

Mainstreaming the Ecosystem Approach in English planning

Lessons from the South Downs National Park experience

Professor Alister Scott

Context





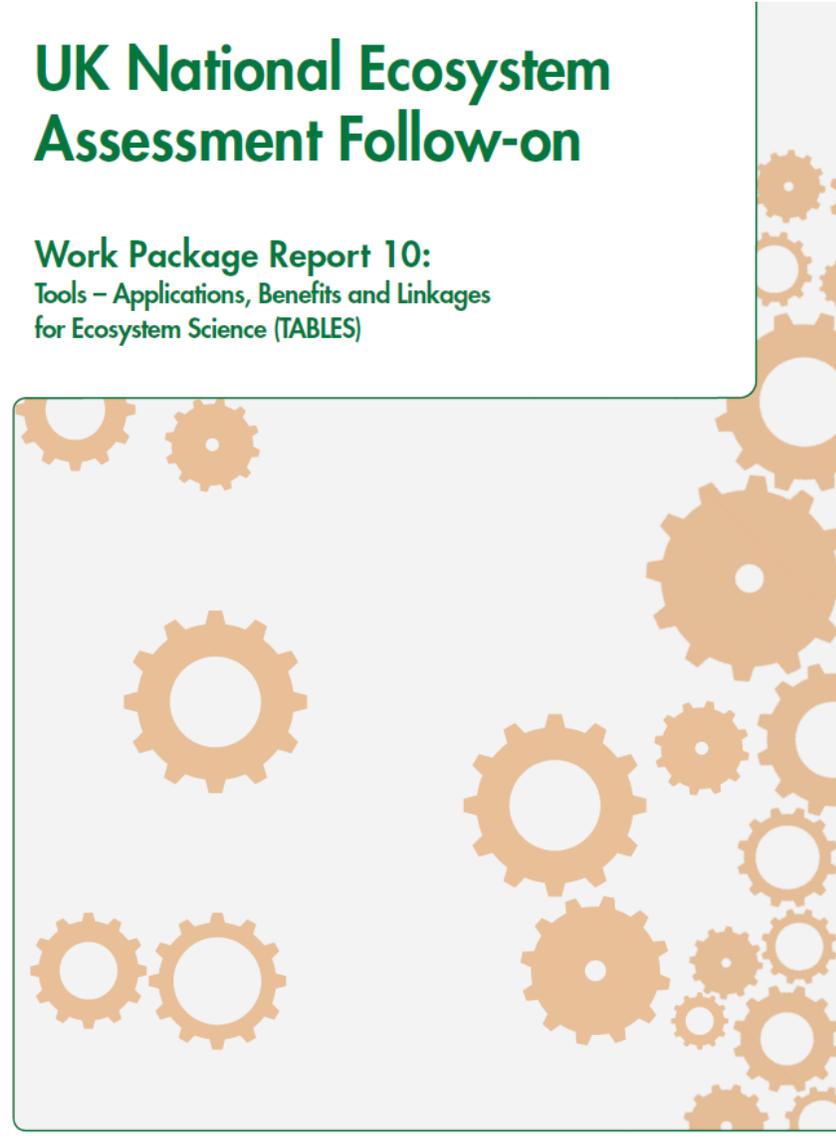
UK National Ecosystem Assessment
Follow-on

Synthesis of the Key Findings



UK National Ecosystem Assessment Follow-on

Work Package Report 10:
Tools – Applications, Benefits and Linkages
for Ecosystem Science (TABLES)



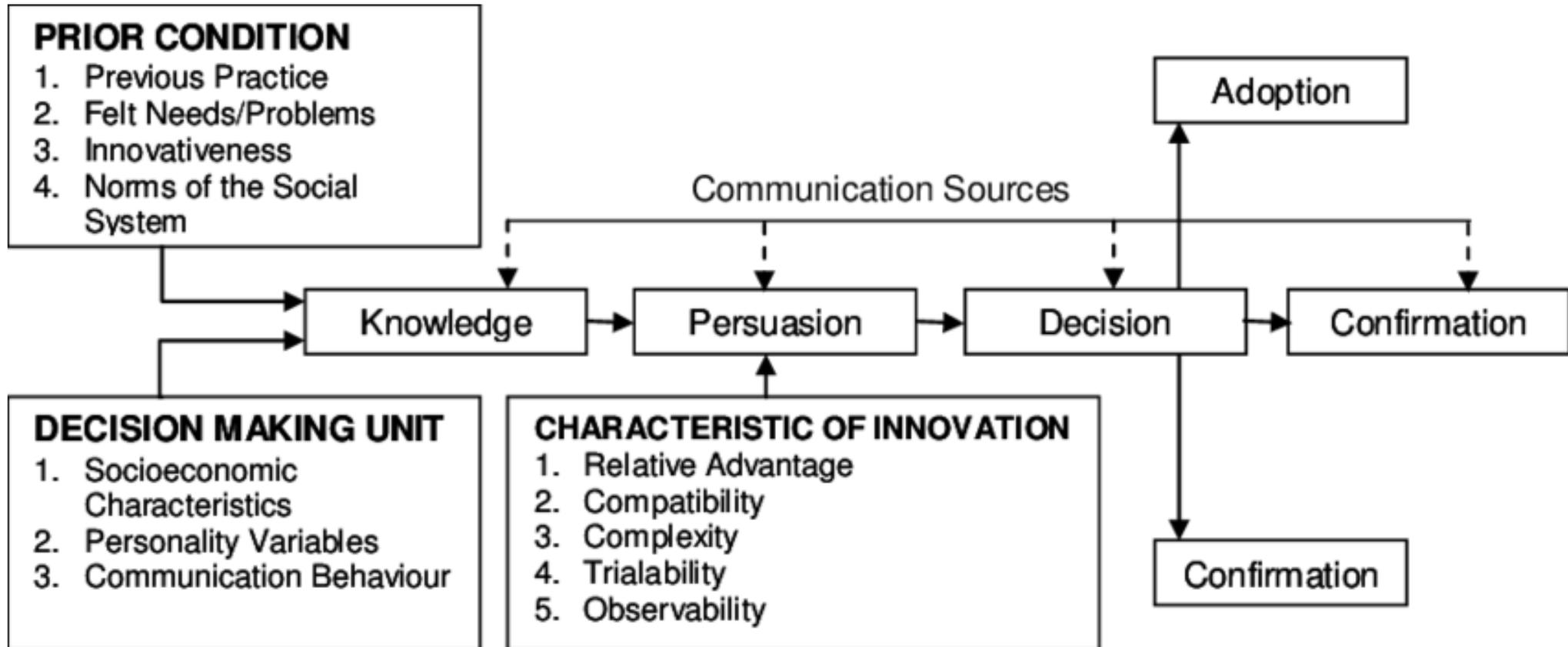
Ecosystem Science : Challenges and Opportunities



- Translating science into policy, tools and practice in built environments.
- Complexity of ecosystem jargon
- Built vs natural environment divide
- Quasi judicial minefield of town and country planning system
- Social learning from innovating ecosystem science in policy and practice

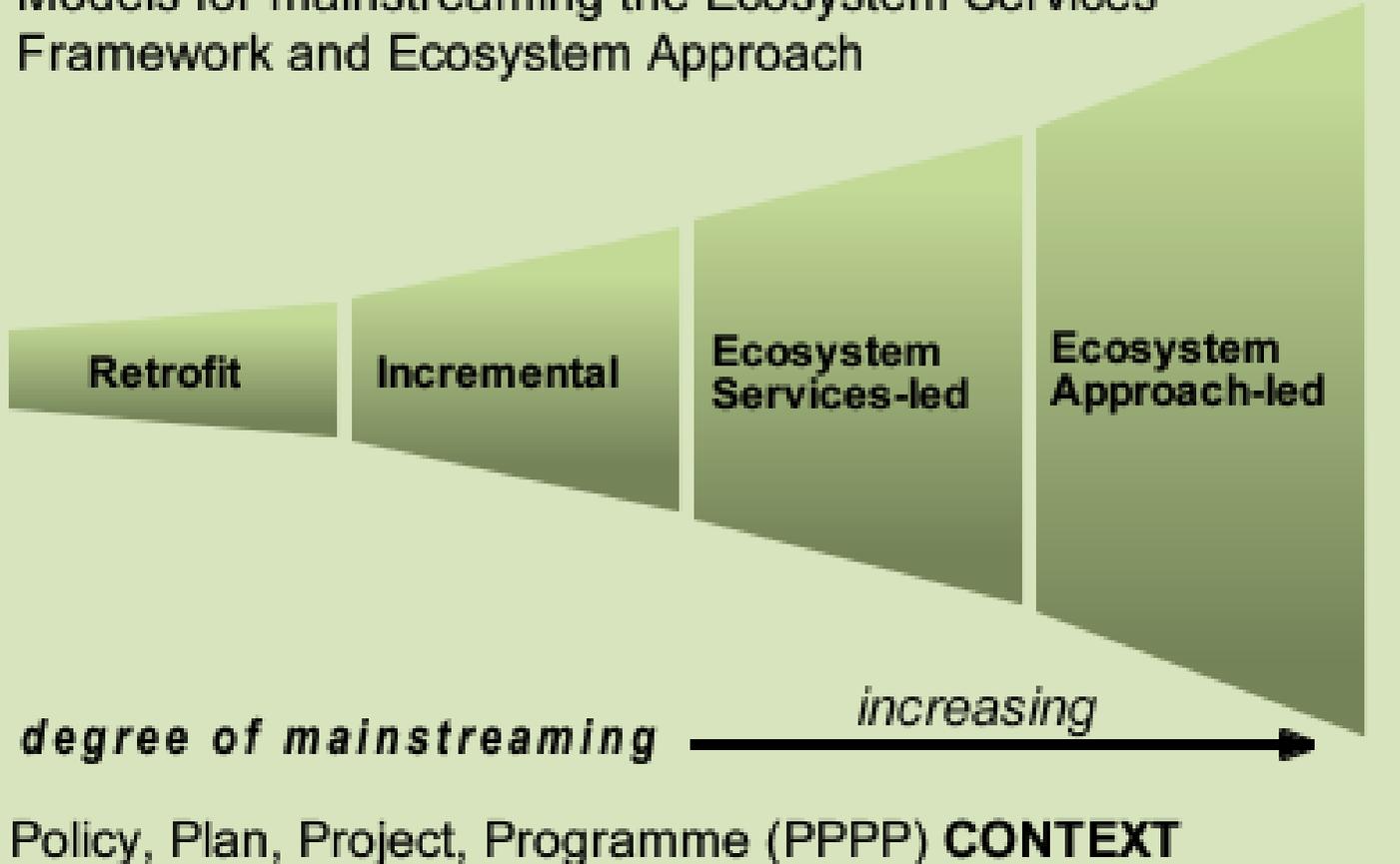


Theoretical foundations Rogers 2003



Typology of ecosystem science mainstreaming

Models for mainstreaming the Ecosystem Services Framework and Ecosystem Approach



- Retrofit: Cotswolds AONB
- Incremental: North Devon and Torrington local plan
- Ecosystem Services: Birmingham Green living Spaces Plan
- Ecosystem Approach led: South Downs National Park

Finding hooks and bridges

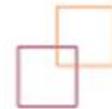


Conventional Hooks : Natural Environment

The Natural Choice:
securing the value
of nature



Biodiversity 2020:
A strategy for England's wildlife
and ecosystem services



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Conventional hooks: Built Environment



National Planning Policy Framework



Planning Practice Guidance

[National Planning Policy Framework](#) [Planning Practice Guidance](#) [About](#)

Search site



Welcome to the home of the National Planning Policy Framework for England and planning practice guidance.

For the first time, planning practice guidance is easily accessible and available online.

[Find out more about this new web-based resource.](#)

[Find out how to contact us or send us your feedback.](#)

Search

Everything

for





Localism Act 2011



SDNPA

- Role as one of newest national parks
- Role as innovator
- Role as an environmental champion
-To boldly go



Redefining ecosystem approach SDNPA style



1. Be based upon the public interest both inside and outside the plan area, including in particular, the opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences and conserving the diverse, inspirational landscapes, breath-taking views and tranquillity.
2. Delegate decision making to the most appropriate level, particularly for the communities with pride in their distinctive towns and villages
3. Identify and assess adjacent effects at different scales, in particular taking into account, views, priority habitat connectivity, rare and internationally important species, river and water catchment issues and the associated flooding, water quality and supply issues.
4. Understand the economic context and aim to reduce market distortion, particularly to enable farming to enhance the environment and continue to embrace new enterprise.
5. Support the enhancement of Natural Capital, historic features and rich cultural heritage so it can be enjoyed by future generations
6. Respect known environmental limits using best available evidence but develop flexible policies to respond to issues of uncertainty
7. Operate at appropriate spatial and temporal timescales, linking in particular with partnership landscape-scale approaches, the National Character Assessment and local data and evidence
8. Manage for the long-term, considering lagged effects
9. Accept and manage change as inherent and inevitable, particularly considering recreation, housing, farming and land management as significant aspects of this change
10. Deliver the National Park's two purposes as a priority and whilst doing so, the Authority duty using the Sandford Principle in case of conflict between purposes (Partnership Management Plan / Delivery Framework reference)
11. Use a robust evidence base and the sustainable development precautionary principle where the data or evidence is not complete
12. Maximise and maintain stakeholder engagement.

Hook 1 : NPPF Par 109



“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;.....*

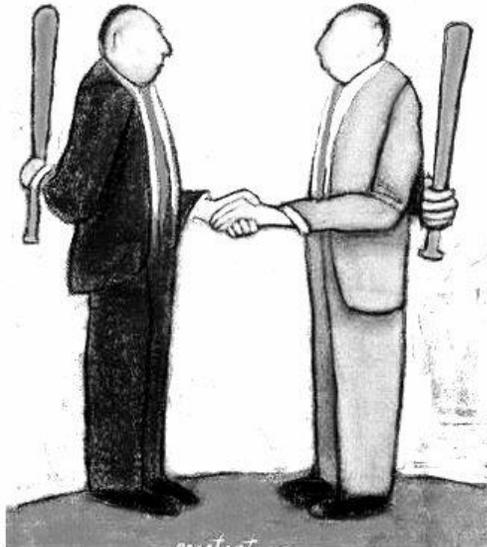
Draft Core Policy SD2: Ecosystems Services SDNP 2015 Local Plan Preferred Options document

1. Proposals that deliver sustainable development and comply with other relevant policies **will be permitted provided that they do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural environment and its ability to contribute goods and services.** Proposals will be expected, as appropriate, to:

- a. provide more and better joined up natural habitats;
- b. conserve water resources;
- c. sustainably manage land and water environments;
- d. improve the National Park's resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change;
- e. increase the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means;
- f. conserve and improve soils;
- g. reduce pollution;
- h. mitigate the risk of flooding;
- i. improve opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing;
- j. stimulate sustainable economic activity; and
- k. deliver high-quality sustainable design

Hook 2 Duty to Cooperate

*“To engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of **strategic cross boundary matters**”.*



SDNPA Local Plan par 4.2

- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area
- Conserving and enhancing the region's biodiversity (including GI issues)
- The delivery of new homes, including affordable homes and pitches for Travellers
- The promotion of sustainable tourism
- Development of the rural economy
- Improving the efficiency of transport networks by enhancing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.

Bridge 1 : Green Infrastructure

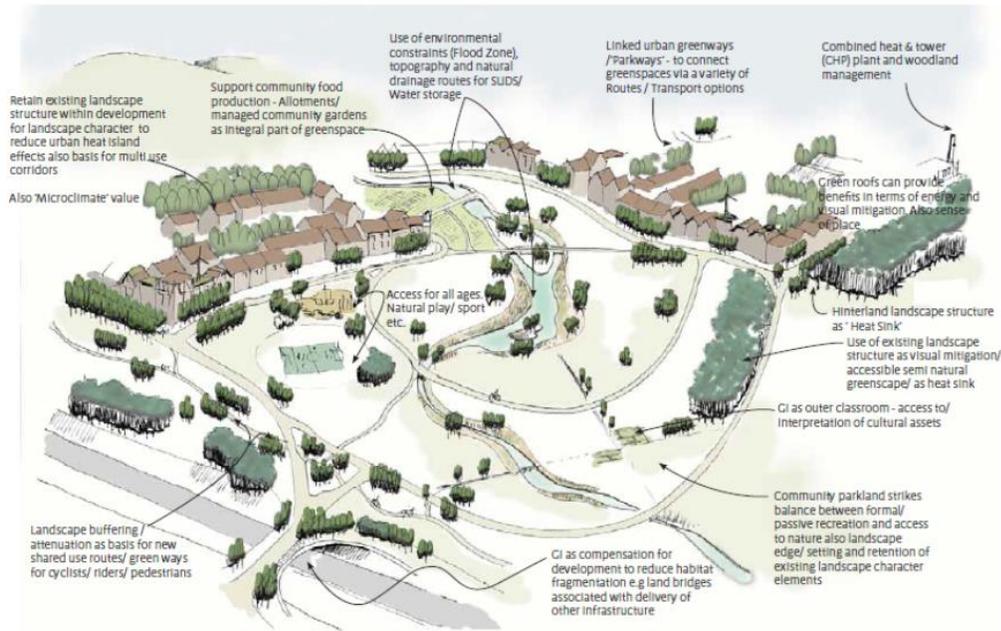


Figure 3.10: Green infrastructure, multifunctionality and place-making – example 2

- NPPG par27 Green infrastructure provides multiple benefits, notably ecosystem services, at a range of scales, derived from natural systems and processes, for the individual, for society, the economy and the environment. To ensure that these benefits are delivered, green infrastructure must be well planned, designed and maintained”.

South Downs Green Infrastructure Framework

A Roadmap for Green Infrastructure

Technical Working Group Consultation Draft January 2016





Make Strong Connections

The need for better connections crosses many areas – biodiversity networks and sustainable transport, as well as planning and delivering green infrastructure across boundaries and across sectors.

A Natural and Cultural Canvas

The well-being of the area fundamentally relies on the quality of the landscape, its ecosystems and the services they provide. The natural landscape and cultural heritage should be strengthened and celebrated, providing distinctive settings for its cities, towns and villages and underpinning the future prosperity of the area.

Support Sustainable and Healthy Communities

The health and well-being of people living in the Framework area is linked to the quality of their environment. People need access to nature and the benefits of a green environment. New development must build communities, not just housing. This is vital for the health of the towns and villages and contributes to the economic prosperity of the area.

Become Fit for the Future

The Framework area needs to build resilience to help it adapt to change. Housing growth and transport will continue to make demands on the landscape and natural resources, particularly water. Climate change will create pressures and challenges which will require adaptation. Economic forces will test farming and forestry. The management of these complex challenges requires forward planning into the medium and long term horizons.

Better Through Working Together

Partnership working, shared objectives, pooling knowledge, securing resources and advocacy will be the keys to success for the Framework and its ambitions.

Lessons



1. To boldly go leadership and risk taking
2. Securing political support from the outset through NP Committee
3. Building capacity in ecosystem science across entire NPA not just individuals
4. Working as partners on research projects.
5. Taking ownership of ecosystem science within their own professional language and NP setting
6. Challenging established practice of NPPF operation
7. Learning and sharing lessons in a public and transparent way

BUT



- Danger of model only being seen as only suitable for national parks.
- We are at first stage of the mainstreaming process
 - Overcoming some barriers
 - Dealing with multiple trade offs
 - Dealing with winners and losers
 - Planning Inspectorate

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK



Any Questions?

