landscape character and quality.

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[2] This is being carried out through other mechanisms.
[3] National Park authorities developed an initial suite of potential national 'State of the Park' indicators in March 2010. This work was put on hold pending development of any national monitoring framework for all protected landscapes.
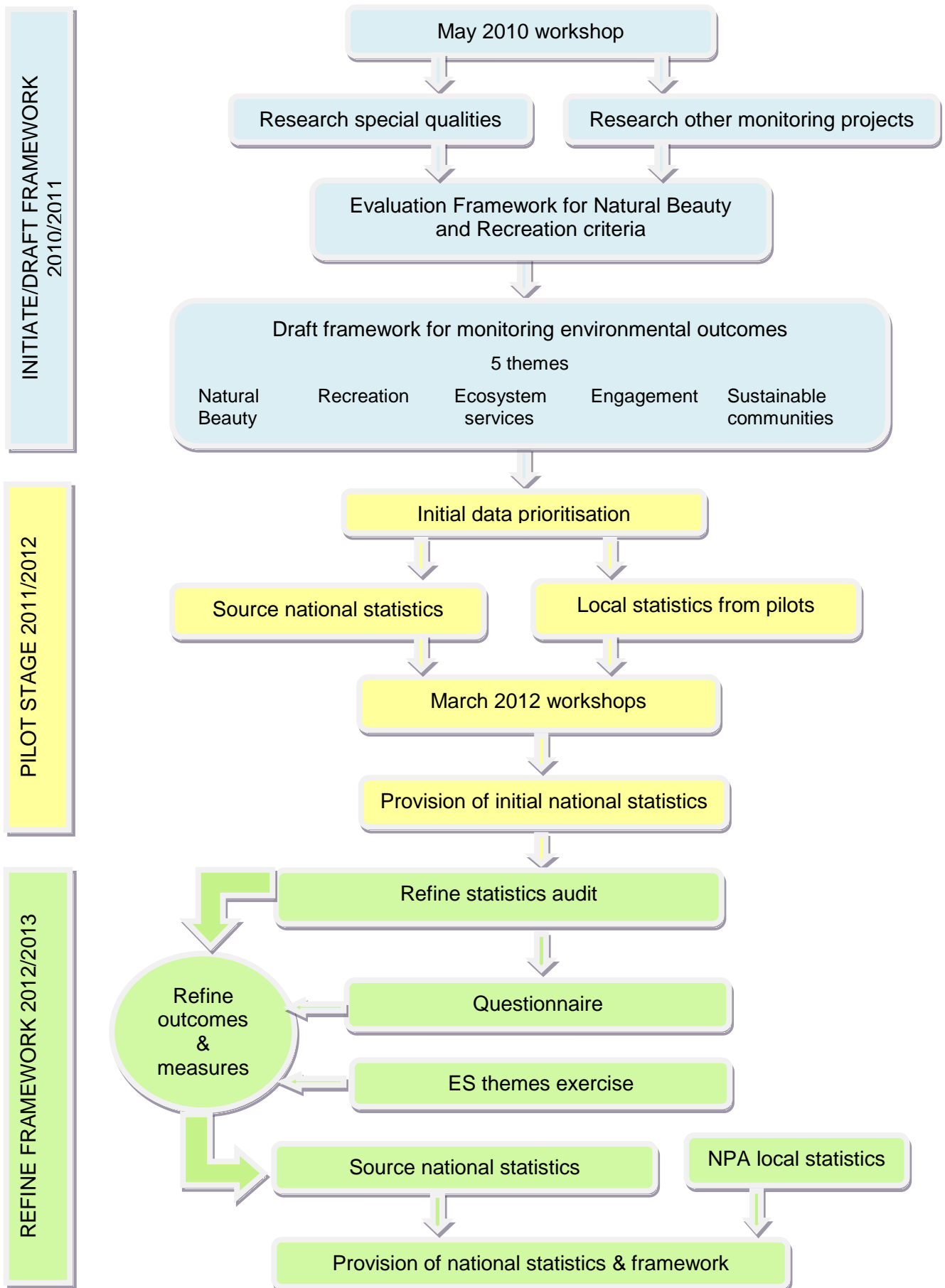
Figure 2 Process

2.3 The basis of the framework

Findings from the workshop and subsequent research indicated that the most appropriate basis for the framework would be the 'Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion' that forms part of the 'Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as a National Park or AONB' [2]. The rationale for using the Evaluation Framework was that:

- all special qualities relate back to the natural beauty criteria;
- the evaluation framework has been tested and 'legal proofed';
- the framework has been through external consultation; and
- there is consistency and continuity in using the same framework for designation as for monitoring.

The extract from the Evaluation Framework below illustrates part of the section on natural beauty. It sets out factors such as 'landscape quality' and 'scenic quality'; it then defines, for each factor, sub-factors such as 'the condition of the landscape's features and elements'; and finally lists indicators for the presence of the sub-factors, eg. 'landscape elements are in good condition'. The criteria it sets out for designation are for guidance and it is not expected that a protected landscape will fulfil them all.

Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty Criterion

Factor	Sub-factor	Code	Indicator
Landscape quality	Intactness of the landscape in visual, functional and ecological perspectives	NB1	Characteristic natural and man-made elements are well represented throughout
	The condition of the landscape's features and elements	NB2	Landscape elements are in good condition
	The influence of incongruous features or elements (whether man-made or natural) on the perceived natural beauty of the area	NB3	Incongruous elements are not present to a significant degree, are not visually intrusive, have only localised influence or are temporary in nature
Scenic quality	A distinctive sense of place	NB4	Landscape character lends a clear and recognisable sense of place
	Striking landform	NB5	Landform shows a strong sense of scale or contrast
		NB6	There are striking landform types or coastal configurations
	Visual interest in patterns of land cover	NB7	Land cover and vegetation types form an appealing pattern or composition in relation to each other and/or to landform
	Appeal to the senses	NB8	Strong aesthetic qualities, reflecting factors such as scale and form, degree of openness or enclosure, colours and textures, simplicity or diversity, and ephemeral or seasonal interest
		NB9	Memorable or unusual views and eye-catching features or landmarks
Relative wildness	A sense of remoteness	NB10	Relatively few roads or other transport routes
		NB11	Distant from or perceived as distant from significant habitation

Table continued...

Figure 3 Extract from the Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty

The partnership then built on the Evaluation Framework to define environmental outcomes, plus related outputs that could potentially be measured using <u>existing</u> national datasets that might be relevant. The partnership did not attempt to seek an 'ideal' set of data, as this would require prohibitive collection costs and be contrary to one of the project's principles. These national datasets would be supported, where appropriate, with existing local data. An example is provided in **Table 1**.

Natural beauty factor	Sub-factor	Indicator (one of the two under the Evaluation Framework for this sub-factor)	National or locally specific	Outcome	Output	Datasets
Cultural heritage	Built environment, archaeology and designed landscapes	Presence of visible archaeological remains, parkland and/or designed landscapes that provide striking features on the landscape	National	Better management & protection of archaeological features	An increase in the area of land under ES for the management and/or protection of archaeological features.	Natural England ES datasets on archaeological features under ES options for historic features
			Local		An increase in the number of historic environment assets managed under local management schemes.	Local datasets, if available

Table 1 Example of defining an environmental outcome and output against a natural beauty indicator, and datasets that could be used to measure this

Four other sections or 'themes' were developed, in addition to natural beauty: recreation (to reflect National Parks' second purpose to promote opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy their area's special qualities); plus ones on ecosystem goods and services, 'community engagement' and sustainable communities. The latter three were chosen to reflect the wider breadth of protected landscapes' activity, the scope of the National Park 'state of the Park' indicators, and to provide contextual data.

As far as possible, these four sections were also populated with suggested outcomes, outputs and existing datasets that could be used to measure them. This resulted in a large draft framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes.

2.4 Pilot stage 2011-12 – initial prioritisation of outputs and related data

The partnership piloted the draft framework with four protected landscape bodies from July 2011 to March 2012. These were the East Devon AONB (**Figure 4**), Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (NPA) and the South Downs NPA. These areas were chosen to reflect a range of broad landscape types, sizes, locations and management bodies, with varying resources and evidence bases.

Figure 4 The East Devon AONB, one of the four pilot areas

The AONBs and NPAs involved in the pilot stage carefully considered the draft framework, on behalf of all protected landscape management bodies. This included prioritising which outputs the project team should try to seek national and local data for in the pilot stage, according to criteria which the pilots and wider steering group agreed (**Appendix 3**). This

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reduced a long, theoretical list of information that might be useful (some of it found not to be readily available), so that the project could focus on providing helpful data.

The pilot phase highlighted some issues with providing data tailored to protected landscapes, particularly the 'cutting' of ES data where farm holdings cross the boundaries of protected landscapes. It was possible to measure the uptake of 'field parcel' based options accurately, but not options that are recorded only at 'agreement level', such as those relating to boundary features. It continues to be the case that we can only provide estimates of the total length of features (or area of land) under agreement-based options, and the total stock of boundaries in each protected landscape also remains undefined – on-site sampling may be the only way to address this issue.

Whilst Natural England, English Heritage and Defra began cutting prioritised national datasets (such as ES and heritage at risk) to protected landscape boundaries, the pilot AONBs/NPAs explored what local information they could contribute to the framework.

The pilots found that NPAs have more comprehensive programmes and systems of local data collection and management than most, but not all, AONBs. Not surprisingly, the pilots had most local data on natural beauty. They sought to identify common local datasets and found that there can be variations in terminology and the approach to collecting local data. Also, local data often required third-party involvement, particularly in the case of AONBs. However, the pilots agreed that local information, allied with national data, can be very powerful and add detail to national datasets as well as, potentially, challenging national data.

2.5   Pilot stage – 2012 March stakeholder workshops

The partnership held two workshops in March 2012 to discuss the pilot work and gather views on the type of data sourced. **Appendix 4** contains a short report of the events. The Project Board carefully considered the feedback as they developed the framework further in 2012. In particular, discussions were held with NAAONB on the framework's links with natural beauty. There were debates on the benefits of providing wider data on socio-economic factors and ecosystem services, and the Forestry Commission's views were gained on the framework, including whether it could also contribute statistics.

2.6   Provision of initial statistics

Natural England collated and distributed some of the national statistics identified in the framework to AONBs and NPAs during summer 2012. **Appendix 4b** lists the statistics that were provided. The statistics were accompanied by a guidance note explaining how they related to different indicators and outcomes. Protected landscape bodies also received spatial 'heritage at risk' data which English Heritage had produced.

This was the first time that a wide-ranging set of data was tailored to the boundaries of every protected landscape and provided in a co-ordinated way, complementing the existing on-line mapping and information services that Natural England provides. The Project Board emphasised that any interpretation of the statistics should be informed by an understanding of local contexts. Management bodies, and their local partners, could supplement national data with local information, where available, to provide a fuller and more nuanced picture of environmental outcomes and trends in their areas.

Defra subsequently produced economic profiles for each AONB, which fed into the 'sustainable communities' themes of the framework. These were very similar to ones produced for NPAs in 2010 and can be used as contextual information. Many AONBs started reviewing management plans in 2012.

2.7 Refining the statistics audit

During summer – winter 2012/13, the project's Delivery Group investigated the availability of additional existing datasets that workshop participants had suggested, plus others that the partnership had not been able to provide at the pilot stage but might be possible to produce for the next release of statistics in 2013. The Environment Agency also agreed to contribute statistics on water quality.

The results helped the Delivery Group to further simplify the still-long list of potential information and to distil it into a 'statistics audit'. An extract is included in **Appendix 5b** and the full version is available in excel format. The approach taken to the audit is set out in **Appendix 5a**.

The Delivery Group also took out the separate section on 'community engagement' (for which there were hardly any nationally available datasets) and moved the measures into other sections, notably into 'Sustainable Communities'.

2.8 Questionnaire

In November 2012, the partnership used a questionnaire to gather valuable feedback from protected landscape management bodies on how useful they had found the data provided in the summer. Most respondents said they were planning to use the information to review their management plans, with other popular uses including input to 'State of the Park/AONB' reports and background information for funding bids. The Project Group's analysis of the responses helped to inform the Project Board's decision on which statistics to update, which additional ones to provide if possible, and how to improve the accompanying information. A summary of the questionnaire responses is set out in **Appendix 6**.

2.9 Environmental Stewardship themes exercise

Natural England provided indicative headline figures for the area covered by ES options under certain themes (eg. woodland/ moorland/lowland heathland) in summer 2012 (see 2.6). Later in the year, the Delivery Group devised a way of providing more accurate figures which removed the double counting of options where they are co-located.

The Delivery Group ran an 'ES themes exercise' in autumn 2013 to prioritise the six 'themes' which Natural England calculated accurate annual headline figures for, in order to keep the monitoring task manageable. The Group sought feedback from protected landscape bodies on which ones these should be. The exercise is summarised in **Appendix 7**.

The Group recognised that whichever six themes were chosen they would not include all the themes and options that are important to different protected landscapes. The Group therefore devised a separate spreadsheet showing protected landscape management bodies the uptake their area has of any of the individual parcel-based ES options.

2.10 Approach to defining the framework's outcomes and measures

The March 2012 workshops crystallised the partnership's view that the framework should set out a 'menu' of environmental outcomes that can be measured, as far as possible, using the most relevant and readily available existing data. It was felt that a small number might be ones that all protected landscape bodies could relate to; others would be of relevance to different areas. Individual National Parks and AONB management bodies could also define additional outcomes that are locally specific and relate to their management plan indicators which are not covered by the national information.

Appendix 8 explains the steps that the Delivery Group took to setting out the framework's outcomes and related measures. Refining the outcomes and measures was an iterative process, with the group updating the outcomes as it became clearer whether certain statistics could be provided.

There were some cases where it was not possible to measure true 'outcomes'. In these instances, the Delivery Group identified 'output' (or activity) information as a proxy. An example is the use of ES data, which only indicates the amount of land or features under management, not whether they are in good condition.

2.11 Approach to sourcing and providing national statistics

Natural England coordinated the cutting of additional and updated datasets in spring 2013. This included liaising with the Forestry Commission, English Heritage and the Environment Agency, as well as cutting datasets that it owned. This multi-agency approach helped to resolve any licensing issues and ensured a consistent approach to cutting statistics to boundaries.

Wherever possible[4], the Project Board decided that the statistics should reflect the situation as at the end of March 2013, so as to provide a full financial year figure. This would provide the 'baseline'[5] against which trends can be measured. The Board decided not to gather pre-2010/11 data for any of the outcomes in order to focus resources on the most recent data.

The Project Board agreed the end of May as the date for the majority of statistics to be provided to protected landscape bodies. This was based on it being:

- the earliest that Natural England could process a large quantity of statistics reflecting the situation as at end March;
- in time for NPAs to fulfil their statutory requirement to report publicly on their performance before the end of June; and
- in time for the majority of AONBs to incorporate relevant information into the review of statutory management plans.

The Project Group investigated the best means of sharing the information with protected landscape bodies. They found that issuing it in the same way as in the pilot stage – namely, via 'TransferBIGfiles' – remained the most feasible method, with information sent on CD to AONBs who could not access the site or preferred to receive it in this way. Further investigation is needed to explore whether an improved method becomes available (see 4.1).

2.12 Approach to sourcing local statistics

'Local statistics' fall into two categories under the framework:

1) Those relating to 'local measures' – information which is best provided by protected landscape bodies where national measures are not readily available. The nature of such information may well vary between different protected landscapes, although the NPAs agreed to contribute two sets of local information that they collate in a consistent way – namely, on the percentage of rights of way in good condition, and the number of volunteers engaged.
2) Local information that adds to national statistics – for example, the 'heritage at risk' figures that NPAs hold on Grade II listed buildings. The Project Board decided to focus on sourcing such

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[4] Some statistics are only available to reflect a different time of year – eg. Heritage at Risk figures reflect the situation as of May each year.
[5] Some statistics can be traced back a year earlier to spring 2012 if they were provided in the pilot stage.

statistics from all NPAs in spring 2013. This was to test how well the exercise worked before potentially inviting AONBs to contribute local statistics voluntarily if they are available. See 3.3.

The local data is incorporated into the framework.

3 Outputs

3.1 The monitoring framework

Appendix 9 presents an extract from the 'Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes'. The full version of the framework is available as an excel workbook split into four themes (natural beauty, recreation, ecosystem services and sustainable communities). Each theme presents the best available set of existing national statistics (or 'measures') that sheds light on a range of environmental outcomes or benefits in each AONB and National Park.

The framework aims to:

- help guide protected landscape bodies as to how various statistics might relate to different outcomes; and
- provide a structure for national reporting of outcome-related statistics, whether for protected landscape bodies or agencies.

It can also inform future targeting – for example, of agri-environment scheme options and landscape scale delivery projects.

Section 2.3 and **Appendix 8** explain how the statistics/measures relate to natural beauty. **Appendix 10** has guidance on using the framework, including helping to monitor outcomes relating to the latter.

3.2 National statistics for identified environmental outcomes

Appendix 11 lists the statistics, identified from the framework, that protected landscape bodies received in late May 2013. It also lists a small additional set of statistics that they received in early July 2013.

Features of the national statistics provision in 2013 included:

- For the first time, provision of statistics to every protected landscape on the ecological status of water, woodland management, Land Cover Map 2007 and publicly accessible land.
- New interactive ES option spreadsheets.
- New analysis of 2006 tranquillity information for every protected landscape.
- Efficiencies brought both for the agencies and protected landscape bodies through the provision of multiple statistics in one go. This means that individual NPAs and AONBs need not approach each agency separately, and the agencies can provide their datasets once rather than responding to ad hoc local requests.

English Heritage also provided updated spatial GIS datasets on 'heritage assets at risk' cut to protected landscape boundaries.

The Delivery Group also liaised with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to ensure that the National Biodiversity Network Gateway, which it helps to manage, can be searched by National Park as well as by AONB.

3.3 Local statistics for identified environmental outcomes

The NPAs' local statistics were provided alongside the national ones – either in their own right (as with the 'rights of way condition statistics' plus the 'number of volunteers'), or, where applicable, incorporated with the national (see 2.12).

Both types of local information will help to provide a more accurate overall picture of environmental outcomes delivered in protected landscapes.

3.4 Guidance notes

Each set of statistics includes guidance and metadata, including: their source; who prepared them; the time period to which they relate; their terms of use; advice on interpretation; and where to find further information. Also see **Appendix 10** for guidance on using the framework.

3.5 Timing of future updates

The Project Board's aim is that the framework should be updated on a regular basis with the release of statistics at regular intervals in order to allow protected landscape bodies and others to measure trends, identify management needs and focus delivery.

Appendix 11 indicates how frequently the framework's statistics will be updated – most will be provided annually, others at longer intervals. Some of the statistics are simply contextual, such as those on the area of woodland and the number of heritage assets. These can be used to help understand the local significance of some of the results for some measures. Protected landscape bodies and their local partners may want to use these in 'State of the Park/AONB' reports.

3.6 Progress in relation to aims and objectives

Appendix 12 sets out how far the project's aims and objectives have been met (see 1.3). The project has established a coordinated framework that has been tested and proofed and provides a structure for national reporting of environmental outcomes, based on using the best available and robust national data. This has been done in accordance with the project's principles, meaning that it is consistent across all protected landscapes; is at the protected landscape scale; and uses affordable data and information from a number of organisations to shed light on the 'state of the protected landscape'.

It is considered the framework meets all of the project objectives, particularly objective 2 ("provide an evidence base to assess effective delivery of protected landscape management plan objectives and to inform their review"). However, the objectives can only be fully met with the integration of additional local and national information which is not currently available for all protected landscapes.

4   Next steps

4.1   Use and development of the framework

The partnership has produced a framework that provides a national structure for monitoring the environmental outcomes that are delivered in protected landscapes, populated with an agreed set of statistics that should be provided by partners on an ongoing basis.

The partnership anticipates that the framework will be reviewed and refined over time to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This will be in response to further information on how the data is being used; as new or updated data becomes available; and, potentially, to monitor additional environmental outcomes, particularly in response to government policy. The framework (**Appendix 9**) colour-codes the various measures to indicate:

- statistics that were provided under the framework in 2013 and will also be provided in future years as long as technically possible (colour-coded green); and
- statistics that are not currently available through the framework, and whose future inclusion will depend on a review of the framework and available resources (colour-coded red).

The partnership is re-running the online questionnaire in spring 2014, after many AONBs have completed the final drafts of revised management plans.

Other areas for possible development include:

- incorporation of AONB local statistics (see 4.2) and opportunities to engage local people in collecting and sharing data; and
- improvements in how protected landscape bodies and others can access the statistics in a simple, intuitive and interactive way, with appropriate context, trends and insight.

There are additional areas that the partnership may wish to consider, such as:

- what can be learnt from the 'Cordiale' project **www.cordialeproject.eu**;
- how the framework fits with the INSPIRE European Directive;
- generic issues revealed by the data, whether through national and/or local reviews;
- the long-term nature of the datasets (eg. changes to agri-environment schemes);
- whether, if resources become available, there would be merit in 'back-casting' data to recent times to show longer term trends; and
- using the data to inform policy discussions between protected landscape bodies, Natural England and Defra.

4.2   Partnership working

The cross-organisation approach led by Natural England has worked well and enabled collective input on each issue. Representation from ENPAA and NAAONB has facilitated wider engagement with National Parks and AONBs at each key stage. To ensure that the progress made to date and the strong engagement between the protected landscape bodies, Natural England and other agencies is maintained it is important that the partnership approach continues and the Project Board meets.

Natural England will continue to lead on the collation and provision of statistics. It is expected that other partners who have contributed statistics (Defra, English Heritage, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission) will continue to provide updated information at appropriate intervals. The

partnership will ensure there is an overall co-ordinating organisation and also ensure the future review and development of the framework.

There is potential for widening others' engagement in the framework, such as by:

- Inviting AONBs to contribute local statistics to the framework if they are available. The partnership will need to consider the most efficient way of coordinating such information.
- Discussing with DECC the potential contribution of statistics on greenhouse gas emissions.

4.3 Conclusion

The Project Board believes that the framework will provide a sustainable means of monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes, which will help to improve NPA and AONB planning and reporting. It will also contribute useful evidence that will help all those working or influencing activities in England's National Parks and AONBs to achieve the best environmental outcomes in these special places.

5   Bibliography

[1]   Defra (2011) *National Park Authorities: Assessment of Benefits – working paper* **www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69310/pb13533-national-park-authorities.pdf**.

[2]   Natural England (2010) *Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England.*

Appendix 1 History of protected landscape monitoring

For much of the last 25 years data gathering, as part of evidence base and/or for monitoring, has been an intensive and expensive process.

Over the years protected landscape reviews have made recommendations for improvements to evidence gathering and monitoring; for example, the Edwards Review of National Parks (1991) and the 'Fit for the Future' Government response in 1992; the 1998 Protected Areas Funding Study; Defra's Review of National Parks in 2002; the 2004 Evaluation of the AONB programme; consultation responses and the review of post CRoW AONB Management Plans.

There have been several attempts to provide consistency and a long term approach to monitoring. However, these have been more one-off attempts which have been short-lived, rather than long term strategies which have shown long term trends in the data.

Work includes:

1986: Environmentally Sensitive Area Monitoring (relevant to 12 AONBs and most National Parks) e.g. Monitoring of Hay Meadows in Pennine Dales ESA - MA01005
http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=11427

Critchley, C.N.R., Fowbert, J.A., Wright, B. and Parkin, A.B. 2004. *Upland Hay Meadows in the Pennine Dales Environmentally Sensitive Area: Vegetation Change between 1987 and 2002 and its Relation with Management Practices and Soil Properties.*
http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=MA01005_5770_FRP.pdf

1987-89: Monitoring Landscape Change in the National Parks (MLCNP) project:

Taylor, J.C., Bird, A.C., Keech, M.A. & Stuttard, M.J. 1991a. *Monitoring landscape change in the National Parks - main report.* Silsoe College.

Taylor, J.C., Bird, A.C., Brewer, T.R., Keech, M.A. & Stuttard, M.J. 1991b. *Monitoring landscape change in the National Parks – methodology.* Silsoe College.

Taylor, J.C., Bird, A.C. & Keech, M.A. 1991c. *Monitoring landscape change in the National Parks – Final Report Volume 9: North York Moors.* Silsoe College.

1992: Department for the Environment/ Welsh Office publish *Fit for the Future – A statement by the Government on policies for the National Parks.* This was in response to the Edwards Review and stated *"12.3 ....(iii) to discuss with the Countryside agencies and the National Park Authorities the need for coordinated monitoring of and researching into conditions in the national parks to guide policy making and financial support."*
www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/146392/fitforfuture.pdf

1994: State of Environment Reports / Park Inventories in National Parks.

Mid 1990s: National Park Performance Indicators (in Corporate Financial Plans) – these started with long lists (60+), then moved to short lists – see overview of Indicators 2009 which resulted in the 2010 National Park Suite of Indicators.

1995–1996: Countryside Commission and Association of National Park Authorities run a GIS contract resulting in the *Parks Information Monitoring System (PIMS) evaluation project.*

1998: Countryside Commission produces Board Paper 98/10 *Draft of Advice to Government.*
"19. Both National Park Authorities and local government departments responsible for AONBs lack comprehensive information on the state of the environment in the area for which they have responsibility. (The Protected Areas Funding Study has revealed this lack of basic information.) Funds should be administered so as to ensure this situation is remedied as soon as possible."

2000: English Nature launches 'Lifescapes', comprising four projects which were all in AONBs. The key work area was to improve access to information.

2001: Countryside Agency publishes *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans – A Guide.* CA23. AONBs encouraged to select indicators to monitor changes in landscape condition.
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/40024

2002: Defra publishes *Review of English National Park Authorities.* It observed that they "*have not developed sufficient or consistent information in monitoring the state of National Parks, or in support of resource bids*"
www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/90210/englishnationalparksreview-defra2002.pdf

2003: South West AONBs Indicators produced – links to South West Regional Observatory.

2003: Countryside Agency publishes information on using GIS in AONB management:
Tantram, D., Haines-Young, R., Agarwal, P. and Aplin, P./Terra Consult. *GIS in AONB management.* Countryside Agency

Also see:
Agarwal, P; Tantram, D; Aplin, P, Haines-Young, R. 2005. Establishing good practice guidelines for the deployment of GIS in the management of AONBs. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference for GIS Research UK (GISRUK)*

2004: Countryside Agency/ English Nature undertake a review of AONB Management Plans and run workshops. They found consistent deficiencies in evidence gathering and monitoring systems and recommended the development of an effective and efficient system for monitoring action.

c. 2004 Defra Statistics cut June Agricultural Census Information to AONBs and National Parks.

2004: Terra Consult produce socio-economic profiles for the protected landscapes in South East England, on behalf of the Countryside Agency.

2005: Countryside Agency publishes *National Park Management Plans – Guidance.* CA216.
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/45014

2006: Countryside Agency publishes *Guidance for the review of AONB Management Plans.* CA221.
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/40023

2005: Countryside Agency publishes the report *Socio-economic assessment of protected landscape areas – data toolkit* (Terra Consult). This listed available datasets. It also referred to several south east AONB socio-economic profiles.

1995-98, 1998- 2003 The Countryside Quality Counts (CQC) study makes an assessment of countryside change for these two periods, as reported in the following two publications:

Nottingham University Consultants Limited. 2004. *Countryside Quality Counts: Tracking change in the English Countryside. Constructing an Indicator of Change in Countryside Quality. Final Report.* University of Nottingham and the Countryside Agency. This was the first assessment covering 1990-1998. **http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/329460**

Haines-Young, R. H. 2007. *Tracking Change in the Character of the English Landscape, 1999-2003.* NE42. Natural England. This was the 2nd assessment covering 1999 – 2003. Data were not specific to protected landscapes but were adapted and re-cut for AONBs.
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/330464?category=31019

2007: Natural England appoints an AONB and SSSI Monitoring officer. AONB units are provided with basic but re-cut (to AONB boundaries) CQC information for their management plans.

2007: Agri-environment targeting work – landscape elements are divided into protected landscape and non-protected landscape, as the only way to give priority in landscape terms. Other elements (such as biodiversity and cultural heritage and their distribution), skewed to protected landscapes, gave the final national priorities.

2008: Robins, M. 2008. Protected landscapes: sleeping giants of English biodiversity. *ECOS*, 29(1)*,* 74-86. Protected landscapes "could do better"; no national intelligence system exists for these cherished landscapes. On Breeding Bird Survey - "little difference in trends, at an England scale, in or out of the protected landscapes."

2007: Department of Town and Regional Planning, University of Sheffield produces *A Report Prepared For Natural England. Land Use Change Indicators for Protected Areas Tabulations. Final Report.*
This is a study of land use change that refers to two periods: 1985-2004 and 1998-2003. It shows recent changes in development in protected landscapes, such as the number of units and greenfield / brownfield development.

2008: Natural England releases agri-environment scheme take up data for all AONBs.

2008: Land Use Consultants. *Cornwall, Tamar Valley and Isles of Scilly AONB Landscape Monitoring Project. Phase 1: Project Report.* Prepared for the Cornwall, Tamar Valley and Isles of Scilly AONB Partnerships.
www.ios-aonb.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/AONB-Monitoring-Project-Report-May-23-08.pdf

2008: Natural England publishes *State of the Natural Environment 2008.* Identified an evidence gap as being "A common monitoring framework and indicators for protected landscapes (National Parks and AONBs)". **http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31043?category=118044**

2008: Natural England monitoring work stream, precursor to the current framework.

2009: Natural England run a Policy Position workshop (protected landscapes, Natural England plus key stakeholders).

2009: Natural England publishes *Agri-environment Schemes in England 2009: A review of results and effectiveness.* NE194.
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/46002?category=35001

May 2010: National Park Authorities develop an initial suite of potential national 'State of the Park' indicators. This work was put on hold pending development of any national monitoring framework for all protected landscapes.

2010: Defra Statistics produce socio-economic profiles for all National Parks.

2011: Defra publishes *National Park Authorities. Assessment of Benefits – working paper.* This discussed the economics of National Park Authorities (NPAs) and Defra support: *"It is often costly for NPAs to collect their own data and therefore they often rely on the relevant national agencies to provide them with the data they need."*
www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13533-national-park-authorities.pdf

2012: Defra publishes *A Strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. Biodiversity 2020 Indicators: 2012 Assessment.*
This suggested data issues similar to protected landscape indicators: some are robust; other data are just not collected in past 10 years or so; others are proxies for actual outcomes.
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130123162956/http:/www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/files/England-Biodiversity-indicators-2012-FINALv2.pdf

2012: Defra Statistics produce economic Profiles for all AONBs.

2013: Natural England publishes *Environmental Monitoring in Natural England 2012*. NE408. Includes article on Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6278902?category=47018

Appendix 2 Project Board and Delivery Group members

Project Board	
Name	**Role, Team/Function, Organisation**
Liz Bingham (until end May 2013)	Lead Adviser, Integrated Monitoring/Evidence, Natural England
Chris Bolton (from Oct 2012)	Landscape Head of Profession, Landscape Scale Delivery/Landscape & Biodiversity, Natural England
Richard Clarke	National Policy and Development Manager, National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Sarah Escott (until end Sept 2012)	Principal Adviser, Integrated Monitoring/Evidence, Natural England
Cathy Fitzroy	Lead Adviser, Landscape Scale Delivery/Landscape & Biodiversity, Natural England
Val Kirby (until end Sept 2012)	Principal Specialist, Professions & Communities, Natural England
Andy Nisbet (from Oct 2012)	Principal Adviser, Integrated Monitoring/Evidence, Natural England
Steve Preston	Senior Specialist, AONB Sponsorship, Defra
Gary Smith	Director of Conservation & Community, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Sarah Tunnicliffe	Senior National Rural & Environmental Adviser, Government Advice, English Heritage

Delivery Group	
Name	**Role, Natural England Team, Function**
Andrew Baker	Senior Adviser (Landscape Monitoring), Integrated Monitoring Team, Evidence
Liz Bingham	Lead Adviser, Integrated Monitoring Team, Evidence
Deborah Fitzpatrick	Lead Adviser, Geographical Information & Analysis Services Team, Evidence
Cathy Fitzroy	Lead Adviser, Landscape Scale Delivery Team/,Landscape & Biodiversity
Stephen Herbert	Senior Adviser, Geographical Information & Analysis Services Team, Evidence
George Hinton	Senior Specialist, Geographical Information & Analysis Services Team, Evidence
Plus input on specific tasks from Gary Smith, Director of Conservation & Community, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	

Appendix 3 Criteria for pilots' prioritisation of outputs and related data

The four pilots carefully prioritised which outputs the project team should try to seek national and local data for in the pilot stage, according to the following criteria which the pilots and wider steering group agreed:

All the national and local outputs should be robust and measure the 'state of the protected landscape'.

The outputs should then meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Will help to demonstrate the effectiveness of **conserving and enhancing** the protected landscape's natural beauty.
- Will help to demonstrate the promotion of the public's **understanding and enjoyment** of the area's special qualities.
- Will help in monitoring the achievement of NP/AONB **management plan objectives**.

The pilots used their judgement to consider whether each proposed output and associated dataset(s) fully, partially or failed to meet the above criteria.

For each *local* outcome, they also indicated how easy it would be to source the data.

Appendix 4 Summary of 2012 March workshops[6]

Introduction

This is a short report of two workshops held in March 2012 to discuss the draft framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in Protected Landscapes (PLs). It also reflects some feedback received subsequently. The first workshop was held at the Surrey Hills AONB Office near Dorking on 8th March, and the second at Natural England's Leeds office on 20th March.

The purpose of the workshops was to:

- share the results of piloting the draft framework in two National Parks and two AONBs[7];
- hear people's views on refining the data sourced so far; and
- explore how the various organisations attending could pool their resources to progress the work.

The agenda for the events covered:

- Introduction to the day
- Developing the draft framework
- How did we pilot the framework?
- Q&A
- Results of the pilots
- Break-out session
- Opportunities for using the data
- What next? – Q&A

A total of 41 people attended the workshops, representing the organisations listed in Appendix 4a. In summary, 18 represented individual AONBs; nine were from Natural England; seven represented National Parks or the Broads; and seven were from other national organisations including the Campaign for National Parks, Defra, English Heritage, English National Park Authorities Association (ENPAA), and National Association of AONBs (NAAONB).

Key feedback

Attendees heard how a strong partnership of organisations, including representatives from AONBs and National Parks, has piloted a draft framework for monitoring environmental outcomes that has been informed by stakeholder views and existing monitoring projects. The pilots have carefully considered this framework on behalf of all PL management bodies, including helping to prioritise the available data.

People raised valuable points during the presentations, breakout sessions and Q&A slots. The key areas of agreement were:

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[6] As provided to protected landscape bodies and other stakeholders in May 2013.
[7] East Devon AONB, Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, South Downs National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park.

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- It is helpful that the project aims to provide a clearer and more consistent view of some of the key environmental outcomes in PLs.
- The project's aim of improving the collection, provision and accuracy of national data is valuable.
- It is critical that PL management bodies interpret national data to explain their local contexts. They, and their local partners, can supplement national information with local data, where available, to provide a fuller picture to inform their management plans.
- We will never have the full datasets necessary to cover all the aspects of natural beauty. The project needs to state clearly how it addresses this concept and the role of any proxy information.
- It was recognised that some data collected in the pilot stage is most useful as background, contextual information and does not need frequent updating as it will not change significantly from year to year.
- The project needs to use durable language eg 'engagement' rather than 'Big Society'.
- The release of key statistics needs to be regular and reliable, so that PL management bodies and their local partners can plan for their use in management plan reviews and State of the Park reports.
- The project will not be used to create a league table of how different PL management bodies perform.
- Decisions on the further development, implementation and use of the framework will be clearly communicated with all interested parties.

Other key points that were raised included:

- The project has explored monitoring PLs' special qualities and found that because there is no standard national approach for defining them, there is no consistency in terms of special qualities across PLs. This means that monitoring special qualities within a nationally consistent framework is impractical. However, the project's analysis of the special qualities of numerous PLs demonstrated that most of them relate to outcomes that have been identified in the framework.
- The draft monitoring framework includes sections on ecosystem services, sustainable communities and voluntary/community engagement. Further discussion is needed on:
  - the pros and cons of reflecting the wider benefits provided by PLs, in addition to those related specifically to their statutory purposes; and, also, understanding their socio-economic context;
  - the relationship between special qualities, natural beauty and ecosystem services.
- Natural England is committed to providing a selection of standard national data that provides a proxy for, or an approximate measure of, identified environmental outcomes to all PL management bodies. The list and frequency of this is to be confirmed, but it will include some of the data collected in the pilot stage which is set out in Appendix 4b.
- Some PL management bodies have already cut some of the national data that the framework has piloted, such as Census information, and there are different ways of doing this. The SG will review the different approaches which were mentioned and will propose a single national approach for the purposes of this project.
- Pilots found that NPAs have more comprehensive programmes and systems of local data collection than most, but not all, AONBs.
- The project effectively provides a 'portfolio' of environmental outcomes which can be measured, as far as possible, by the most relevant and available data. It was suggested that PL management bodies and their local partners could use the ones most relevant to their circumstances for monitoring and other purposes.
- There are still some concerns about whether information from the project could be used to measure the performance of PL management bodies. This is despite its focus on environmental outcomes that are influenced by different factors, many of which are beyond the responsibility of the PL bodies.
- The analysis could be used to help PL management bodies both collectively and individually. Although each PL is different, it is possible that lessons learnt in some PLs could be applied elsewhere.

- It would be useful to explore public perceptions of natural beauty.
- It is worth investigating the scope for the framework to use trend data provided by the **Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE)** project. The sample size currently limits the degree to which it can be cut to individual PLs, especially smaller AONBs.
- The importance of different ecosystem services is best determined locally. Some PLs would welcome a standard national methodology for visitor surveys.
- Whilst PL management bodies have limited powers and responsibilities for socio-economic matters, many felt that if the project can easily collect a small set of related information then it would help with developing PL socio-economic profiles.

Next steps

From the workshop discussions, it is clear that the SG needs to make decisions on a number of aspects relating to the further development and implementation of the framework. These include:

- Deciding whether any additional work is needed to support why the framework uses the natural beauty criteria identified in the designation guidance. The links between natural beauty and the framework need to be explicit.
- Confirming the core set of environmental outcomes to include in the framework that can be measured, to varying degrees, with data that is nationally available and can be provided long-term.
- Considering a single approach for 'cutting' extra national datasets to PL boundaries this financial year, where this is necessary and they relate to the core environmental outcomes.
- Identifying any additional key datasets that might be made available in future years, as the project develops.
- Identifying key environmental outcomes for which there is no available data.
- Determining the value and feasibility of gathering pre-2010/11 data for any of the outcomes.
- Developing clear messages on carefully interpreting national data, particularly when analysing proxy information - for example, in relation to natural beauty.
- Agreeing how the information will be presented and made available to all PL management bodies.
- Agreeing the respective responsibilities of data providers and users when the framework is implemented, including how regularly data will be provided and its terms of use.

The approach that the SG takes on each issue will depend on a combination of resources, timing, and relevance to all PLs.

The following timescales are envisaged for the immediate next steps of the project:

End May - SG meeting to discuss key points raised at the workshops and agree next steps.
- Data collected during the pilots, as listed in Appendix 4b, to be made available to all PLs.

Mid June - Note circulated to PLs explaining the next steps and a timescale for implementing the framework this financial year.

15 May 2012

4a Organisations represented at the March 2012 workshops

Workshop 1 Dorking 8th March 2012

Campaign for National Parks
Chilterns Conservation Board
Dartmoor National Park Authority
Dedham Vale AONB/Stour Valley
Defra
East Devon AONB
English Heritage
High Weald AONB
Isle of Wight AONB
Kent Downs AONB
National Association of AONBs
Natural England
New Forest National Park Authority
North Devon Coast AONB
North Wessex Downs AONB
South Devon AONB
South Downs National Park Authority
South East & Eastern Protected Landscapes
Surrey Hills AONB

Workshop 2 Leeds 20th March 2012

Arnside & Silverdale AONB
Broads Authority
Defra
ENPAA (rep from Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority)
Forest of Bowland AONB
Howardian Hills AONB
Lincolnshire Wolds AONB
Natural England
Nidderdale AONB
Norfolk Coast Partnership
North Pennines AONB
Northumberland National Park Authority
Peak District National Park Authority
Shropshire Hills AONB

4b Summary of data available

The following sets of national data will be made available to all PLs to download by end May 2012. They are for each AONB and National Park, unless otherwise stated.

The area managed under Environmental Stewardship (ES)
The average annual values of current ES agreements
The uptake of selected ES options that contribute towards the good condition of landscape elements and/or landscape character, including: 1. Number of hedgerow trees and in-field trees under ES   2. Area of woodland managed and restored under HLS   3. Area of woodland edge habitats managed under ES   4. Area of parkland and wood pasture restored and maintained through HLS   5. Area of traditional orchards managed under HLS   6. Area of lowland heathland maintained or restored under ES   7. Area of species rich, semi-natural grassland maintained or restored under HLS   8. Area of moorland maintained or restored under ES   9. Area of designed/engineered water bodies maintained under HLS   10. Area of reedbed maintained or restored under ES   11. Area of fen maintained or restored under ES   12. Area of lowland bog maintained or restored under ES   13. Area of sand dunes maintained or restored under ES   14. Area of coastal marsh maintained or restored under ES   15. Area of land under ES for the management and/or protection of archaeological features   16. Area of watercourse buffer strips under ES   17. Area of land under ES for soil protection and management   Plus estimated figures for: 18. Area of traditional farm buildings protected and maintained through ES   19. Length of boundary features under ES   20. Length of woodland protected from grazing by fencing   21. Length of watercourse fencing under ES
The % of heritage assets 'at risk'
The condition of SSSIs
The condition of broad habitats (pilots)
The area of priority habitats and (for AONBs) the % that are managed under agri-environment (A-E) schemes
The area of deciduous woodland plus the area of Forestry Commission estate
Data, where available, on the condition of Local Geological Sites (pilots)
The area mapped as CROW land
The area of land that is actually accessible under CROW, plus land with existing access rights that pre-determine CROW Access (pilots)
The length of existing coastal paths and PROWs
% employed in tourism
The % area that has varying levels of relatively tranquillity (pilots)
The amount of open access brought about by A-E agreements (pilots)
The length of linear access brought about by A-E agreements (pilots)
The area covered by the England Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS), plus the area of ancient woodland in WGS
Agricultural Survey statistics
% rivers and lakes achieving 'good' ecological status
The size of the working age population (pilots)

Appendix 5 Statistics audit

5a Approach to the audit

The original prioritisation process the pilots went through was:

- first we said the outputs had to be robust, and measure 'the state of the Park';
- second, we said they had to demonstrate how effectively they are achieving statutory purposes (conservation/enjoyment); and
- third, we said they had to help monitor management plan objectives.

They then assessed whether each dataset fully, partially or fails to meet those criteria.
This gave us a start to the audit, but to give a more complete picture we built back in some of the other criteria that were stipulated in the original project brief and the brief for the pilots:

- 'updatable', so we can get trends; and
- affordable to collect.

We also added 2 other criteria, ie:

- whether data is 'cuttable' to protected landscape boundaries; and
- whether the data is available for all protected landscape (rather than just some).

That gave us the following set of criteria for the audit:

- robust (i.e. we trust the results);
- measure outcomes (not activity);
- relevant to statutory purposes;
- useful (to protected landscape, Defra, Natural England or others);
- updateable (every 5 years or less);
- affordable;
- cuttable; and
- global.

The audit then has a final column called 'conclusion' that gives a one sentence/word summary.

Undertaking the audit

We used 4 broad categorisations:

- Consider for inclusion (meaning it was a definite/probable/possible measure).
- Consider for inclusion in 'Protected Landscape Profile' (definite/probable/possible measure to go in the contextual background description of each protected landscape).
- Consider for 'phase 2' (not currently available nationally – but something that we might want to recommend pursuing at a later stage through e.g. collaboration by all protected landscapes to collect).
- Do not pursue (This is not to say that the other datasets are of no use, or that the issues measured by the other datasets are unimportant; simply that they did not match what we were seeking).

5b Extract from natural beauty part of statistics audit

NATURAL BEAUTY											
Theme	**National or locally specific**	**Existing measures**	Robust	Outcomes	Relevant	Useful	Updateable	Affordable	Cuttable	Global	Conclusion
Characteristic natural and man-made elements are well represented throughout	National	Area of ancient and semi natural woodland receiving the Woodland Improvement Grant for BAP targets.		✕						✕	Do not pursue
	National	Area of woodland receiving the Woodland Regeneration Grant.		✕							Do not pursue
	National	Area of woodland SSSI receiving the Woodland Improvement Grant for SSSIs		✕							Do not pursue
Landscape elements are in good condition	National	Length of boundary features under ES		✕							Do not pursue
	Local	Length of boundary features under local management schemes.		✕							Do not pursue
	National	Number of hedgerow trees and in-field trees under ES		✕							Consider for inclusion (ES themes feedback)
	Local	Number of hedgerow trees and in-field trees under ES		✕							Do not pursue
	National	Area of woodland under ES		✕							Consider for inclusion (ES themes feedback)
	National	Woodland protected from grazing by fencing through ES	✕	✕			✕				Do not pursue
	Local	Increase in woodland protected from grazing by fencing through local management schemes		✕						✕	Do not pursue
	National	An increase in the number of HE assets managed under ES.	✕	✕				✕		✕	Do not pursue

	Scale	Indicator									Recommendation
	Local	Number of HE assets managed under local management schemes		✕							Do not pursue
	National	Condition of HE assets managed under Environmental Stewardship		✕							Consider for inclusion
	National	Number/percentage of HE assets listed on the 'Heritage at risk' register		✕							Consider for inclusion.
	National	Area of woodland in active management		✕							Consider for inclusion
	National	% of woodland SSSIs in good or recovering condition		✕							Consider for inclusion
	National	Area and % of land in a) 'entry level' environmental schemes; b) 'higher level' environmental schemes	✕	✕						✕	Consider for inclusion
	National	Area of land managed in line with conservation objectives'		✕							Consider for inclusion
Incongruous elements are not present to a significant degree, are not visually intrusive, have only localised influence or are temporary in nature.	National	Length of overhead power lines	✕	✕		✕		✕	?	?	Do not pursue
	National	Area of active mineral workings		✕		✕			?	?	Do not pursue
Landscape character lends a clear and recognisable sense of place	National	Area of parkland and wood pasture restored and maintained through HLS	✕	✕						✕	Do not pursue

	Local	Area of parkland and wood pasture restored and maintained through local management schemes		✕							Do not pursue
	National	Area of designed and engineered water features under maintenance through ES		✕							Do not pursue
	Local	Area of designed and engineered water features under local management schemes		✕						✕	Do not pursue
	National	Area of traditional orchards under HLS		✕							Do not pursue
	Local	Area of traditional orchards under local management schemes		✕							Do not pursue
	Local	Existence of a Landscape Character Assessment, in accordance with the 2002 LCA Guidance		✕		✕					Do not pursue
	Local	Existence of a seascape character assessment for the PL (if applicable)		✕		✕					Do not pursue

Note: The full version of the audit is available in excel format.

Appendix 6 Summary of responses to questionnaire

In November 2012 Natural England asked National Park Authorities and AONBs to complete a questionnaire on how useful they have found the data provided so far under the draft 'Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes'. This paper summarises the responses received from the organisations listed in the Appendix 6a. This helped to inform the data provision in 2013.

1. Have you managed to download the data from the TransferBIGfiles website?			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes, completely (please move on to Q5)		57.89%	11
2	Partly (please explain below then move to Q5)		21.05%	4
3	No (please explain below)		21.05%	4
			answered	19

All but one of the NPAs who responded downloaded the data completely. The host local authority system blocked two AONBs from downloading it, and three found that either the main data or following heritage at risk (HAR) spatial data was no longer available when they tried to download it. One AONB found the necessary password protection complicated the process.

2. If you have not managed to download the data from TransferBIGfiles, have you been able to access it in another way?			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes – via CD		60.00%	3
2	No		40.00%	2

Most protected landscapes now have access to the data, as Natural England sent it on CDs to those that had difficulty with the TransferBigFiles site. The two outstanding cases highlighted from the questionnaire have or are being addressed.

3. Have you received enough information about the nature of the data - eg its source, the period to which it refers, and issues to be aware of?			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes, completely		47.37%	9
2	No		10.53%	2
3	Partly		42.11%	8
			answered	19
Answers for: If you answered 'No' or 'Partly', please explain below: 1 NPA provided separate written feedback, bringing total responses to 20			*11 answers*	

Including the separate written feedback, 45% of questionnaire respondents felt they had received sufficient information about the data, and 55% not. Amongst the latter, the most common points raised were:

- It was not always clear what the time period for the data is – was it the date shown on spreadsheets or was this just the day when the report was run-off?
- It would be useful to have basic guidance for each dataset to ensure it is interpreted and used correctly.

Individual comments made included:

- The need to ensure: that the data provision follows INSPIRE best practice; details are given of any manipulation work undertaken on the original source data; acronyms are explained; and metadata/issues are set out in a consistent format[8].
- The GIS HAR data requires specialist knowledge for protected landscapes to interpret.
- There was no information tailored to each area.

4. Have you started to, or are you shortly going to, use the data in your work?			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes, started		47.06%	8
2	No, not at all		0.00%	0
3	Yes, plan to soon		52.94%	9
			answered	19

100% respondents said that they had started to, or were shortly going to, use the data in their work. How much of it they would use varied, ranging from "some" to "pretty much all". Some were interested in cross-checking the data against their existing evidence base, explaining that where the

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[8] These suggestions were made by one organisation which had not yet accessed the guidance note issued with the data, but consideration of the points is still valid.

data aligned it improved their confidence in accuracy, and where there were differences further investigation was needed. Another mentioned that they needed to find a way of presenting the data so it means something to their wider audience. The particular uses are shown below in Q5.

	5. In what ways are you using, or are planning to use, the data? Please select all answers that are applicable.		**Response Percent**	**Response Total**
1	Helping to determine how policies are delivering protected landscape objectives		52.63%	10
2	Making revisions to our Management Plan		78.95%	15
3	Producing other reports eg 'State of the Park/AONB' and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments		78.95%	15
4	Contributing to other monitoring/reporting programmes		78.95%	15
5	Supporting communication strategies		10.53%	2
6	Providing background information for funding bids		78.95%	15
7	Exploring the extent of ES management agreements		42.11%	8
8	Something else (please specify)		10.53%	2
			answered	19

The most popular planned uses of the data were making revisions to management plans; producing other reports; contributing to other monitoring/reporting programmes; and providing background information for funding bids. The 'something else' uses were "influencing policy/strategy or decision-makers", and "background data direct from Defra....negating the need to pay consultants to do the same analysis". A variety of comments were made, including:

- All are valid uses which may come about in time.
- Top-level information eg extent of ES agreements are useful for reporting purposes, but access to a lower level of information and/or spatial data would help more targeted delivery work.

- The usefulness of the data depends on how regularly it is updated and how well it fits with data that some protected landscapes may already collate from other sources.
- It is important to have confidence in the data, including its method of analysis and that protected landscape bodies can quote it[9].
- One organisation was interested in using the data to provide a cross NPA picture on policy issues where appropriate, and to assess performance against goals in some cases.

	6. Please select the three datasets that you think are, or will be, most useful to your organisation:		**Response Percent**	**Response Total**
1	Area managed under ES and value of current agreements		63.16%	12
2	Uptake of groups of ES options, eg number of hedgerow trees under ES		42.11%	8
3	Heritage at risk		36.84%	7
4	SSSI condition		31.58%	6
5	Area of priority habitats		36.84%	7
6	Uptake of England Woodland Grant Scheme		21.05%	4
7	Agricultural survey		26.32%	5
8	Good ecological status of rivers and lakes		36.84%	7
9	Open and linear access provided under agri-environment schemes		0.00%	0
10	Tourism		21.05%	4
Plus written feedback from an additional PL body			answered	19

Almost two-thirds of respondents found the statistics on the area managed under ES to be one of the three most useful datasets.

Several respondents noted that all or most of the statistics are useful in some way – one adding "but only some for the purpose of monitoring change in natural beauty".

The most common comment concerned the availability or otherwise of data. Three mentioned that they already had access to statistics on SSSI condition, HAR, Agricultural Survey[10] and/or ES GIS

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[9] This was a reference to restrictions on publicising water framework directive data.

data, whether direct from a government agency or online. Another two explained that they selected the statistics that can otherwise be hardest to locate.

Drawing on written feedback as well, additional comments included:

- There are discrepancies between some of the nationally provided statistics and data that some bodies already hold - eg area priority habitats, HAR[11], open access[12], length ROW and the size of the protected landscape itself. Two noted differences on how they present data on WFD[13]
- It is useful to have mapinfo/GIS information alongside the data on ES options, so protected landscape bodies can undertake their own analysis where needed.
- Statistics that show the value of ecosystem services or the value of protected areas in some way are most useful.
- Three NPAs enquired about the availability of tourism data split by National Park[14].
- 2 sets of detailed comments on the ES options data, including: queries on the double-counting of options[15]; whether there is monitoring at the end of ES schemes to ensure that options really relate to 'environmental outcomes'; the possibility of data on capital works/boundaries; the value of including all relevant 'codes' from ELS, HLS and UELS under each indicator to present a full picture; plus conflicting impressions of the statistics reflecting a lowland or upland bias.

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[10] Two said that it would be useful if the project could encourage the provision of agricultural survey statistics more quickly and/or more regularly than the current 3 years.
[11] The NPA mentioned that they include Grade II buildings and had identified more buildings at risk.
[12] This is due to the statistics currently just showing the area mapped as open access, not dedicated and/or pre-existing access rights.
[13] ie Number of water bodies rather than length.
[14] This was forwarded on in September 2012.
[15] One respondent also raised this regarding WGS statistics, and the usefulness of breaking this data broken down further to show what type of benefit it will bring eg woodland creation, improvement or management.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Area managed under agri-environment agreements (ie Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Environmental Stewardship)		57.89%	11
2	Condition of historic environment features under Higher Level Stewardship		42.11%	8
3	Condition of broad habitats		47.37%	9
4	Area of woodland under active management (encompasses woodlands where there has been FC England grant or felling licence activity typically in the previous 5 to 10 years)		21.05%	4
5	Tranquillity		63.16%	12
6	Land Cover Map 2007 (land cover information based on broad habitats) and Dudley Stamp Land Utilisation Survey (1930s land use survey)		21.05%	4
7	Other (please specify)		15.79%	3
Plus written feedback from an additional PL body			answered	19

7. We only have resources to provide statistics on a limited number of additional national datasets to protected landscape boundaries. Bearing this in mind, are any of the following so important to you that you feel they should be included in the future framework? Please select no more than three (including any 'Other' sets you identify).

Some organisations again selected the statistics that they felt they would find most difficult to gain via other means, ranging from the 'condition of historic environment features' to tranquillity statistics and Land Cover Map.

Almost two thirds of respondents rated the provision of tranquillity statistics as among their 'top three' new ones to receive, as they relate to management plan and State of the Park measures (although the means and chances of being able to monitor tranquillity over time was raised). Two NPAs suggested it would be useful to show levels of tranquillity compared to national levels rather than just comparing them relative to other parts of that protected landscape. They also suggested presenting this data spatially.

Two protected landscape bodies explained how important it is to be to track all types of national agri-environment programmes given their role in landscape management and their economic value. Separate organisations suggested that the framework should include the following extra statistics:

- Inter-Departmental Business Register data.

- Analysis of Land-use change statistics, ie updating Peter Bibby 2007 report.
- Greenhouse gas emissions.
- Industry/employment by sector in addition to tourism[16].

Additional comments individual respondents made included:

- Land Cover Map statistics are only useful if they are updated and available regularly.
- It would be preferable to focus on providing statistics on tranquillity and 'usable' Environment Agency data rather than on ES options statistics. (This contrasts with the wider support for ES options statistics in Q6).
- Any data covering condition is very useful.
- Information on datasets can be accessed from elsewhere – eg direct from CPRE or from MAGIC.

8. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Eight additional sets of comments were submitted with the questionnaire and extra ones by e-mail. The views expressed differed widely. Some expressed how pleased they were with the information, benefits including:

- The '1 hit' data provision enabling the aggregation of data and communicating messages as protected landscapes family;
- Improving the evidence base on which bodies make decisions; and
- Saving protected landscape bodies time and effort.

Two mentioned that it was important that the data is provided long-term to allow condition monitoring over the longer-term.

Concerns expressed by individual respondents included:

- The monitoring framework needs to provide an overview as well as a commentary on each data set, and a joint project to 'unpack' the meaning from the data and to provide simple reports in a common format.
- The need to communicate what is processed and when so protected landscape bodies can input to a process if required, and avoid sourcing data twice. A related comment was that data needs to be provided promptly, otherwise a protected landscape body may obtain it direct from the source organisation when needed.
- Indicators may not match up with those a particular organisation uses. This is not an issue where they are completely different, but could confusion where an organisation reports something[17] in a slightly different way.

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[16] NPA suggestion.
[17] Reference again to HAR and WFD stats.

6a Respondents

National Park Authorities/ENPAA

1) ENPAA
2) New Forest National Park Authority
3) North York Moors National Park Authority
4) Northumberland National Park Authority (supplemented with written feedback)
5) Peak District National Park Authority
6) Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Plus written feedback from Lake District National Park Authority

AONB Units

1) Blackdown Hills AONB
2) Chilterns AONB
3) Dorset AONB
4) Dedham Vale AONB
5) East Devon AONB
6) Forest of Bowland AONB
7) Mendip Hills AONB
8) Nidderdale AONB
9) Norfolk Coast AONB
10) North Devon Coast AONB
11) Quantock Hills AONB
12) South Devon AONB
13) Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Plus feedback over the phone from Cannock Chase AONB

Appendix 7 Summary of Environmental Stewardship themes prioritisation exercise

Guidance Note[18]

Introduction

This note explains an exercise to prioritise the six or so Environmental Stewardship (ES) 'themes' that Natural England calculates accurate annual headline figures for under the *Framework for monitoring environmental outcomes in protected landscapes*.

Natural England provided indicative headline figures for the area covered by ES options under certain themes (eg woodland/moorland/lowland heathland) in spring 2012. We want to provide more accurate figures in spring 2013, as we've now devised a way to prevent the double counting of options where they're co-located. We would like to concentrate on just six or so themes to monitor annually to keep the monitoring manageable, and would value feedback from protected landscapes on which ones these should be.

The exercise

There are two spreadsheets: one for upland protected landscapes ('ES themes prioritisation uplands'), and another for lowland landscapes ('ES themes prioritisation lowlands'). Both show the majority of the different ES themes and the related subthemes and options. Please note the 'points to be aware of' before completing the exercise!

a) Please select the lowland or upland spreadsheet, as appropriate based on the dominant landscape character of your designations.
b) Please consider whether the particular theme in column A (eg historic environment) is important in terms of its impact on landscape character in your protected landscape, by putting a 'Y' or 'N' against its name in column C, eg:

Themes and Sub-themes	Options	Is this theme important re. its impact on landscape character in your protected landscape? (Y/N)	
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT *(theme)*		Y	

As a guide you'll see that we've pre-populated column C in a generic way for upland or lowland landscapes, so do please change the entry if it's not right for your protected landscape. In this way we'll start to gain a picture of how the importance of different ES themes, in terms of their impact on landscape character, varies in different parts of the country.

If you only have a short time available, just completing (b) will be helpful. If you have more time, then we'd value your help on the next stages of the exercise:

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[18] As provided to protected landscape bodies in autumn 2013

c) If the theme is important, then please indicate how important each of the associated sub-themes is in terms of conserving and enhancing the landscape character in your AONB/National Park by putting an 'H' (High), 'M' (Medium) or 'L' (Low) in column D-F respectively. There is also a 'Not applicable' category, plus a 'negative' one if a particular sub-theme of options tends to have an adverse impact on character. Eg:

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	Options		High	Medium	Low	N/A	Negative
Archaeological features taken out of cultivation *(sub-theme)*	D2, D7		H				
Reduced depth of cultivation	D3			M			
Management of archaeological sites under grassland	D4, D5		H				
Management of archaeological sites in wetland	D8		H				
Maintaining archaeological visibility on moorland	D13		H				

There's no need to do this part of the exercise for themes that aren't important.

d) Please add any comments in column I if you would like to caveat any choices – eg it might be that a particular subtheme is generally of high importance in landscape character terms but there are particular options under this subtheme that aren't.

e) There are 3 egs of this exercise that the pilots tested, if you'd find it useful to refer to these.

f) Please e-mail the completed spreadsheet to Liz Bingham by 17 December 2012.

Points to be aware of:

- This exercise specifically asks about the importance of ES themes and sub-themes for landscape character rather than, say, for biodiversity. This is not to underplay the importance that ES has for wildlife; it is simply to help us to focus on providing headline figures that relate to landscape character as this is an aspect of the framework where nationally available figures are less readily available.

- Not *all* ES themes, subthemes or options are included in this exercise. The main exclusions are:

  - Capital items and supplements. We recognise these are very important for most protected landscapes, and their exclusion is purely to avoid double-counting when we try to calculate the overall 'footprint' that is covered by a certain group of options.

  - Options entered at the agreement level (eg boundary features). This is because it is not possible to calculate accurately the uptake of these. The boundary theme is therefore omitted and certain sub-themes (eg 'historic buildings') are struck-through with an explanatory note.

  - The access theme. This is because we are more likely to calculate the uptake of certain option groups under the 'recreation' part of the Framework than in relation to landscape character.

How the information will be used

We will analyse the results in January 2013 to see whether a consensus emerges over the importance of particular themes, sub-themes and associated options. We'll then propose to the Project Board which themed groups of options we calculate the annual take-up of in terms of their footprint in each protected landscape. The Project Board will then decide whether to incorporate these into the monitoring framework.

We recognise that the chosen themed groups of options will not include all the themes, sub-themes or options that are important to different protected landscapes – this exercise can only attempt to find the most universally valued ones. We hope, however, to be able to provide a separate

spreadsheet from which protected landscape management bodies can see what uptake their area has of any of the individual parcel-based ES options.

Appendix 8 Approach to measures and outcomes - explanatory note

This note summarises the Delivery Group's approach to setting out the framework's outcomes and measures, which the Project Board approved.

The Group:

- Identified the generic 'outcomes' that we want to see in protected landscapes:

a) For the Natural Beauty and Recreation themes, they're taken from the 'indicators of natural beauty and recreation' established by the 'Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty and Recreation'.
b) Those for ecosystem services were originally based on the structure provided under the National Character Area project, and have been agreed with Natural England ecosystem services specialists. The term 'benefits' rather than 'outcomes' is used to more accurately reflect what the framework can set out under this theme.
c) Those for 'sustainable communities' are based on those included in the 'State of the Park' indicators.

   It agreed not to devise 'outcome type' statements for (b) or (c) as they are very difficult to set nationally.

- Identified the measures that seem to be ways of measuring progress on those outcomes.
- Greyed out those lines where it concluded that relevant measures can probably only be set/measured at the local level.
- Numbered each measure.
- Repeated measures where they could be used to measure more than one 'outcome'.
- Adopted the following 'key' to indicate the availability or otherwise of the measures under the Framework:

Green	Available to protected landscape bodies in 2013 and in future years as long as technically possible
Red	Are not currently available through the framework (future inclusion will depend on a review of the framework and available resources)

- Measures in italics are contextual info for Park/AONB profiles.
- Italicised those statistics or 'measures' which could be used for protected landscape profiles.

Appendix 9 Extract from the framework's outcomes and measures workbook

NATURAL BEAUTY

Desired outcome * (*Based on 'indicators of natural beauty' from the Designation Framework's 'Evaluation Framework for Natural Beauty')	Relevant national measures		Local criteria	Local measures
Characteristic natural and man-made elements are well represented throughout	Local measures			
Landscape elements are in good condition	1	Landscape elements managed under ES		
	2i	% of woodland that is managed		
	2ii	% of woodland that is managed under local woodland schemes (NPs only)		
	3i	Area and % of PL and/or Utilisable Agricultural Area (UAA) under agri-environment schemes		
	3ii	Area and % of PL and/or UAA under local agri-environment schemes (NPs only)		
	3ia	Area and % PL and/or UAA under ES		
	3ib	Area of land under 'environmental management' (eg amalgam of 3i, 3ii, 2i, 2ii, Catchment Sensitive Farming, Inheritance Tax Exemption)		
	4	% of heritage assets that are 'at risk'		
	5	% of broad habitats in SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition		
	6a	% of geological SSSI unit features in favourable or recovering condition		
	7	Condition of historic environment features under ES		
Incongruous elements are not present to a significant degree, are not visually intrusive, have only localised influence or are temporary in nature.	Local measures			

Note: The full version of the framework is available as an excel workbook.

Appendix 10 Guidance note on using the framework

Please see Appendix 8 for an explanation of the approach taken to setting out the framework's measures and outcomes.

- The framework is split into four themes: natural beauty, recreation, ecosystem services and sustainable communities. Each theme is set out on a separate spreadsheet within an excel workbook.
- Column A sets out the generic 'outcomes' (or 'benefits' in the case of ecosystem services) that protected landscapes might be expected to provide. These outcomes are intended as a 'menu' for protected landscape bodies and their local partners to refer to if applicable. This is to recognise that the 'indicators of natural beauty and recreation' (on which many of the outcomes are based) can vary depending on location.
- Column B sets out the best, nationally available 'measures' or datasets that can be used to measure progress on each outcome (or part of an outcome). These have been selected according to the criteria explained in Appendix 5a. Each one is numbered, which is reflected in the coding of the related statistics. For example, statistics on '% of heritage assets that are at risk' have the code 'PLNB4' (PL = protected landscapes; NB = natural beauty; and 4 = the number of the measure.) Other themes are coded as: Rec = recreation; SC = sustainable communities; Eco = ecosystem services.
- Column B also includes some measures that are purely contextual. These are indicated in italics. They can be used to understand the local significance of some of the measures. Protected landscape bodies and their local partners may want to use these in 'State of the Park/AONB' reports.
- Column C 'local criteria': Protected landscape bodies and their local partners can use the framework to consider whether there are more tailored versions of the 'generic' outcomes that they want to achieve locally as part of their local management plan objectives.
- Column D 'local measures': Protected landscape bodies and their local partners can use this column to identify appropriate local measures that they are collecting or intended to collect. Local information, combined with that available from the national measures, can provide a more nuanced picture of outcomes in particular places. It is also invaluable where no national data is available under the framework.

Using the framework to help monitor outcomes relating to natural beauty

Natural beauty cannot be measured by using datasets alone; it is more than the sum of its parts and is also a "very subjective characteristic of a landscape and ultimately involves a value judgment" [Chapter 1, p. 1].

Whilst recognising this, the framework sets out aspects that contribute towards natural beauty (ie the 'indicators' of natural beauty) and identifies some existing national measures/datasets that protected landscape bodies and their local partners can use to monitor changes in at least some part of these aspects. This in turn will help people to make a judgment about the degree to which some (but not all) aspects of natural beauty are being maintained.

The national measures can only give a part of the picture. Over half of the indicators of natural beauty have no relevant national measures and can only be measured at the local level; for example, through the use of fixed point photography or feedback from residents and visitors. Even when national measures are available, they may only relate to one part of the outcome. Similarly, the partnership could not identify any nationally available socio-economic data for each protected landscape that related

closely to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. However, some NPAs and AONBs may have case studies of sustainable tourism businesses that contribute to conserving natural beauty, which could add a local flavour to national figures on the percentage employed in tourism within each protected landscape. Further information may become available in time if resources become available (a current gap including data on how people perceive natural beauty) and with improvements in remote sensing and 'crowd sourcing' data.

Appendix 11 Statistics provided to each AONB and National Park in 2013, and frequency of future provision

A. Statistics provided to each AONB and National Park in late May 2013

Code	Statistics	Provider	Frequency
PLNB1	Interactive spreadsheets ('ES analyser') enabling protected landscape bodies to calculate the uptake of Environmental Stewardship (ES) field parcel options & 'numbers of' items eg trees, which can be tailored to local circumstances.	Natural England	Annual
	The uptake of 6 themed groups of ES options that contribute to conserving and enhancing landscape character:		
PLNB1a	Area of land under ES specifically for the management & protection of archaeological features	Natural England	Tbc, depending on protected landscape bodies' feedback on their value
PLNB1b	Number of hedgerow trees & in-field trees managed under ES	Natural England	
PLNB1c	Area of woodland managed and created under ES	Natural England	
PLNB1d	Area of low input grassland managed, restored or created under ES	Natural England	
PLNB1e	Area of land under ES for the management, restoration or creation of lowland heathland	Natural England	
PLNB1f	The area of land under ES for the maintenance, restoration or creation of moorland	Natural England	
PLNB2	% area of woodland that is managed	Forestry Commission	Annual
PLNB3	Area managed under agri-environment agreements, ie Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS), Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) & the different levels of Environmental Stewardship (ES). Expressed as a % of the protected landscape & as a % of the draft Utilisable Agricultural Area within it.	Natural England	Annual
PLNB4	% of heritage assets that are 'at risk', including buildings at risk (excluding grade II listed), monuments, registered parks & gardens, registered battlefields & places of worship.	English Heritage	Annual
PLNB5	Condition of broad habitats within SSSIs	Natural England	Annual, but potentially focused on the relationship between priority habitats and SSSI unit condition from 2014 onwards
PLNB6	Number of geological SSSI unit features, & % in favourable or recovering condition.	Natural England	Annual
PLNB8	Land Cover Map 2007 - the area under each of its 20 broad habitat classes	Natural England	N/A

PLNB9	% of the protected landscape that is relatively tranquil for its area.	Natural England	N/A (unless tranquillity study is repeated)
PLNB12	Area of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in favourable or recovering condition.	Natural England	Annual
PLNB13	Area & % of Ancient Woodland	Natural England	Every 2 years to reflect changes in Ancient Replanted Woodland. (Updated Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland figures anticipated every 5 years or more frequently if revision project is undertaken).
PLNB14	Number of heritage assets, including the number of listed buildings (including grade II listed) & structural scheduled monuments, scheduled monuments, registered parks & gardens, registered battlefields.	English Heritage	Annual
PLRec1	Length of Public Rights of Way, sub-divided into footpaths, bridleways, Byeways Open to Traffic & restricted byways.	Natural England	N/A
PLRec1a	Length of National Trails	Natural England	Every 2 or 5 years, depending on means of calculating potential future statistics on coastal access (see note d below)
PLRec3	% of the protected landscape as 'accessible natural environment'	Natural England	Annual
PLEco5	Area of woodland (Sub-divided into broadleaved, conifer, mixed, shrub land, young trees, felled woodland, ground prepared for new planting, coppice)	Forestry Commission	Annual
PLEco6-10	Ecological status of, & objectives for, rivers, standing water bodies, coastal water bodies & groundwater bodies	Environment Agency	Annual
PLSC9	Total annual values of agri-environment agreements (CSS, ESA & different levels of ES)	Natural England	Annual

Plus statistics on permissive access under agri-environment schemes (CSS, ESA & ES)

B. Statistics available to each AONB and National Park in early June 2013

Code	Statistics	Provider	Frequency
PLNB7	Condition of historic environment features under Higher Level Stewardship Schemes	Natural England	Annual
PLRec2	% of PRoW that are 'easy to use' (NPs only)	National Park Authorities	Annual
PLEco18	Total number of volunteer days spent on activity led by the PL (NPs only)	National Park Authorities	Annual

In addition:

a. Defra is investigating the availability of analysis on Land Use Change statistics, via DCLG. Analysis tables have been assembled from available datasets by Peter Bibby of the University of Sheffield which follow up on his 2007 report. The new analysis includes 2001 and 2011 census information. An

overview report has also been commissioned to discuss some key changes and guide the reader through the tables.

b. The National Biodiversity Network's Gateway at http://data.nbn.org.uk is searchable by AONBs and National Parks. Users can download a list of the species that have been recorded within individual protected landscapes.

c. The next results from the June Survey of Agriculture[19] for AONBs and National Parks should be available in early 2014.

d. There is a new programme for delivering coastal access in England. When we review the framework, we will consider the provision of statistics on new approved coastal access, rather than the estimates of coastal access provided previously. We will also consider whether to include these statistics within those for national trails to avoid double-counting where a national trail already exists on the coast. This would probably increase how frequently statistics are provided on national trails from five to two years.

e. Defra Statistics has previously produced socio-economic profiles for every National Park and AONB (provided in 2010 and 2012 respectively).

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[19] Available at **www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry**.

Appendix 12 Progress in relation to project aim and objectives

Project aim	Progress
To establish a coordinated and robust monitoring framework for England's protected landscapes	The partnership has worked hard to meet the project's aim within the available resources. The framework does provide a co-ordinated, tested and proofed structure for national reporting of environmental outcomes across all protected landscapes, based on using the best available, robust national data, for both protected landscape bodies and agencies. This has been done without the need for time-consuming and costly additional data collection, meaning that the framework should be sustainable. There are undoubtedly further datasets that could be incorporated in time; it needs to be a 'living' framework to ensure it remains 'fit for purpose'; retaining a core set of statistics to establish trends, evolving to incorporate new and/or improved datasets and deleting those that may no longer be useful. Any opportunity to improve the system needs to be carefully considered, weighing the potential benefits against the costs involved and available resources.

Objective	Progress
1: To demonstrate the effectiveness of the conservation and enhancement of the outstanding natural beauty of England's protected landscapes	Evidence gathered after an early release of data in summer 2012 has demonstrated that protected landscape bodies will be able to use the statistics to help demonstrate how effectively natural beauty is being conserved and enhanced, acknowledging that the data can only give a partial picture. Additional information that NPAs and AONBs can provide will be vital. The amount, type and availability will vary between protected landscape bodies, but could be drawn from fixed-point photography, landscape character assessment, feedback from residents and visitors, and local statistics; plus from art or literature to capture some of the more intangible aspects of natural beauty. As the 2012 workshops suggested, it would be useful to explore public perceptions of natural beauty if resources became available, whether locally or nationally. One area for further consideration is to what extent different agencies may wish to use the framework in their reporting, policy and delivery work, particularly as trends become discernible.
2: To provide an evidence base to assess the effective delivery of protected landscapes' management plan objectives and to inform their review	This is one of the most practical outcomes from the framework project. Feedback from the questionnaire indicated that nearly 80% of respondents planned to use the pilot stage statistics when reviewing their management plans. Further information on the value of the statistics as an evidence base will become available once the questionnaire is re-run after many AONBs have completed the final drafts of revised management plans. Not all the measures in the framework will be used by all protected landscape bodies; some will be of more relevance to some areas than others. The Project Board also recognises that confidence in using the datasets, or mix of datasets, will vary. The guidance that accompanies each set of statistics highlights issues to be aware of to help inform how they are used. In addition, the Board acknowledges that local information can provide a robust

challenge to the national picture. This national/local dynamic should always be part of the process of informing policy and management.

The AONB management plan workshop in November 2012 also recognised that, whilst the data was 'hugely valuable, analysis and understanding what it could tell a protected landscape manager was a time-consuming task'. It was suggested that this analysis could be done more efficiently if it was done by a single entity for all 34 AONBs. The means of doing so is still open to discussion, but both the NAAONB and ENPAA have expressed an interest in using the statistics to communicate messages as a family. (This also relates to objectives 1, 3 and 4).

Objective	Progress
3: To provide an evidence base to inform the understanding of the benefits of protected landscape designation	The national and local statistics available through the framework could help to inform an understanding of the benefits of protected landscape designation; indeed, statistics on Environmental Stewardship uptake are already being used in a research project funded by the NPAs looking at the 'value' of National Parks, such as in economic terms. Ideally, counterfactuals would need including to gain a fuller understanding of the benefits of designating National Parks and AONBs. Individual datasets may be available to help shed light on differences between designated and undesignated areas - for example, Defra's socio-economic profiles include statistics comparing those for the designated area with its region. However, wider comparison is not possible currently due to there being no national landscape monitoring programme covering all areas. Statistics provided under the National Character Area programme could provide some contextual comparison in the interim.
4: To provide an evidence base to demonstrate that England's protected landscapes are exemplars of land management (including local character, cultural heritage, tranquillity, biodiversity in favourable condition, exemplary access management, resilience to climate change)	As with the earlier objectives, the framework provides some statistics that could be used for such an analysis, but would need to be accompanied by further information. In time, improved and/or additional national statistics may be available through the framework to shed light on the condition of biodiversity in protected landscapes plus their resilience to climate change. Feedback from the 2012 questionnaire also showed that 79% of protected landscape bodies planned to use the evidence to support funding bids, enabling delivery, which could potentially include Natural England's outcomes and National Character Areas statements of environmental opportunity.